

# Flathead County Trails Plan



Photo Courtesy of Victor Brozovich

**Prepared for the  
Flathead County Weeds, Parks and Recreation Board  
and Flathead County Commissioners**

**By the  
People, Athletics, Travel, Health, & Safety (PATHS) Advisory Committee**

**Resolution **XXXX-XX**  
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## **Introduction**

### **Benefits of Trails in Flathead County**

The networks and connections proposed in this Trails Plan can bring a wide range of benefits to Flathead County, including increased business revenue, improved public health, higher property values, and improved quality of life. A growing body of research—including research specific to Montana—measures how trails bring benefits to communities.

### **Business Impacts**

Trails can generate business impacts and create new jobs by attracting visitors, especially overnight visitors. Destination trails attract visitors from outside the local area who travel specifically to use a trail. This results in greater business revenue, employment, employee earnings, and tax revenue. The economic impact from trails is highest when a trail is connected to local businesses that cater to trail user needs, including restaurants, grocery stores, camping and hotels, guide services, and gear stores. This connection can occur directly through trail spurs that link to commercial centers as well as through signs at trailheads or shuttles between a town and the trailhead.

Two recent Montana studies highlight the economic impact of trails in two Montana communities. In Whitefish, the Whitefish Trail is associated with \$3.2 million in new consumer spending annually, supporting 68 jobs. In Helena, the South Hills Trail System supports \$4.3 million in visitor spending annually, supporting 60 jobs.

### **Public Health**

Trails can improve public health by increasing physical activity and providing safer transportation routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Trails often encourage inactive people to become active, and trails modestly increase the activity levels of already-active residents. Because they provide a safe environment, trails are the only place where many residents exercise. The gains in physical activity are most significant in rural places with few parks and narrow road shoulders. Increased physical activity is highest among people at greatest risk of inactivity, including people with low income, low education attainment, and the elderly.

In Billings, Montana, existing trails and pathways that encourage active transportation result in \$1 million in annual health care cost savings. Their Bikeway and Trail Master Plan Update projects additional health care cost savings of \$370,000 to \$2.8 million annually.

In Flathead County, our survey found that 45 percent of residents use trails at least once per week. This level of use shows that our trails play an important role in helping residents stay physically active, improving public health.

### **Property Value**

Trails can be associated with higher property value, especially when a trail is designed to provide neighborhood access and maintain residents' privacy. Trails, like good schools or low crime, create an amenity that results in a higher price for nearby homes. Trails are valued by those who live nearby as places to recreate, convenient opportunities for physical activity and improving health, and safe corridors for walking or cycling to work or school. Home value is not property owners' only concern. Legal, well-marked access eliminates problems with trail users trespassing.

Homes near trails generally are worth between five and ten percent more than otherwise identical homes without trails nearby. In Methow Valley, Washington, homes within one-quarter mile of trails have a nine percent price premium.

### **Quality of Life**

Trails can measurably improve a community's quality of life by providing opportunities for social connection and safe places for recreation and commuting. Trails are an amenity that keep existing residents and attract new people, an asset that contributes to community identity. These benefits focus on residents, rather than visitors. As such, the trails that can bring the greatest benefits to residents often are close to where people live and work, providing physical connections within a community.

In Whitefish, summer and winter recreation, in addition to community character, are the most important reasons why residents move to or stay in the area. In Whatcom County, Washington, 95 percent of long-time residents—many of whom are mountain bikers, hikers, and trail runners—state that trails are important to their decision to stay in the area.

Ninety-five percent of respondents use trails in the Flathead Valley at least once a month. This widespread frequent use highlights the role trails play in creating a community identity and shared experiences.

### **Stakeholders and Planning Process**

This update to the Flathead County Trails Plan, originally adopted in 2010, was initiated by the reconvened PATHS Advisory Committee. The planning process included monthly meetings open to the public and attended by Flathead County staff, planning staff from local municipalities, representatives from the US Forest Service, National Park Services, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, local community foundations, and area recreational groups and non-profits. The first planning meeting occurred in August 2017 and monthly meetings were held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month and advertised in the Daily Interlake Daybook. In addition to these meetings, a number of outreach activities were conducted to solicit input from the community. An online survey assessing the existing conditions, trends, and values of the community with regard to existing and proposed trails. The survey was open between February and June 2018 and advertised on Flathead County Department websites, advertised in the newspaper, and distributed by community group social media platforms. In addition to the online survey, two open house meetings were held at the Flathead County Fairgrounds on March 21 and May 22, 2018 during which time the public was invited to provide input on large maps and through paper copies of the survey. Public input was reviewed at the PATHS general planning meetings and recommendations incorporated into the updates outlined in this plan.

### **Relationship to Flathead Planning Documents**

**Growth Policy** – On October 12, 2012, the Flathead County Board of Commissioners adopted an update to the Flathead County Growth Policy (Resolution #2015R). The Growth Policy was established to identify a collective vision for growth in Flathead County. The document includes a Park and Recreation element, which recommends the creation of “a committee to determine and prioritize areas for bike path easement acquisition and construction, prioritize use of funds, guide grant applications, identify roads that should have bicycle lanes, determine maintenance funding mechanisms, and set county-wide bicycle path/lane construction standards.” The PATHS

Advisory Committee reconvened to comply with this policy by updating the Flathead County Trails Plan to ensure the vision for trail development is in line with the community's desires.

**Parks and Recreation Master Plan** - The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, adopted in 2009 (Resolution #2015L), expands the analysis that is contained within the Growth Policy and provides programmatic recommendations for park and recreation development, including substantial discussion on the topic of trails. The Trails Plan provides specific recommendations regarding a county trails network as an element of the overall Parks and Recreation Program. The Trails Plan is intended to be adopted by reference into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and, therefore, the Growth Policy.

**Neighborhood Plans** - Neighborhood Plans address an array of specific criteria at a localized "neighborhood" scale in greater detail than the more generalized Growth Policy. The process of trail project selection and design should entail consultation of an adopted Neighborhood Plan when a proposed trail project occurs within a Neighborhood Plan area.

**Other County Plans** - To ensure effective implementation, it is recommended that the Trails Plan / community recommendations be incorporated by reference into all other pertinent county plans and documents, including the Flathead County Subdivision Regulations and the Flathead County Capital Improvement Plan.

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## **Chapter 1: Mission, Vision, and Goals**

### **Mission**

The Flathead County PATHS Advisory Committee will update the comprehensive Trails Plan for Flathead County.

### **Vision**

Safe and convenient networks of multi-use trails connecting Flathead County communities, schools, parks and public lands for the benefit of our families, our economy and our environment.

### **Goals**

1. Continue to plan, build, and maintain a network of pathways and routes that facilitate connections to residential areas, schools, parks, recreation areas, public lands, and permitted private lands.
2. Establish an effective administrative framework for new and established trail systems that ensures proper maintenance and funding by incorporating private, public and community partnerships over the next 20 years.
3. Enhance safety of new and existing trail networks through planning, design, and education.
4. Ensure cooperative efforts of all user groups and entities for the realization of four-season opportunities for motorized and non-motorized users on public and permitted private lands.
5. Create an all-inclusive mapping system for trail users and provide collective spaces where trail information, conditions, and maintenance can be accessed and used as an economic tool to assist in the marketing of the Flathead Valley as an outdoor recreation destination.

## Chapter 2: Trail Network

### Trail Network Components

This plan outlines and proposes an interconnected network of multi-use trails throughout the county for safety, transportation, recreation, health and other purposes. Rather than describing the trails system in terms of specific facilities, this plan designates each existing and proposed trail in terms of its primary function as an arterial trail, connector trail or recreational trail.

*Arterial trails* provide direct commuter routes between major communities. *Connector trails* provide safe, transportation routes linking common destinations within and between communities and serve as collectors for arterial trails. *Recreational trails* respond to the needs of communities throughout the county for recreational amenities.

Specific trail types are not proposed in this plan because the recommendation is dependent on circumstances that change over time, such as traffic congestion, demand, site constraints and available funding, including the contributed resources of future trail proponents. The most appropriate and feasible trail type for different locations and situations will be determined based upon specific site evaluation and planning. This statement is particularly pertinent to arterial trail routes located along roads. While it is preferred to construct pathways along all arterial trail routes wherever feasible, circumstances may dictate that a shared roadway will have to suffice for many years until demand and funding allow for road reconstruction and/or trail development.

**Arterial Trails** - Arterial trails provide direct commuter routes between Flathead County's major communities, Glacier National Park and Flathead Lake. They feed traffic to and collect it from the rest of the countywide trail network and should be constructed to a high standard. Ideally, these trails will be located along a separate easement(s) such as along a watercourse, rail line, ridgeline, or utility right-of-way. However, given limited opportunity, most will be located on or along county roads and state highways. For safety and optimal user experience, grade-separated pathways are the preferred facility for arterial trails, particularly alongside high-speed, high-volume motorized traffic.

**Connector Trails** - Connector trails provide safe, transportation routes linking common destinations within and between communities and serve as collectors for arterial trails. These trails should provide routes between higher density residential areas and schools, business and commercial centers, parks, cultural attractions and public lands. When a proposed trail is located within an adopted Neighborhood Plan area this Trail Plan's recommendations should be augmented by more-detailed Neighborhood Plan recommendations based upon identified needs for local trail connections between residential areas, existing connector and/or arterial trails, and community facilities. Most connector trails will be located near communities where there is local demand for an enhanced user experience and available rights-of-way. Connector trails will likely differ depending on user type. Pedestrians may use sidewalks while bicyclists may use a shared roadway.

**Recreational Trails** - Recreational trails primarily provide recreation destinations rather than transportation corridors. Recreational trails respond to the needs of communities throughout the county for recreational amenities.

Recreational trails may be located on private, municipal, county, state, and/or federal lands. These trails may be aligned through parks, forests and open lands, along streams, rivers, and the perimeter of lakes within the county. For purposes of continuity and/or expediency, proposed recreational

trail routes may make use of existing backcountry roads or old logging roads. A prime example of this is the Foy's-to-Blacktail Trail linking Foy's Lake and Herron Park with the Blacktail Mountain Ski Area via a series of existing backcountry roads and backcountry trails primarily on the National Forest and lands currently owned by Weyerhaeuser and F.H. Stoltze. Effected private landowners restrict this trail to non-motorized users.

Water Trails are recreational trails that incorporate the idea of a linked system of access points, picnic sites and camping areas connecting the parks, lakes, rivers and streams of the county. Formal establishment of water trails will likely require shared interest and cooperative efforts between the county and other state and federal agencies. The distinction between recreational and commuter trails is not absolute. Recreational trails may serve a transportation function for some users, just as there will be a recreational component to the use of arterial and connector trails.

### **Existing Trail Network**

The existing trails map accompanying this plan depicts the existing trails located throughout Flathead County and is organized by trail network component type (arterial, connector, and recreational trails). This map will only be accurate until new trails are built. The interactive map produced as a result of this plan can be used in the future as an existing trail network plan as it will be updated as new trails in Flathead County are built.

### **Future Trail Network**

The future trails map accompanying this plan (Appendix M) depicts the proposed routes for the major network components – arterial, connector and recreational trails. Consistent with goals and policies of this Trails Plan, the map depicts a long-term vision for an integrated countywide trail network. Its realization will occur incrementally as trail user demographics and their demands change, roads are constructed or rebuilt, land is developed, and trails projects are prioritized and funded. It is hoped that this visual display of a functional countywide trail system will help energize trails proponents from all sectors of society to work with the county trails program in realizing the vision. This future trails map is used in conjunction with the Subdivision Regulations to ensure easements are dedicated during subdivision review.

### **Trails and Trail Types**

**Trail** - Used in a broad sense referring to multi-use routes. It also is used to describe routes along shared roadways where bicyclists and pedestrians are directed and accommodated.

**Pathways** - Pathways (also called “shared use pathways”, “multi-use pathways”, or “grade-separated pathways”) are physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by boulevards, open space, and/or a barrier, and have minimal cross-traffic. They can be located either inside a road right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way or easement. Pathways offer opportunities not provided by the road system such as safe and direct commuter routes that preclude motor vehicles. They also may be designed to circumvent obstacles, provide recreation in a natural setting and provide for connection of community features.

**Shared Roadways** - Most bicycle travel in the United States occurs on roads shared with motor vehicles. Montana statutes (MCA 61-8-602 through 608) make bicyclists legitimate road users and define requirements of bicyclists using roadways. Pedestrians also will walk along roads, particularly near residential areas, when sidewalks or pathways have not been provided. Many county roads are capable of safely accommodating multi-use users in their current condition. Some

of the roadways designated as trails in this plan will need no special facilities other than signage as bike routes due to low traffic volumes and slow speeds.

**Bike Lanes** - Bike lanes are portions of roadways designated for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. They provide for more predictable movements by both bicyclists and motorists, and are utilized primarily by experienced, commuting cyclists who desire a convenient, direct route to their destinations. Bike lanes are generally established on urban arterials or collector streets where there is significant bicycle demand and where motor vehicle speeds are relatively high.

**Sidewalks** - Sidewalks are usually found in city street cross-sections along with concrete curbs and gutters. Some rural roads that pass through community commercial districts have sidewalks and larger county residential areas developed in the future may include sidewalks for internal pedestrian use. These should connect with the county's trail network. Sidewalks are only appropriate for pedestrians.

**Backcountry Trails** - Backcountry trails are recreational facilities usually located on public and sometimes private lands and often traverse forested terrain. Commonly constructed as 24–42" wide natural-surface trails, these trails are attractive to a multitude of users.

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### **Chapter 3: Administration and Funding**

A well-defined administrative framework is necessary for successful trail program implementation. The trail network envisioned by this plan can be implemented only if a county-sanctioned entity takes lead responsibility for directing a program of planning, advocacy, fund raising, acquisition, construction, maintenance and monitoring. Dedicated staff is needed for steady program implementation, to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, to maintain assets, and to ensure trails are considered as a routine part of county planning and administration. While some communities have experienced a level of success with trail development efforts led by the private sector and supported by county departments, this method may be unreliable and insufficient for a successful county-wide program. The county government must take an active lead role in administration of a trails program in cooperation with private sector and public groups. Given the breadth of challenges presented by such an undertaking, it is advantageous to maintain existing departmental cooperation and establish new partnerships that can capitalize on the strengths and capacity of other entities.

In addition to the Board of Commissioners, the current administrative contributors to Flathead County's trails program include the Flathead County Parks and Recreation, Road and Bridge, Planning and Zoning, and the Flathead County Grant Administrator. These departments are crucial to the implementation of county policies developed to ensure efficient trail selection, monitoring, public involvement, funding and maintenance.

**Parks and Recreation Department** - The Parks and Recreation Department currently oversees park acquisition and development and has an inventory of over 80 parks. The Department currently monitors the status of Flathead County owned/sponsored parks and trails and has been involved in trail selection during Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) projects. The department works closely with the Flathead County Weed Control District and the Flathead County Road and Bridge Department to ensure maintenance-related activities are completed, as needed. With the implementation of this updated plan, the Department may be more involved with administrative responsibilities of trail development and the Flathead County Parks Board and PATHS Advisory Committee should be more involved with trail prioritization and public involvement.

**Road and Bridge Department** - The Road and Bridge Department has historically been tasked primarily with maintenance-related projects. Input in trail selection of CTEP projects by the department has historically been sought to assess the technical side of trail development and their involvement should continue in the future. The Road and Bridge Department performs/contracts out maintenance responsibilities for existing trails (i.e. snow plowing, pavement patching, etc.) and should be involved with the Parks and Recreation Department in maintaining an inventory of the status of existing trails and maintenance responsibilities.

**Planning and Zoning Department** - The primary responsibilities of the Flathead County Planning and Zoning Department have historically involved enforcement of trail-related policies during subdivision review and implementation of the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP). As the CTEP program has been phased out and replaced by the Transportation Alternatives (TA) grant program, these administrative duties will likely shift to the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department with assistance from the Flathead County Grant Administrator. The Planning and Zoning Department will continue to administer subdivision

regulations relating to easement acquisition for trails and can assist, as needed, with research and planning.

**Flathead County Grant Administrator** - This grant writing position within the Flathead County Commissioners' Department is responsible for assembling grant applications for County-initiated projects. While the Grant Administrator has not historically been involved in trail administration, the recent changes in state/federal funding towards competitive grant applications rather than yearly designated funds could require more assistance in future trail development grant applications. The County Grant Administrator could also assist in researching other funding sources for trail development and maintenance as they become available.

In addition to county departments and employees, the following entities are crucial to administering a comprehensive trail program:

**PATHS Advisory Committee** - The PATHS Advisory Committee was originally convened to develop a Trails Plan under guidance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance Program with a committee lifetime limited to a couple of years. It may be beneficial to expand the scope of PATHS to be charged with various trails-related tasks such as assisting in prioritization of trail development; actively networking with members of the public and private sectors to establish trail development opportunities; actively networking with members of the general public to raise money for maintenance purposes and 'matching funds' for grants; providing trail-related comment as applicable in the subdivision review process to promote implementation of the Trails Plan; encouraging county planning and capital improvement efforts appropriately consider trails; assisting with fundraising efforts by writing or reviewing grants; and generally advocating for development of the trails system.

**Non-Profit Organizations** - Private sector organizations have been instrumental in implementing the county's trails program to date. In Flathead County and other Montana communities, land trusts, service organizations and recreation clubs have spearheaded efforts to develop trails and to organize volunteers to adopt trail segments, hold clean-up events, and rebuild degraded sections. These organizations can provide the necessary passion to build community support, raise money, develop momentum, and lead projects.

In the event a private sector organization or individual wishes to contribute to the trails program through volunteer trail construction within public easements/right-of-ways, the organization should discuss the scope and methods of the anticipated efforts with the PATHS Committee and obtain formal written consent from the Parks Board prior to commencing proposed activities. Trail construction is expected to meet applicable technical specifications where appropriate, particularly with those requirements mandated by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

### **Recommended Administrative Structure**

Historically, county trail development has not been pursued in an organized manner regarding administration, implementation and maintenance. Existing county trails have generally been developed in response to pressure from local interest groups, funding source and departmental interests. Public opinion surveys conducted for this plan clearly indicate the public's interest in an effective and expanded trails network; implying the need to expand and improve the county's trail program. It is recommended the Board of Commissioners clearly delegate and fund one county board or department to manage the county's trail program to ensure efficient, proactive progress towards trails program administration and implementation.

The Parks Board appears best situated for the role of primary administrator and implementer of the county's trails program in terms of mission compatibility and customers served, as the Board oversees both the Parks and Recreation Department and PATHS Advisory Committee. The management of trails by the Parks Board is implicitly implied by the Growth Policy and the Parks and Recreation Department is knowledgeable of multiple recreation needs of the diverse recreational users. The Department has undertaken planning, outreach and education efforts on behalf of parks. As trails are essentially linear parks, it is a natural fit for trail management to be handled by the County Parks and Recreation Department.

If delegated by the Commission, the Parks Board should generally coordinate all aspects of the trails program, oversee the PATHS Advisory Committee and act as liaison with associated county departments, private and public partners, and volunteers. Adequate funding resources should be appropriately directed to involved departments based commensurately upon actual work efforts resulting from the additional trails program responsibilities. Departmental requests for funding should be based upon annual trails project prioritization by the Parks Board.

The PATHS Advisory Committee is recommended to be a long-term advisory committee to the Parks Board, appropriately staffed by volunteers appointed by the Parks Board by volunteers, including individuals from broad user groups, Forest Service, DNRC, outdoor/health-related government organizations, community groups, and involved county department employees. PATHS would be charged with the tasks described above and any others deemed necessary by the Parks Board in implementing the trails program.

### **Trail Selection Criteria**

As previously noted, a comprehensive trail program requires clear direction on where and what types of trails should be developed. The vision and goals outlined in Chapter 1 were established via multiple meetings during this Trails Plan update, and input from the public was gathered during the public meeting held in March 2018. These goals should be utilized by trail developers- public and private- in prioritizing trail projects. Specifically, a prioritization and ranking system should be developed by the PATHS Advisory Committee and/or the Parks Board. A prioritization and ranking system will ensure the trails needing the most attention receive maintenance (see Appendix G).

### **Funding**

Providing funding for county departments charged with implementing and maintaining the trails program is necessary in order for the work to be prioritized and accomplished. The primary source of funding for trail development and maintenance of county sponsored trails will likely come from grants and private fundraising via local community groups. Pending widespread public support for the trails program, taxpayer funding may be a future option. The following are potential sources of funding that the county should seek, as multiple sources of funding may be needed to meet the project needs.

**Grants and Reimbursement Programs** – Appendix F lists many public and private sources of grants for trail development. Two commonly used funding sources in Montana are the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Transportation Alternatives (TA), both part of the Federal Aid Highway Program and administered by the State. Reimbursement programs and most grants are appropriate for trail development projects and could be sought for some maintenance projects.

**Fundraising by Non-Profit and Community Groups** – Community groups and non-profit partners may take responsibility for trail program fundraising efforts and to build community

support for specific projects. Tools could include selling memberships, holding fundraising events, writing grants, and soliciting donors for a maintenance endowment fund. These funds will likely be required as “matching funds” for grants and reimbursement programs that cover the entire cost of a trail project.

**In-Kind Donations** – Individuals, organizations and businesses sometimes are willing to donate land, labor, equipment or materials to community projects, such as trail construction. These donations often can be used as part of the required match for grants or reimbursement programs.

**Taxes** – A property mill tax levy could be used to create a long-term funding source for maintenance and operations. Since the county has reached its mill levy ceiling, a general election vote would be necessary to approve an increase in property taxes. A special improvement district or park maintenance district could be established to tax residents in defined neighborhoods serviced by trails. Under certain circumstances, these districts can be established and activated as taxing entities when trail maintenance funding is needed. Other types of taxes that have been used elsewhere for this purpose include impact fees, real estate transfer taxes, resort taxes and local option taxes on vehicle registrations.

**Bond Initiative** - County Commissioners can ask electors to approve a bond for trail development if the ceiling on bonded indebtedness has not been reached. Bonds allow communities to borrow money which they often pay back over time through property taxes. Bond money can be used only to acquire lands and construct projects, not to maintain or manage them.

**Other Sources** - Under certain circumstances, and if the Parks Board so decides, excess park land may be sold and used as the Parks Board deems appropriate. In accordance with 76-3-621, MCA, it may be more advantageous in some situations to accept cash-in-lieu funds rather than land due to parkland dedication requirements. While some of these funds may be used to support elements of the trails program, these monies are not dedicated to such use.



## Chapter 4: Maintenance and Safety

### Trail Maintenance

As discussed in the introduction of this plan, there are numerous benefits of having a well-connected trail network, but these benefits are only reaped if the trails are maintained. A comprehensive trail maintenance plan depends on addressing needs of existing trails and establishing policies for how future trails will be maintained. Flathead County is more likely to sponsor trails with solid maintenance provisions outlined at the beginning of the trail development process. Understanding different trail types and the maintenance requirements of each type of trail is crucial to formulating policies to implement coordinated maintenance efforts.

### Maintenance Types

There are two types of maintenance: routine and non-routine activities. Routine maintenance includes activities that are conducted on a scheduled and consistent basis and include activities such as sweeping, mowing, snow removal, and weed management. Non-routine maintenance consists of activities that may or may not be scheduled and are typically required only once or a few times during the life-cycle of a trail. These maintenance items include activities such as pavement preservation, culvert replacement, and sign repair and replacement.

**Table 1: Maintenance Checklist Compiled from Other Community Plans**

<i>Routine (Scheduled) Maintenance Tasks</i>				
Task	Notes	Frequency	Man-hours (per 1000 lft)	Source
Trail Inspection	Walking	Monthly	.2 hr	1
	Driving	Monthly	.1 hr	1
	Surface Investigation	Yearly	NA	2
		2X Monthly	NA	4
Mowing	Hard Surfaces	3X Annually	.5 hr	1
	Natural Trails	Monthly	.25 hr	1
	--	2X Monthly	NA	3
Tree & Brush Pruning	--	2X Annually	.5 hr	1
	--	4X Annually	NA	3
Leaf & Debris Removal	--	1X Annually	.25 hr	1
	--	4X Annually	NA	3
Surface Cleaning	Asphalt Trail	Monthly	NA	3
<i>Planned (Scheduled) Maintenance Tasks</i>				
Task	Notes	Frequency	Man-hours (per 1000 lft)	Source
Painting and Repair of Amenities	--	Every 5 years	NA	2
Sealcoat Asphalt Trails	--	Every 5 years	NA	2
Resurface/regrade/restripe Trail	--	Every 10 years	NA	2
Replace/reconstruct Trail	--	Every 20 years	NA	2
<i>Irregular (As-Needed) Maintenance Tasks</i>				
Task	Notes	Frequency	Man-hours (per 1000 lft)	Source
Snow & Ice Removal	--	As Needed	.5 hr	1
	--	As Needed	NA	3
Clean and Replacement of Culverts	Cleaning	As Needed	1 hr	1
	Repair	As Needed	1.5 hr	1
	Cleaning	As Needed	NA	3
Maintenance of Water Crossings	--	As Needed	1 hr	1
Repairs to Signs & Other Amenities	--	As Needed	.5 hr	1
	Pavement Markings	As Needed	NA	3
	Trailheads	As Needed	NA	3
Repaving/Sealing of Asphalt Trail	Asphalt Trail	As Needed	NA	3
Pothole Repair	--	As Needed	NA	3

- Sources: 1. Fairfax County Authority Guide to Trail Management  
 2. Iowa Trails 2000  
 3. Rail-Trail Maintenance & Operation  
 4. Bozeman Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan

The above table comes from the Trail Asset Management Plan created for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County in 2011. The table notes the best practices for trail maintenance for different trail types. It should be noted that these practices are ideal for trail maintenance and actual practices will be determined by site-specific needs.

Currently the 21.75 miles of County-maintained trails are taken care of by the Flathead County Road and Bridge Department and the Flathead County Weeds, Parks, and Recreation Department. Some activities, such as snow removal around schools, are contracted out by the Road and Bridge Department to ensure consistent and timely completion and costs are negotiated each year.

### **Maintenance Costs / Equipment**

As the diagram above suggests, older trails will need increasing maintenance/repair work while newer trails likely won't need significant repair for many years. More than half of the trail system, 11.5 miles, is over 10 years old and may soon be subject to costly repair work. According to national and state research, maintenance costs range from \$1,006 per mile for non-asphalt surface trails to \$1,971 per mile for asphalt trails (Rails-to-Trails, 2015). As would be expected, maintenance on natural surface trails is usually less expensive and volunteers can provide a level of skill required to maintain these types of trails. Because the majority of the county-maintained trails are hard surfaced, this plan will focus on maintaining these types of trails. Below is a breakdown of estimates of each maintenance activity (*MDT Shared Use Paths Inventory and Detailed Maintenance Plan, 2015*) for an average hard surface trail:

General maintenance costs include:

- Mowing (5' on each side) - \$40 per mile
- Sweeping and cleaning - \$85 per mile
- Snow removal - \$85-\$95 per mile\*
- Cleaning drainage structures - \$51 per mile
- Weed control - \$87 per mile\*\*

Pavement preservation costs include:

- Minor crack sealing - \$1,600 per mile, to be scheduled every 4 years
- Major crack sealing - \$4,800 per mile, as needed
- Hand patching - \$300 per mile, as needed
- Machine patching - \$3,075 per mile, as needed
- Fog sealing - \$1,100 per mile, to be scheduled every 8 years
- Surfacing overlay - \$29,500 per mile, to be scheduled every 25 years

\*Actual figure from 2015-2017 service contracts with Flathead County Road and Bridge Department

\*\*Based on weed control along trails in Yellowstone County/City of Billings (Trail Asset Management Plan, 2011)

While these figures do not include the cost of equipment, most equipment (e.g. vehicles, sweepers, etc.) is available within the County's resources. Chemicals, spray equipment including trucks, can be provided by the Weed/Parks/Recreation Department. Large equipment, trucks, front end loaders and asphalt can be provided by the Road & Bridge Department.

## **Maintenance Administration**

### **Local Government**

Administering maintenance activities must involve active cooperation between Flathead County and local groups. It is critical that there is clear communication from the beginning about the responsibilities of each entity. Spearheading the maintenance program should fall on the shoulders of the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department. As noted above, the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department, Road and Bridge Department, Planning and Zoning all work together to administer the trails plan, including the maintenance responsibilities. The Parks and Recreation Department should establish a point of contact who will coordinate trail related responsibilities of the other county departments.

In addition to coordinating general interdepartmental maintenance efforts, the Parks and Recreation Department should regularly perform comprehensive inventory of conditions of county trails. These inventory efforts can be done by local engineering firms or done in house, depending on availability of funds. Each trail should be evaluated uniformly based on standard trail rating methodologies, such as the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) for paved trails or Trails Assessment and Condition Survey (TRACS) for soft surface trails. These inventories should be conducted routinely, usually every few years, and should be completed around the same time each year. Notes on reoccurring issues, such as ponding, erosion, or debris, should be noted as well.

Information collected by the trails inventory should be compiled to create a maintenance prioritization list to be established as part of the county's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This prioritization list should be informed based on data collected from the trails inventory, general pavement preservation timelines, and use by the general public. After maintenance priorities have been established, cost estimates should be developed and a detailed project sheet completed for inclusion in the plan. While the CIP is a planning document established for planning capital expenses over a 5-year period, each maintenance item should be reviewed yearly by the Parks and Recreation Department and Road and Bridge Department to update the maintenance timeline, if needed. In addition to the CIP, major maintenance projects should be included in the yearly Strategic Plan and budget of the Parks and Recreation Department and Road and Bridge Departments.

Inclusion of maintenance work in the CIP should not preclude actively seeking grants for maintenance work. Although most grant programs offer funding for trail construction only, state and federal agencies have begun to acknowledge the need for grant funding for maintenance work. As major maintenance projects are scheduled, Flathead County should apply for grant funding for major maintenance projects. Because most grants require preliminary engineering and cost estimates to be furnished at the time of application, it is important that funding opportunities and application timelines are regularly tracked.

### **Local Trails Groups/Non-Profit Organizations**

Ongoing trail maintenance is a major endeavor, and because of this, Flathead County relies on support from local trail groups to assist with the maintenance obstacle. When any new trail that is accepted and maintained by Flathead County is constructed, a maintenance agreement is entered into with the local sponsor who is required to raise a portion of maintenance costs to be used by the county for future maintenance work. These funds are maintained in separate trail accounts to be used for maintenance of that trail only. The purpose of the project maintenance fund is to generate revenue off the principal amount for routine maintenance of the project and for the

principal to be available as needed over time for larger trail expenditures. An example of the trail maintenance agreement is located in Appendix I.

An alternative or supplement to the seed fund required as part of the maintenance agreement could be to establish an endowment fund that will generate on-going revenue at a rate likely higher than that accrued in the Flathead County accounts.

As more trails are developed and the maintenance cost per trail mile continues to increase, the county will likely recognize the advantages of using volunteers to assist with maintenance activities. Volunteer programs can increase awareness of trails, create a sense of community pride, and provide skills needed for maintaining quality trails. To date, the use of volunteers has been limited due to perceived risks of allowing volunteers to work on behalf of the county. While some trail maintenance activities are clearly more hazardous in nature than others, some activities, such as sweeping, removing debris, collecting trash and animal waste would appear to be appropriate activities for volunteers. Trails routinely cleared of trash and obstructions are more likely to be used and enjoyed.

Because of the value of volunteers, it is strongly encouraged that the county adopt a program that address the obstacles and liabilities that are inherently associated with volunteer work. A uniform training program with standards that volunteer groups can adhere to will provide guidance for community groups and reduce risks assumed by the county. This program should incorporate an element of training, planning, and liability coverage requirements. Because even minor trail maintenance work can include unforeseen hazards, each volunteer should be trained on how to do the work, what specific risks are involved with each activity, and what protective measures need to be taken to avoid accidents. In addition to training, volunteers should be associated with a group that has a detailed plan of the work to be done. Not only does a plan ensure volunteers understand what work they need to do, but it also provides the county with an understanding of what will be done and prevents unnecessary work that does not further the goals of the county trails plan. Finally, each organization needs a clear understanding of the insurance requirements that must be obtained before volunteers can work on behalf of Flathead County.

Trail maintenance is a multifaceted effort that involves cooperation between departments within the county and between the county and local trails groups/non-profit organizations. Because of the sheer number of individuals included in the trail maintenance administration, it is also strongly suggested that the Trails Coordinator position is created within the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department. In addition to assisting communities in planning, researching and obtaining funding, and coordinating construction of new trails, the Trail Coordinator can administer maintenance agreements, maintain trail condition inventories, coordinate work between county departments, develop a comprehensive volunteer training program, and apply for funding for major maintenance work. Ensuring that the county has a designated point-of-contact for all trail-related development and maintenance responsibilities will increase the likelihood that the trails that are constructed are adequately maintained.

## **Trail Safety**

Just as trail maintenance is an ongoing effort, ensuring trails are designed and used in a safe manner is an ongoing effort. Because proper use and safety is a goal supported by this plan, it is important that proposed trails adhere to standards for construction. Trail design depends on a number of factors, including proximity to urban centers, anticipated use, and the local environment; thus, a one-size-fits-all design is not appropriate. However, all trails should adhere to sound engineering

principles and industry standards no matter what type of trail is designed (i.e. urban/suburban, rural, or primitive trail).

The standard for multi-use urban/suburban trails should roughly follow the guidelines established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials', Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO Bike Guide, 1999). The AASHTO Bike Guide is recommended as minimum guidelines for bicycle transportation facilities and shared use paths, but not for bicycle trails intended for rough terrain mountain bike use. In addition, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities (AASHTO Pedestrian Guide, 2004) is recommended as minimum guidelines for the construction and design of sidewalks and street crossings, and may be appropriate for pedestrian trails serving a transportation purpose. More rural trails, including those found on state and federal lands will likely have specific design standards such as the Standard Specification for Construction of Trails and Trail Bridges on Forest Service Projects established by the US Forest Service. Most trails developed by the county in conjunction with local sponsor groups are constructed using state or federal funding which requires compliance with accepted engineering standards. Private individuals or subdivision HOAs who construct trails open to the public should be strongly encouraged to have the trail designed by a certified engineer to avoid trails that do not meet the connectivity and safety goals promoted by this plan. All proposed multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails should incorporate ADA standards.

Proper use and trail etiquette is another crucial component that must be addressed to ensure trail safety. The trails survey conducted between February - June 2018 showed that 21% of trail users experienced a conflict or problem on a trail in Flathead County. While clearly not the majority of trail users, problems among different users can be overcome through appropriate trail design and educational programs designed to promote responsible trail behavior. The Federal Highway Administration's publication on multi-use trail conflicts notes that the most common techniques for overcoming conflict include signage, education, meeting with user groups, expanding facilities, police or ranger patrols, enforcement of regulations, brochures or articles in local newspapers, speed limits, volunteer trail patrols, partial closings, and bicycle bell giveaway.

While trail etiquette is ultimately the responsibility of all trail users, an active program geared towards schools, outdoor recreational groups, and park users *as well as safety-related signage* could impact perceptions of different users and behaviors on trails. As a component of trail safety, it should be a primary responsibility of the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department to oversee such a program.

## **Chapter 5: Comprehensive Map**

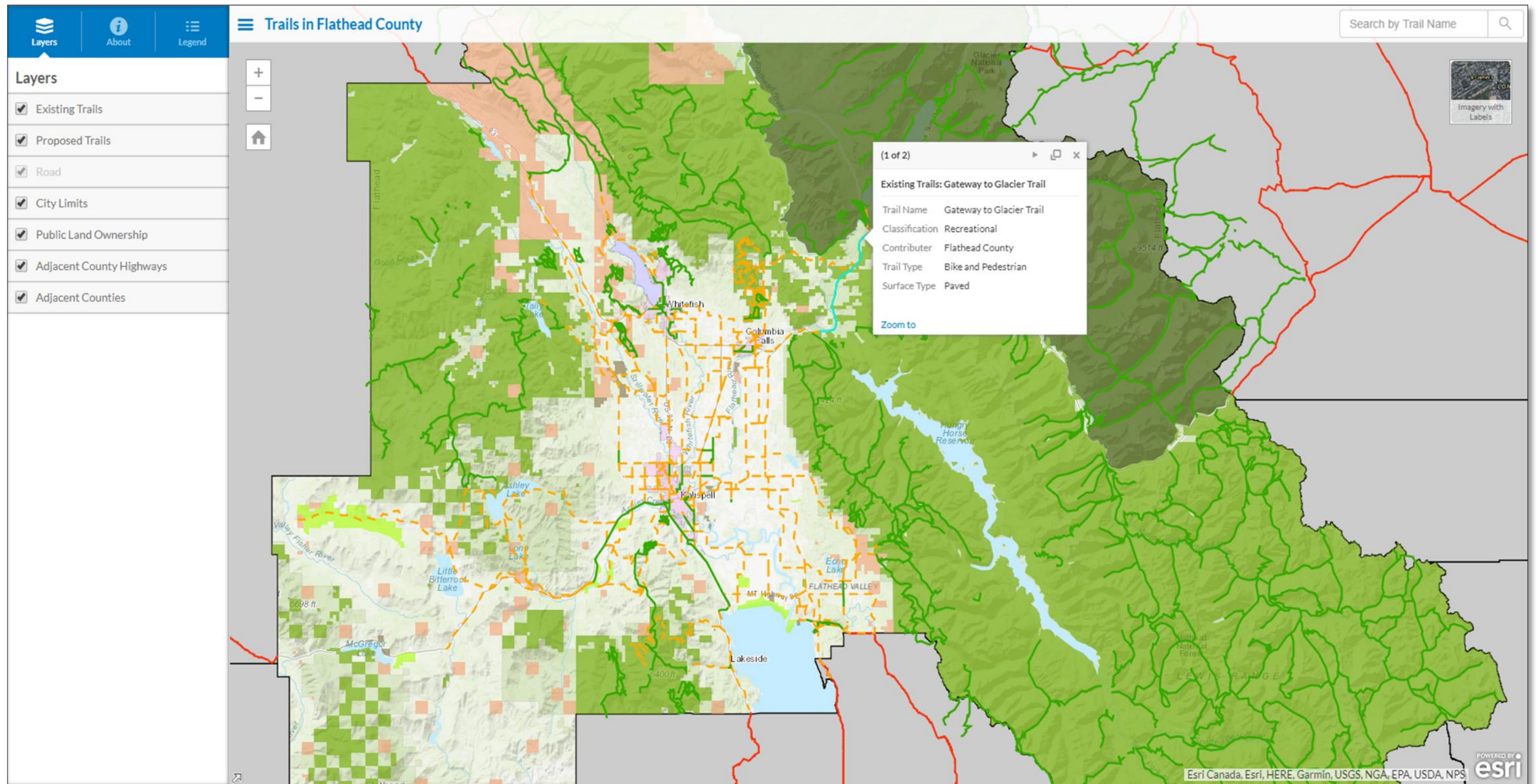
Goal #5 outlined in Chapter 1 discusses the need to, “Create an all-inclusive mapping system for trail users and provide collective spaces where trail information, conditions, and maintenance can be accessed and used as an economic tool to assist in the marketing of the Flathead Valley as an outdoor recreation destination.” During the updating of this plan, the PATHS Committee worked with the Flathead County Geographic Information System (GIS) Department to establish an interactive mapping system that illustrates all existing official trails in Flathead County. At minimum, each trail has information regarding trail classification (arterial, collector, recreational), trail type (allowed use), and surface type. Moving forward, the GIS Department will require these attributes for new trail information as it is added to the GIS database. Still keeping in mind the need for an inclusive countywide map of trails, the PATHS Committee worked with the Flathead County GIS Department to ensure at least three attributes were available for each trail.

The map also shows the proposed trail network (see Figure 1). While this is largely in existence for the establishment of easements as properties go through the subdivision review process, this proposed trail network layer also serves as a way for citizens to see where trail building interest is located within Flathead County.

While it would be ideal to have the map updated to include up-to-the-minute trail closure/maintenance information, the existing budget and plan timeline precluded this from happening. To ensure this interactive map is kept up-to-date, a representative from the Flathead County Parks Department or the PATHS Advisory Committee should be established as a liaison between agencies developing new trails and the Flathead County GIS Department.



Figure 1: Trail Interactive Mapping System



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## Chapter 6: Implementation

The following list cites the actions needed to implement the goals listed in Chapter 1 and discussed in the later chapters. Each item has been taken from the chapter referenced at the end of each element.

1. It is recommended the Commission clearly delegate and fund one county board or department to administer the county's trail program to ensure efficient, proactive progress towards trails program administration and implementation. The Parks Board appears best situated for the role of primary administrator and implementer of the county's trails program in terms of mission compatibility and customers served, as the Board oversees both the Parks and Recreation Department and PATHS Advisory Committee. **(Chapter 2)**
2. The PATHS advisory committee is recommended to be a long-term advisory committee to the Parks Board, appropriately staffed by volunteers appointed by the Board by volunteers, including individuals from broad user groups, Forest Service, DNRC, outdoor/health-related government organizations, community groups, and involved county department employees. **(Chapter 2)**
3. As previously noted, a comprehensive trail program requires clear direction on where and what type of trails should be developed. The vision and goals outlined in Chapter 1 were established via multiple meetings during this Trails Plan update and input from the public was gathered during the public meeting held in March 2018. These goals should be utilized by trail developers- public and private- in prioritizing trail projects. Specifically, a prioritization and ranking system should be developed by the PATHS advisory committee and/or the Parks Board. **(Chapter 3)**
4. Because of the value of volunteers, it is strongly encouraged that the county adopt a volunteer program that address the obstacles and liabilities that are inherently associated with volunteer work. A uniform training program with standards that volunteer groups can adhere to can provide guidance for community groups and reduce risks assumed by the county. **(Chapter 3)**
5. In addition to coordinating general interdepartmental maintenance efforts, the Parks and Recreation Department should regularly perform comprehensive inventory of conditions of county trails. These inventory efforts can be done by local engineering firms or done "in house", depending on availability of funds. Each trail should be evaluated uniformly based on standard trail rating methodologies such as the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) for paved trails or Trails Assessment and Condition Survey (TRACS) for soft surface trails. These inventories should be conducted routinely, usually every few years, and should be completed around the same time each year. **(Chapter 3)**
6. Information collected by the trails inventory should be compiled to create a maintenance prioritization list to be established as part of the county's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This prioritization list should be informed based on data collected from the trails inventory, general pavement preservation timelines, and use by the general public. **(Chapter 3)**
7. As major maintenance projects are scheduled, Flathead County should apply for grant funding for major maintenance projects. **(Chapter 3)**

8. When any new trail that is accepted and maintained by Flathead County is constructed, a maintenance agreement should be entered into by the local sponsor who will be required to raise a portion of maintenance costs to be used by the county for future maintenance work. **(Chapter 3)**
9. Because of the sheer number of individuals included in the trail maintenance administration, it is also strongly suggested that a Trails Coordinator position is created within the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department. **(Chapter 3)**
10. While trail etiquette is ultimately the responsibility of trail users, an active program geared towards schools, outdoor recreational groups, and park users as well as safety-related signage could impact perceptions of different users and behaviors on trails. As a component of trail safety, it should be a primary responsibility of the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department to oversee such a program. **(Chapter 3)**
11. Trail design depends on a number of factors, including proximity to urban centers, anticipated use, and the local environment and thus one-size-fits-all design is not appropriate. However, all trails should adhere to sound engineering principles and industry standards no matter what type of trail is designed (i.e. urban/suburban, rural, or primitive trail). **(Chapter 4)**
12. To ensure this interactive map is kept up to date, a representative from the Flathead County Parks Department or the PATHS committee should be established as a liaison between agencies developing new trails and the Flathead County GIS Department. **(Chapter 5)**

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Participant Biographies
- Appendix B: Public Input Survey
- Appendix C: Survey Findings Summary
- Appendix D: Survey Results
- Appendix E: Trail Development Checklist
- Appendix F: Grants and Reimbursement Programs
- Appendix G: Trail Evaluation Form
- Appendix H: Parks Board Meeting Item Request Form
- Appendix I: Sample Trail Maintenance Agreement
- Appendix J: Trail Etiquette
- Appendix K: Trail Specifications
- Appendix L: Trails Coordinator Job Description
- Appendix M: Proposed Trail Network

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## **Appendix A: Participant Biographies**

### **Flathead National Forest**

In the heart of the Rocky Mountains, west of the continental divide and just south of the Canadian border, lies the 2.4 million acre Flathead National Forest. Home to lynx, grizzly bear, and bull trout; with numerous lakes, streams, and rivers to enjoy, the forest is the premiere destination for visitors looking to experience natural landscapes of the American West. Visit one of the three wilderness areas, such as the famous Bob Marshall Wilderness, for a rare glimpse at undeveloped areas with outstanding opportunities for solitude. Celebrated for its water, wildlife, and wilderness the Flathead National Forest has abundant recreation opportunities and outstanding natural resources with 2000 miles of trails!

### **Glacier National Park**

The National Park Service preserves the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

### **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

Montana is a place where people have abundant opportunities to connect with the world-renowned fish, wildlife, and State park resources that define our state, and where a responsive and relevant Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) agency has the resiliency and public support it needs to lead the way in making sure these resources remain an essential part of Montana's culture, economy, and high quality of life. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission and board, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks, and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations. The State Parks Division of FWP administers the Recreational Trails Grant Program, the Snowmobile Trail Grooming Program, and Off Highway Vehicle Trail Program.

### **City of Kalispell**

The city of Kalispell is the commercial and governmental center of the Flathead Valley with a diverse economy, robust employment, and vibrant neighborhoods offering a variety of housing options; where community history and culture are celebrated, parks are abundant and well-maintained, greenways and trails connect the community, and public services provide for the needs of residents and visitors alike, while looking forward to future growth.

### **City of Whitefish**

The City of Whitefish strives to have a connected and continuous network of well-maintained, shared use paths, urban trails, bike lanes, signed bike routes and sidewalks between residential areas, schools, parks and downtown that are safe, convenient and comfortable for locals and visitors to use for both recreation and active transportation. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has been working since 2000 to promote continued development of pedestrian and bicycle trails, pursuant to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan including the Whitefish River Trail. Additionally, the City has worked collaboratively in partnership with Whitefish Legacy Partners in the development of the Whitefish Trail.

### **Kalispell Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitor Bureau**

The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitor Bureau's strategic initiatives are to promote an active and vibrant community, grow Kalispell as a regional trade center, improve the area's infrastructure, and accelerate non-resident tourism growth. A cohesive trail system that is well maintained and mapped is a significant component of the outdoor recreation offerings that attract visitors to the county, many of which become residents. The Kalispell COC/CVB is pleased to be part of the PATHS Advisory Committee to assist with updating the Flathead County Trails Plan.

### **Rotary Club of Bigfork**

The Rotary Club of Bigfork is interested in developing funding mechanisms to fund maintenance of existing and future non-motorized trails in and around Bigfork. Some areas of interest include unfinished sections of Swan River Road, from Highway 83 south to Highway 209, Highway 83 from Swan River Road west to Highway 93 and south to Bigfork, and the Bigfork Trail Network along the lower section of the Swan River.

### **The Flathead Land Trust**

The Flathead Land Trust is dedicated to the conservation of northwest Montana's land and water legacy primarily through voluntary agreements with private landowners. Some properties we help conserve in perpetuity include public trails and we work to help expand recreational opportunities where appropriate. We are happy to contribute our knowledge and expertise as part the PATHS Trail Plan Update working group to develop a community vision for a robust and successful countywide trail system.

### **Montana Conservation Corp**

Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) is a 27 year-old private non-profit, of which the Northern Rockies regional office is in Kalispell. The mission of the MCC is to "Inspire young people through hands-on conservation service to be leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens who improve their communities". The MCC strives to be a reliable, effective resource for federal, state, county and municipal land managers as they stretch budgets, and their work forces, to address the ongoing and backlog maintenance of their infrastructures.

### **Flathead Snowmobile Association**

The Flathead Snowmobile Association (FSA) is a membership of snowmobilers and outdoor enthusiasts, who endeavor to educate the public about the sport of snowmobiling, enhance the riding experience in our area, promote safety, and provide opportunities for family recreation. The FSA works closely with the Montana Snowmobile Association (MSA) and other clubs around the state to promote winter recreation. Virtually all of our trails are multi-use trails used by cross-country skiers, fat-tire bikers, tracked ATVs, etc. We have worked extremely hard to secure access to 200 miles of groomed trails and thousands of acres of public lands. We work with the US Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana DNRC, Flathead County, and private landowners such as Weyerhaeuser, Stoltz and others.

### **Northwest Montana Back Country Horsemen**

The purpose of the Northwest Montana Back Country Horsemen is to perpetuate enjoyable common sense use of horses in the backcountry; assist government agencies in maintenance and management of the resource; and educate, encourage and solicit active public participation in wise

and sustaining use of horses and use by people commensurate with our heritage and the backcountry resource. Our Vision is to ensure stock use continues on public lands and to expose the wonders of our wilderness and wild places to the generations through fun, inspiring and thought provoking programs and partnerships; to encourage responsible horsemanship by teaching Leave No Trace principles in the backcountry. We will be able to contribute to the Trails Plan by volunteering our time to clear and repair trails, to provide pack support for MCC Crews, Forest Service crews, and other partners needing pack support. To provide education on Leave No Trace Principles, trail etiquette, packing, and defensive horse safety.

### **Lakeside Community Development Foundation**

Working on behalf of the Lakeside Community Development Foundation, a 501-3C organization, Johanna Bangeman has led the effort to connect communities along the western shore of Flathead Lake safely. Johanna served on the original PATHS Advisory Committee during the original writing of the Flathead County Trails Plan. Johanna and the Lakeside Community Development Foundation are committed to connecting communities safely which will allow visitors and residents to enjoy healthy lifestyles and bring economic benefits to the community of Lakeside.

### **Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana**

Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana is a not-for-profit organization formed of active concerned citizens committed to converting abandoned railroad beds into non-motorized recreational trails since 1988. The regular monthly meeting is the first Monday of each month in the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Building in Kalispell.

### **Whitefish Legacy Partners**

Whitefish Legacy Partners (WLP) is a non-profit organization whose community-minded vision ensures conservation, recreation and education on the lands around Whitefish for future generations. WLP works with a wide range of partners and the public at large to create and sustain high quality, year-round recreation opportunities while ensuring watershed protection, wildlife habitat connectivity, sustainable forestry, and community-based outdoor education opportunities. This work will leave a lasting legacy that will include a 55-mile natural surface loop trail around Whitefish Lake with permanent conservation, ongoing community stewardship, and continued growth of the local economy. WLP is engaged with the local communities and Flathead County as an interested party and willing partner to support trail planning, development, construction, and ongoing maintenance to provide high quality recreation, community-driven conservation, and education opportunities now and for future generations.

### **Gateway to Glacier Trail**

Gateway to Glacier Trail (G2GT) is a non-profit citizens' organization with a goal of building a safe non-motorized path from Columbia Falls to West Glacier, Montana. The citizen group came together in 2011 to advocate and raise funds for a non-motorized trail connecting to the existing Hungry Horse to Coram Trail. The group has received grants, including the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds and Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) funds, successfully negotiated easements with Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, and negotiated with the Montana Department of Transportation regarding future reconstruction of Highway 2 through Badrock Canyon to include a non-motorized trail.

### **Foy's to Blacktail Trails**

Foy's to Blacktail Trails works to provide access and long-term stewardship of the trails and lands connecting Herron Park to the forest lands at Blacktail Mountain. Our involvement with the PATHS project is to help serve other trail organizations with similar missions, to increase connectivity of the trail systems, and to help improve the trail user experience in Flathead County.

### **Glacier Nordic Club**

Glacier Nordic Club, Inc. (GNC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit established in 1984. The Glacier nordic mission is to promote and inspire a life-long love of cross-country skiing. We groom 12 kilometers of trails at the Glacier Nordic Center at the Whitefish Lake Golf Course as well as operate a rental and lesson shop there. We also groom and maintain part of the Big Mountain Nordic Trails, including a trailhead on Big Mountain Road that we co-built with Whitefish Legacy Partners. GNC offers ski education programs for ages four to adults, beginning skiers to competitive racers and has taught many Flathead Valley residents to ski. Visit [glaciernordiclub.com](http://glaciernordiclub.com) for more information, maps of our courses and daily trail reports. We can be reached at 406.862-9498 in the winter or 406.253.0361 the rest of the year.

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## Appendix B: Public Input Survey

### 2018 Flathead County Trails Survey

In order to update the Flathead County Trail Plan, we are seeking user and community input to ensure we are providing the services trail users want and need. Please take 2 - 3 minutes to fill out this survey. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

1. What is your zip code?

2. Identify your age group:

15 and under    16-25    26-35    36-45    46-55    56-65    66+

3. What is your gender?

Male                      Female                      Prefer not to answer

4. How often do you use Flathead County Trails on a monthly basis?

0            1-2            3-5            6-10            11 and higher

5. What are your primary activities on the trail? (Circle all that apply)

Walking            Hiking            Biking            Jogging/Running            Horseback Riding  
X-Country Skiing    Snowmobiling            ATV            Motorcycle            Do not use trails

6. How do you get information about trails? (Circle all that apply)

Word of Mouth    Road Side Signage    Parks Department    Recreational Shops  
Visitors Centers    Internet            Maps            Other (please specify):

7. Would you use an online interactive trail map?

Yes            No            Prefer Paper

8. In your opinion, the cleanliness of the trails are:

Excellent            Good            Fair            Poor

9. In your opinion, the maintenance of the trails are:

Excellent            Good            Fair            Poor

10. In your opinion, the trails are well signed for safety and trail rules



Excellent      Good      Fair      Poor

**11. In your opinion, parking to access the trails is:**

Excellent      Good      Fair      Poor

**12. Have you had any conflicts or problems on the trails?**

Yes      No

Comments:

**13. How should trails development and maintenance be funded? (Circle all that apply)**

Private Organizations      Public Funds      User Fees      Donations  
Volunteer Time

**14. What areas (community or general area) would you like to see new trails added in Flathead County and what type of trail would you want? (Select trail type from question 5)**

**15. Additional Comments:**

## **Appendix C: Survey Findings Summary**

### **Bike Path Expansion:**

A significant amount of community members would like to see paved bike paths connecting the three cities: Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls. Specifically, many respondents suggested a path along Whitefish Stage to connect Kalispell and Whitefish and also along Highway 40 to connect Whitefish and Columbia Falls. It was stated multiple times that this would increase the safety for those who desire to commute from city to city via bikes.

There was also a desire for bike path connections between Somers, Bigfork, and Lakeside. A few comments mentioned the idea of connecting existing isolated trails and creating a bike path around Flathead Lake.

### **Favorite Trails:**

The results of the survey found that Flathead County community members are highly appreciative of the trails in this area and would strongly support the improvement of these trails. Among the favorites are Herron Park, Pig Farm, Foys to Blacktail, Lone Pine, Rails to Trails, and the Whitefish trails. Another favorite mentioned was the Swan River trail, however, many respondents reported that they would like to see it completed and connected to surrounding areas. It is dangerous around Echo Lake because there is a blind corner near Alpine Drive.

### **Trail Maintenance:**

Many of the survey respondents reported that the Flathead County trails need better maintenance. There were several complaints about dog and horse waste. The community members would like to see increased efforts on dog and horse waste removal along with snow removal during the winter months. Some comments revealed a desire for the county to address the use of volunteer trail maintenance because there are many trail users who would be willing to help out with this issue.

Another common trend of the data demonstrated a concern for trail users that do not keep their dogs on a leash. This has created conflict with horses, other dogs, and people who do not like dogs. A few respondents reported wanting trails that would allow use of electronic collars and/or voice restraints for dogs instead of on-leash only trails. However, most respondents believed that dogs need to be on a leash to reduce conflict with other trail users.

### **Dangerous Areas:**

The overwhelming response from the survey regarding dangerous areas was that this community needs safer highway and bridge crossing and bike lanes on the busier streets in Kalispell. Specifically, the dangerous areas mentioned in the survey include the Flathead River Bridge, Foy's Lake Road, and Highway 206. Part of the problem is the lack of snow removal on the sidewalks and highway shoulders in the winter.

### **General Improvements:**

A large number of respondents reported needing separate trails for bikers, horse riders, dog walkers, and runners. There were several mentions of conflict between bikers and horse riders. Safety education to inform bikers that they need to be aware of horses could be a solution to this problem, if separating the trails is not possible. A reoccurring trend of the feedback was the desire for an online map of area bike trails and a need for better parking for horse trailers.

### **Summary:**

Overall, the survey results concluded that the Flathead County trails are a great investment because they improve community health, provide opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors, and attract visitors to Flathead County. There were many comments of praise and thanks for the trails currently available. Yet, community members would love to see further expansion and better maintenance of existing trails, especially during the winter. Furthermore, the respondents of this survey expressed a strong desire to connect Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls through paved bike paths. In conclusion, this survey revealed some of the favorite trails in this county while also shedding light on many areas that need improvement.

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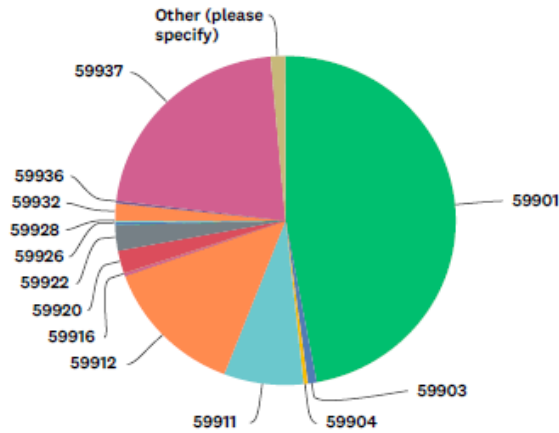
# Appendix D: Survey Results

Flathead County Trail Survey 2018

SurveyMonkey

## Q1 What is your zip code?

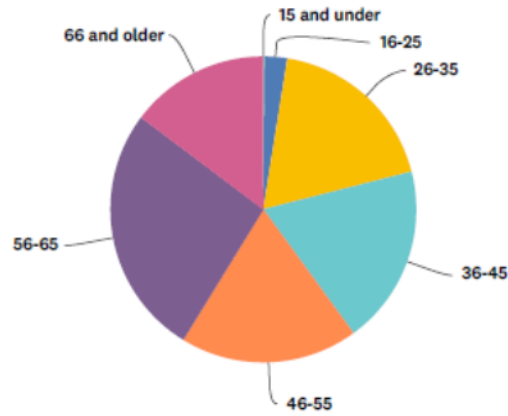
Answered: 716 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
59901	47.07%	337
59903	0.84%	6
59904	0.42%	3
59911	7.54%	54
59912	13.69%	98
59913	0.00%	0
59916	0.28%	2
59919	0.00%	0
59920	2.23%	16
59922	2.51%	18
59925	0.00%	0
59926	0.28%	2
59927	0.00%	0
59928	0.14%	1
59932	1.68%	12
59936	0.28%	2
59937	21.65%	155
Other (please specify)	1.40%	10

### Q2 Identify your age group:

Answered: 713 Skipped: 5

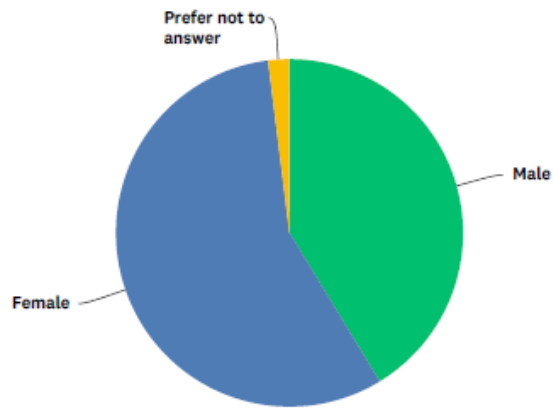


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
15 and under	0.14%	1
16-25	2.38%	17
26-35	18.51%	132
36-45	18.93%	135
46-55	18.79%	134
56-65	26.51%	189
66 and older	14.73%	105
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>713</b>



### Q3 What is your gender?

Answered: 714 Skipped: 4

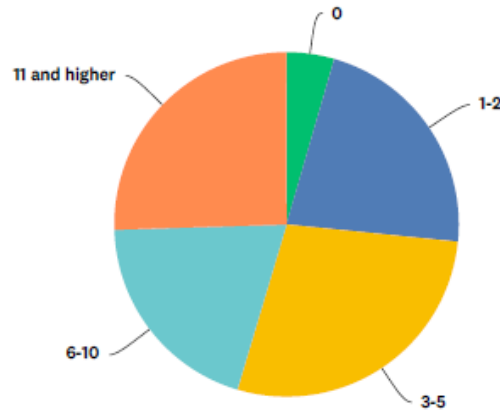


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	41.32%	295
Female	56.72%	405
Prefer not to answer	1.96%	14
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>714</b>

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### Q4 How often do you use Flathead County Trails on a monthly basis?

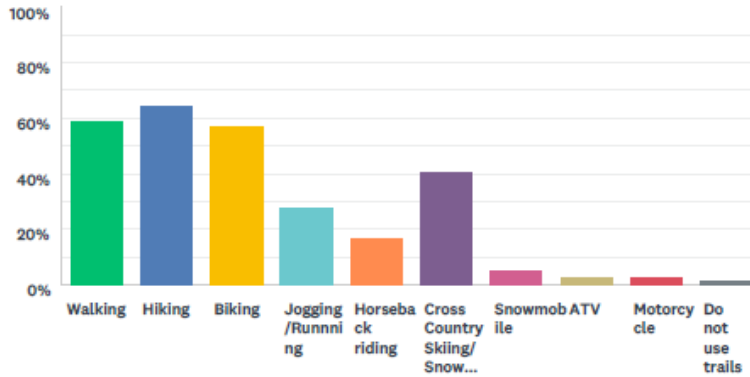
Answered: 714 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0	4.48%	32
1-2	22.13%	158
3-5	28.01%	200
6-10	19.89%	142
11 and higher	25.49%	182
TOTAL		714

### Q5 What are your primary activities on the trail? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 713 Skipped: 5

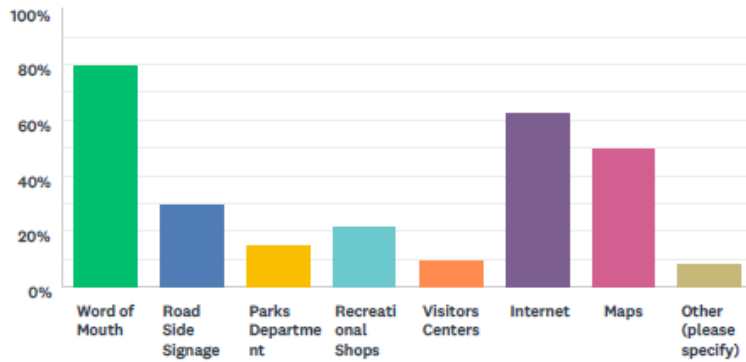


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Walking	58.91%	420
Hiking	64.52%	460
Biking	56.80%	405
Jogging/Running	27.77%	198
Horseback riding	16.97%	121
Cross Country Skiing/Snowshoeing	40.25%	287
Snowmobile	4.77%	34
ATV	3.09%	22
Motorcycle	3.23%	23
Do not use trails	1.68%	12
Total Respondents: 713		



### Q6 How do you get information about trails? (Check all that apply)

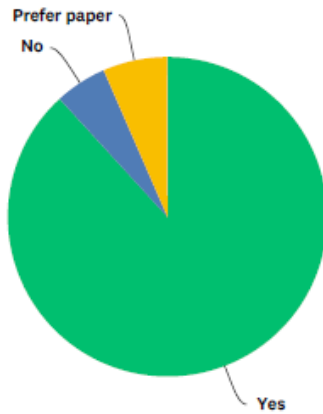
Answered: 716 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Word of Mouth	79.89%	572
Road Side Signage	29.61%	212
Parks Department	15.22%	109
Recreational Shops	21.65%	155
Visitors Centers	9.64%	69
Internet	62.43%	447
Maps	49.44%	354
Other (please specify)	7.82%	56
<b>Total Respondents: 716</b>		

### Q7 Would you use an online interactive trail map?

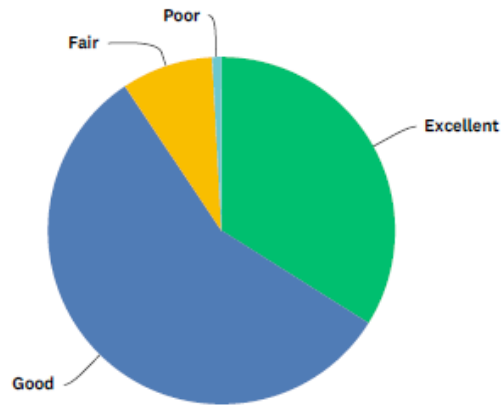
Answered: 704 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.21%	621
No	5.26%	37
Prefer paper	6.53%	46
TOTAL		704

### Q8 In your opinion, the cleanliness of the trails are:

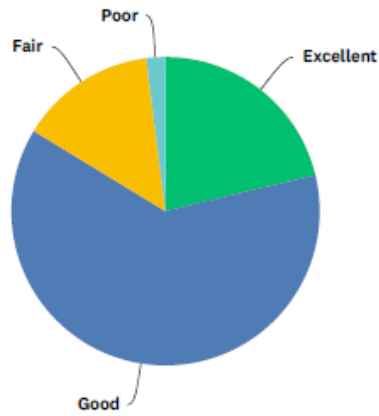
Answered: 704 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	33.95%	239
Good	56.68%	399
Fair	8.52%	60
Poor	0.85%	6
TOTAL		704

### Q9 In your opinion, the maintenance of the trails are:

Answered: 706 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	21.25%	150
Good	62.46%	441
Fair	14.31%	101
Poor	1.98%	14
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>706</b>

### Q10 In your opinion, the trails are well signed for safety and trail rules

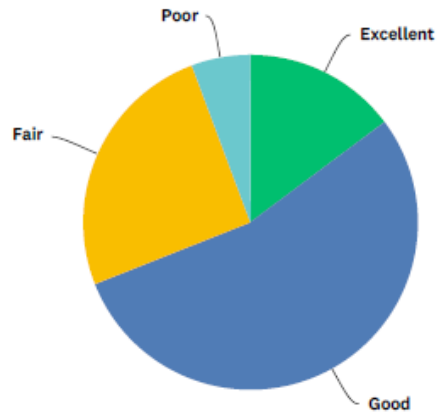
Answered: 703 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	19.20%	135
Good	56.19%	395
Fair	21.62%	152
Poor	2.99%	21
TOTAL		703

Q11 In your opinion, parking to access the trails is:

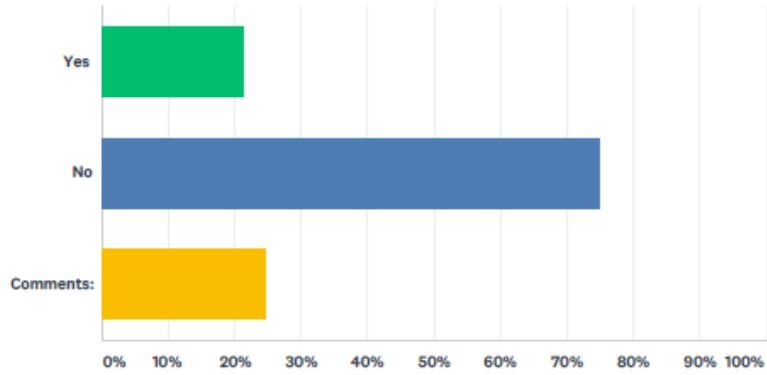
Answered: 703 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	14.79%	104
Good	54.20%	381
Fair	25.32%	178
Poor	5.69%	40
TOTAL		703

### Q12 Have you had any conflicts or problems on the trails?

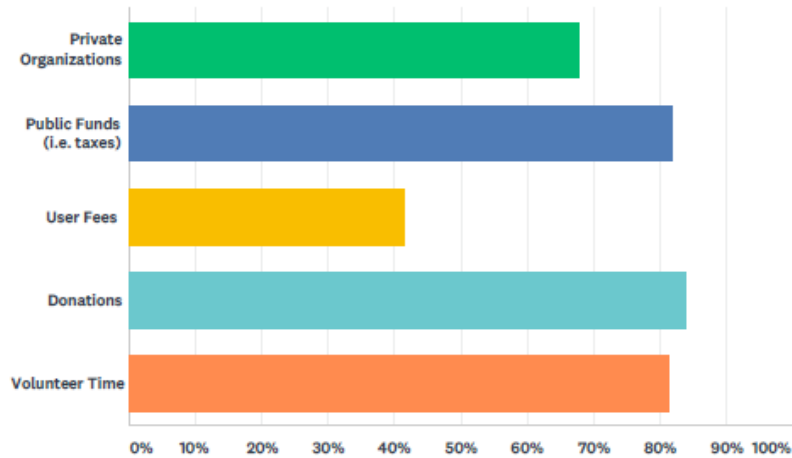
Answered: 705 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.28%	150
No	75.18%	530
Comments:	24.68%	174
Total Respondents: 705		

### Q13 How should trails development and maintenance be funded? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 700 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Private Organizations	68.00%	476
Public Funds (i.e. taxes)	81.71%	572
User Fees	41.57%	291
Donations	83.86%	587
Volunteer Time	81.29%	569
Total Respondents: 700		



**Q14 Please choose the areas where you would like to see new trails added in Flathead County and put which types of trails in those selected areas. Please choose from the following list of types of trails: walking, hiking, biking, jogging/running, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, snowmobiling, ATV, motorcycle**

Answered: 562 Skipped: 156

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bigfork	43.59%	245
Columbia Falls	50.71%	285
Coram	24.38%	137
Evergreen	23.13%	130
Hungry Horse	28.29%	159
Kalispell	57.47%	323
Kila	26.33%	148
Lakeside	33.27%	187
Marion	19.57%	110
Somers	30.43%	171
Whitefish	40.21%	226

## Q15 Please leave any additional comments on Flathead County Trails including your favorite trails to use.

Answered: 371 Skipped: 347

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Bigfork to Jewel Basin via Swan River trail. Ultimate goal should be to connect to Glacier NP!!	6/8/2018 8:29 AM
2	We desperately need a bike/walking path from Bigfork south along the east lake shore- at least to Woods Bay, but the whole length of the east lake shore connecting to the trail along the south shore to Polson would be wonderful. Highway 35 traffic is too scary for bikes!	6/4/2018 4:25 PM
3	Need for N-S trail on E side of Flathead river. Need for paved path connecting CFalls to Whitefish. Desire for N-S trail on LaSalle connecting CFalls to Kalispell. *Adding all park (playgrounds) to maps is good!	6/4/2018 4:23 PM
4	Trails from Kalispell to Kyla and Somers.	6/4/2018 10:47 AM
5	Favorites: Harry Horn, RailsToTrails, trail system out past Foy Lake (can't recall the name!)	6/1/2018 5:20 PM
6	Lone Pine, wild mile. Is there a website that lists all trails in the county? Include private, local, state, and federal trails with details and maps for each, including trail heads and directions to them.	5/25/2018 8:18 PM
7	A new single track trail is highly needed between the chase overlook and spirit bear trail at Herron park. Also a bike path from somers to Bigfork is desperately needed.	5/25/2018 5:58 PM
8	Swan river trail.	5/25/2018 5:49 PM
9	I routinely use the trails system in the valley and greatly appreciate it. I feel strongly that a connector between Kalispell and Whitefish would get a lot of use as short of bike rides on Whitefish Stage there is no easy way to connect the two towns without a vehicle. I also feel that a connection to Columbia Falls somewhere in there would really help to integrate in the new trail from Col Falls to glacier that is moving forward.	5/25/2018 11:55 AM
10	In Whitefish we need a connecting trail from the 93/40 highway intersection stoplight to Blanchard Lake Rd and a speed reduction to 55 in this area. It is hard to cross the highway during business hours with the 65mph & often ++ speed zone. In the canyon the Hungry Horse to the House of Mystery stretch needs a path now. Having lived here for going on 40 years MDOT has so dragged their feet on this stretch of highway I will probably be dead before they do anything. Maybe if you push ahead it will force them to come along.	5/25/2018 11:51 AM
11	Commuter trails between the major cities would decrease traffic, improve air quality, improve community health, improve happiness.	5/25/2018 11:13 AM
12	Favorite: All of the Whitefish Trails	5/25/2018 9:58 AM
13	Trails are both an asset to the health and quality of life for current residents and a tremendous attractant for tourists and talented people looking to resettle and bring themselves/ businesses/capital to the area. I have found Flathead county to be very backward it terms of valuing and promoting outdoor and recreation assets and also in promoting growth planning. It would be allot easy to lose the attractiveness of this valley and the commissioners/ old timers just don't get it	5/25/2018 9:47 AM
14	love herron and lone pine in kalispell, but they could improve some of the mountain bike trails like Terraflo did for some portions of herron and for the haskill basin trails.	5/25/2018 9:26 AM
15	Connecting the 3 cities is vital!	5/25/2018 8:50 AM
16	Whitefish trail system is awesome, both in and out of town	5/25/2018 8:45 AM
17	Swan River Nature Trail, Rails to Trails	5/25/2018 8:44 AM
18	Allow pedal assist electric bikes on all bike trails	5/25/2018 8:15 AM
19	The state land by Kokanee Bend fishing access could easily be further developed to provide a great trail system	5/25/2018 8:02 AM

## Flathead County Trail Survey 2018

SurveyMonkey

20	More dog off leash trails that inter-connect. Dogs under control, Buy voice or electric collars.	5/25/2018 7:58 AM
21	Regular user of rails to trails Somers, Kalispell, Kila. Thank you for these trails! Would love to see a walking/biking trail from CFalls to Glacier.	5/25/2018 7:49 AM
22	A path connection from city center to north Kalispell/FVCC is needed for commuters as well as recreation. Is it possible to connect Lawrence Park to Buffalo Head Park or FVCC?	5/25/2018 7:48 AM
23	ATV & motorcycle's belong on the roadway, not on paths. If they want off road they already have ample opportunity.	5/25/2018 5:24 AM
24	ATV & motorcycle's belong on the roadway, not on paths. If they want off road they already have ample opportunity.	5/25/2018 5:23 AM
25	I like separated trails where there is heavy traffic, like along 93 and highway 2 west, etc. and share the road ways where traffic is sparse or slow. Lower Valley used to be that way but now people travel too fast and it either needs signage or should not be a designated bikeway. I have also ridden to Bigfork, but crossing the Flathead River on the bridge is very DANGEROUS and it needs a separated bike/ped path. The westshore of Flathead Lake, connecting the end of the trail in Somers, using North and South Juniper Bay Roads, Marco Bay Road, and along Lakeside Boulevards, with the connections between and to and through Lakeside all have engineered studies. "Share the Road" are necessary and the separated paths where it is not safe to ride on 93 all need to be built.	5/24/2018 8:58 AM
26	I would really like to see the completion of the Swan River Road Trail.	5/23/2018 10:28 AM
27	I like Great Northern Rails to Trails for cycling, Whitefish Trails and Herron Park for hiking. Would really appreciate a bike path on Farm to Market and Old Reserve Drive for safety's sake.	5/22/2018 2:24 PM
28	Jewel basin for Xc skiing; rails to trails; Herron park; would love to see linked trail through Bigfork around swan river area as proposed. This is very important to quality of life in these unincorporated areas of the county.	5/22/2018 1:51 PM
29	I'd just like the trails to connect.	5/22/2018 1:03 PM
30	I love the trails we have! Thank you for working to expand them.	5/22/2018 10:03 AM
31	I would love to see a trail connecting glacier high school area to farm to market via old reserve and from west valley school along farm to market to the bypass trail...as it is now to ride or walk to a current trail is extremely dangerous on Farm to Market and Old Reserve..it would be nice to see the current 1mile bike trail by West avalley School extended in both directions and to the east.	5/21/2018 6:40 PM
32	More access and trails along the Flathead River please. It seems only private parties get to enjoy most of the riverfront views and access, but it would be great if we could walk along the river a lot more. It used to be more accessible in C Falls before the California developer bought up so much land along Riparian Drive. It's not all bought up yet, so can the County provide some access or trails along the river there? Too bad the wastewater treatment plant in C Falls takes up such a beautiful prime location on the river that we can't get close to. It looks gorgeous from a distance. Can you do something there so we can get to the river there? The smell shouldn't prohibit it because those of downwind already get a whiff. C Falls lost the Kreck Trail due to private landowner closing it off, allegedly due to vandalism (of their Keep Out signs) and 'misbehavior'. If that trail had been maintained without all the barbed wire and Keep Out signs, it wouldn't have been trashed in protest. I thought Montanans were guaranteed the right to access the river at the low water point. The County should take that access back for us which was taken first by barbed wire and now with tall fencing chain link fencing. Teakettle Mtn should be accessible and possibly developed as a slickrock mountain biking mecca. Private landowners should not be allowed to block access to our public lands. Isn't there a law about illegal takings by private property owners? They're stealing both our our land and river access.	5/21/2018 6:35 AM
33	Swan River trail, Lone Pine trail	5/18/2018 6:09 PM
34	it would be great to have more designated bike paths even along the highways and new bridges.	5/18/2018 3:09 PM
35	I love the Wild Mile and would like to see more walking or hiking trails. Of course, they could be used in winter for XC skiing or snow shoeing.	5/18/2018 2:26 PM
36	Herron Park and Swan River Trail	5/18/2018 1:04 PM
37	Favorite Trail Bear Creek but don't like that gate is closed most of the time so you can't get to the turnaround to park and you have to hike up the road to actually get to the trailhead.	5/18/2018 12:19 PM

38	I feel the trails system should be a community project, with the primary responsibility on the county but with support via donations, volunteers and out of area user fees. If the people of the valley take pride in "their" trail system, there will be more support for it, and example is the nature trail in Bigfork that is maintained by a community organization.	5/18/2018 10:01 AM
39	Bike trails in the city are the best investment for healthy community. Providing safe walking trails is a priority. I use the Lawrence park connector trail to whitefish stage, and it is in very poor shape.	5/17/2018 12:29 PM
40	Herron Park is my favorite! More areas for dogs and people are my vote.	5/16/2018 11:24 PM
41	Need to prioritize Swan River Trail!! Not just from Hwy 83 south but north to Jewel Basin Road. Very dangerous near Alpine Dr (by Echo Lake...blind corner).	5/9/2018 1:59 PM
42	Lone Pine, Rails to Trails are favorites. We need a trail between Kalispell and Whitefish and Kalispell and C. Falls. Trail to Somers is good, need to extend to Lakeside. Need to get bikes off the road. Many drivers are VERY unfriendly.	5/8/2018 2:44 PM
43	recently moved from Whitefish to Columbia Falls. There is dire need of improved signed, upkeep of trails and creation of new trails in the C Falls/NE Flathead Valley region. The proposed trail system in the Cedar Flats would be huge.	4/30/2018 8:49 AM
44	A path connection between Columbia Falls and Whitefish would also be great. Thanks!	4/24/2018 8:16 PM
45	Need to hire someone to remove dog waste from the highest-use trailheads during winter.	4/18/2018 2:36 PM
46	Lower Lone Pine has no off street parking	4/18/2018 11:27 AM
47	Allow volunteers Groom trails in the winter separate the park and trails from weed dept have people that actively want people to use the trail	4/18/2018 11:26 AM
48	Separate trail maintenance from weed control	4/18/2018 11:23 AM
49	Sometimes it is crowded but most people are respectful. Would love to see the Bigfork trail system expand.	4/18/2018 11:21 AM
50	Love the progress! The trails especially in town, will clearly boost local economy. Parks and trails need to separate from county weed control.	4/18/2018 11:18 AM
51	<b>general</b> keep it simple no fancy plaques or decorations that vandals will ruin and cost taxpayer money and keep away from busy roadways if possible. My favorite so far is the trail that goes to kila and lakeside, but I wish they were not so close to roadways in places. Thanks for your interest in this citizens opinion.	4/16/2018 6:17 PM
52	<b>liability volunteer help</b> <b>snow removal</b> Snow plowing in winter is an issue. Trails are the only decent walking paths in winter or during muddy seasons. County parks & weed supt. said liability issues sharply limit volunteer work on the trails, according to the county insurance company. A separate source of coverage would open more maintenance options. Parking for most Kalispell trails is largely ad-hoc, with no official lots.	4/13/2018 12:52 PM
53	<b>Trail names</b> somers and kila rails to trails, herron park, lone pine	4/4/2018 10:08 AM
54	I seldom use the trails because there aren't any in the Columbia Falls area. I would like to see a trail along the river/River Road and the old red bridge restored so there would be a loop trail.	4/1/2018 9:06 PM
55	Realy like the new trail in the Canyon now that it goes all the way from HH to WG.	4/1/2018 7:30 AM
56	upkeep is key, you can't afford to do that so why add more	3/30/2018 11:35 AM
57	Continue Foy's to Blacktail trail system. Place trees and other plants on bike/walk paths along highway.	3/27/2018 3:06 PM
58	<b>dog issues</b> I am now attempting to generate support and funding for winter dog waste removal services for major trailheads, such as Herron Park, Whitefish Trail, Round Meadow, and Blacktail cross country ski areas.	3/26/2018 1:04 PM



59	Internet site can include a trail log/sign in for hikers. If you were going to charge an access fee, you could collect here and print out permit for parking. This could prevent overcrowding in the lots at trail heads. Boulder Co has \$5.00 charge for out of county cars for all Trailheads. Please add GPS coordinates for all Trailheads - this will help users find it and also allow for rescue/medical if needed. Allow users to Rate the trails for difficulty and conditions. Muddy, snowy, Bear/Predator sightings should be allowed. Restroom facilities are nice. Include Trash bags for those who will clean up after others. Leave a containers for stewards to leave plastic grocery bags to be reused as trash/poo bags. Should be a penalty if you do not pack out what you pack in.... should include dog/people poo. Off leash certifications for DOGS who can be off leash. Some dogs can be really well mannered on the trail and perform well off leash. Others do not. Boulder County CO has an off leash Dog Program. \$25.00 per year per dog, tag required. Watch a video on good trail behavior and your well trained-always in your line of site dog, ( Stop -Sit - Stay, not chase livestock or wildlife, Sign and Voice Command) dog is good to go.	3/26/2018 9:46 AM
60	The WF Trail should be a model for community based trails throughout the entire Flathead.	3/25/2018 5:48 PM
61	Beaver lakes area is my favorite	3/24/2018 10:04 PM
62	Grant trail at Stanton lake is horrible. Stanton lake trail needs attention. It is well used. Trail at Bear Creek area :)	3/24/2018 2:34 PM
63	Love spencer the most! Keep on keeping on with building	3/23/2018 10:14 PM
64	Thank you for all that we have so far!	3/23/2018 7:57 PM
65	Horses and motorcycles seem to be the most destructive uses of trails	3/23/2018 5:43 PM
66	I would really like to see safer biking within Kalispell: safer access to trails and paths and schools - (where are the sidewalks and paths to the middle school?) Easier and safer crossing across 93(the courthouse crossing is great)! A dirt jump track off of the bike path while heading to kila would be greatly beneficial for youth (as long as they can safely access the bike path). Bike lanes on busier streets would be nice. More, less steep biking trails up lone pine. More mtn bike trails close to town. Herron is great, more of that close to Kalispell for the more dense population would be great!	3/23/2018 2:17 PM
67	Wonderful undertaking to maintain prime access to the hills, mountains, trees and serenity. Wonderful cooperation going on too!	3/23/2018 10:57 AM
68	Many groups within the Valley are interested in helping with maintenance. We need to resolve County issue with insurance so those that want to help CAN!	3/23/2018 10:54 AM
69	Horseback riders are a large, adult, educated, financially well-off group that is not barrel racing, can roping, etc. We are using the trails.	3/23/2018 10:49 AM
70	trail from Missoula to Whitefish	3/23/2018 10:44 AM
71	The above comments are intended to emphasize the need for some exclusivity, as open "multiple use" areas invite inappropriate behavior. Visualize Glacier Park before fully open every spring. Thank you for the ability to comment.	3/23/2018 8:32 AM
72	I would like to see the towns of the Flathead connected by paved bike paths. For example Somers to Bigfork and Lakeside, Bigfork to Kalispell, Columbia Falls to Whitefish to Kalispell to Columbia Falls. Thank you	3/22/2018 9:58 PM
73	Need more trails for horses/hikers in Columbia Falls	3/22/2018 6:13 PM
74	The Parks Department makes it far too difficult for non-profit groups and volunteers to assist with trail maintenance and development. Also, as the numbers of users increase, trails need to be laid out better, and users need to be separated. Continuing to build trails that have bikes, horses, dog walkers and runners, all going both directions on one corridor is just asking for conflict. The solution isn't to ban users - rather, make it easier for separate user groups to build trails for their own users. If horseback riders want a trail that's only open to horses, help them design and build that trail. Same for bikes, runners, etc.	3/22/2018 5:55 PM
75	Thank you for your time and effort!	3/22/2018 4:02 PM

76	It would be so nice to connect/expand the existing trails. To extend the Kalispell Bypass/Hwy 93 trail to the north and south. Top priority should be to build a trail from Kalispell to Whitefish and then to Columbia Falls to connect with the trail that will be installed thru Bad Rock Canyon the existing Hungry Horse/Coram trail. A Lakeside to Glacier Park trail would be a hallmark feature of the Flathead Valley. It would see loads of use by locals and tourists who would venture here just to ride the tremendous trail. Second priority would be to make Kalispell more pedestrian and bike friendly with the addition of bike lanes and trails around town.	3/22/2018 2:10 PM
77	Flathead county trails should be separated from the weed department	3/22/2018 1:47 PM
78	link as many together as possible please	3/22/2018 1:39 PM
79	Online map is a good tool for researching where one can go. I want to see this data move to mobile devices for offline use in an app like Trail Trekker (a company based in Flathead County).	3/22/2018 11:01 AM
80	Access to good trails gives our community opportunity to increase physical health and mental health. Experiencing nature is a bedrock to our resilience and should be a priority. Thank you!	3/22/2018 5:03 AM
81	I love Herron Park! Foys to blacktail has made this a great place to get everyday workouts in the forest close to home!	3/21/2018 8:05 PM
82	Please help gateway to glacier trails build and manage the cfac trail	3/21/2018 7:48 PM
83	Separate parks (& paths (I.e.linear parks) from weeds dept. This is much more important to visitors and to the economic growth of our area.	3/21/2018 6:59 PM
84	Separate parks (& paths (I.e.linear parks) from weeds dept. This is much more important to visitors and to the economic growth of our area.	3/21/2018 6:58 PM
85	Biking !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	3/21/2018 6:19 PM
86	Biking !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	3/21/2018 6:15 PM
87	Connect trails to each other throughout the valley. Make Loops where possible, rather than out & back. Snow removal on bike/walking paths for safety. Too many people walking in shoulders of roads in the winter.	3/21/2018 3:40 PM
88	Herron Park is sweet WF Trails are awesome Rails to Trails cannot be beat Bike rides up near Glacier	3/21/2018 3:02 PM
89	I'd love to see biking trails connected to trail heads and increased trail access from town!	3/21/2018 2:31 PM
90	Pig farms is one of my favorite. We need to convince DNRC to allow us to better maintain them.	3/21/2018 2:24 PM
91	Would be nice to see some trails created only for horses, only for hikers and only for MTN bikers. Whitefish already has a few of these; Spencer and big MTN...would be nice to see Kalispell have some too.	3/21/2018 2:15 PM
92	Typically use Whitefish Trail. Trail development in communities typically leads to greater well being for residents.	3/21/2018 7:12 AM
93	We have the most beautiful river two miles from Kalispell and a park at the old steel bridge and without a vehicle it suicidal to walk or bike there. A trail there would used a lot. There are school bus stops on that route and children must walk in the ditches.	3/20/2018 5:56 PM
94	Need to make sure historically equine trails are kept multi user, and need to make sure the County Government addresses the use of volunteer trail maintenance	3/20/2018 4:08 PM
95	The existence of Herron Park and Lone Pine are the primary reason I live in Kalispell rather than elsewhere. Those opportunities, particularly the expanded trails of Herron and FTB, substantially increase our local quality of life and property values. I STRONGLY encourage seeking additional properties/easements upon which to develop more trails to continue offering diverse recreational opportunities for our community. I would financially and vocally support this effort in any way possible.	3/20/2018 2:26 PM
96	Please plow the bike paths when possible in the winter!	3/20/2018 1:37 PM
97	Need better outreach to let users know what county trails even exist now.	3/20/2018 10:00 AM
98	During the winter it is hard to be able to walk around my neighborhood. Sidewalks are not plowed and it makes for dangerous running/walking.	3/20/2018 9:41 AM
99	Would love to see snow removal so we could use the trails along by-pass during winter months.	3/20/2018 8:50 AM

## Flathead County Trail Survey 2018

SurveyMonkey

100	We love the Herron-Blacktail trails but Foys Lake Road is very dangerous, especially on the hill/corner heading up to North Foys Lake. We wish there was something along Foys Lake Road, perhaps on the drain side incorporating a drainage pipeline with a trail over the top? This is otherwise unusable land anyway with the water issues...and the hill is very dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. Thank you for this opportunity to give some input!	3/20/2018 8:10 AM
101	My comments were mostly about the existing trail from Somers to Kila.	3/20/2018 4:45 AM
102	They are a great community resource! Bypass trail/bike path snow removal please.	3/19/2018 10:06 PM
103	Would love to access trails during winter months and be able to walk/jog etc if it was possible to have snow removed.	3/19/2018 9:05 PM
104	If the Flathead valley had an extensive trail system for all types of recreation this would be a huge gem to be very proud of.	3/19/2018 9:00 PM
105	Would love to be able to use bikenpathsby year round. It's a shame to build them not be able to use them.	3/19/2018 8:57 PM
106	Thank you for your time and dedication. Herron Park is one of my favorite places to jog!	3/19/2018 8:57 PM
107	Plowing of bike paths along rails to trails to make more user friendly year round would be wonderful.	3/19/2018 8:27 PM
108	Herron Park and Whitefish trails are my favorite so far...	3/19/2018 8:25 PM
109	Thank you for all of your hard work!	3/19/2018 4:09 PM
110	Forest Service and National Park Service Trails are favorites.	3/19/2018 12:56 PM
111	We need a path along 206. Its too narrow to ride safely and is a major corridor for Glacier Park. Thanks!	3/19/2018 9:19 AM
112	Please consider a path along 206. There are many residents out there and most of the existing paths are west of town or north from Whitefish to Glacier. A path connecting 206 to these would be a great improvement and so much safer. 206 is narrow and dangerous to ride on. Thanks so much!	3/19/2018 9:16 AM
113	Biggest needs IMO- paths along Hwy 2 Evergreen, W Reserve (from 93 to Helena Flats existing path), connector from Somers path to Lakeside. All dangerous locations to ride, yet connect major communities and schools/shopping/community events.	3/19/2018 8:18 AM
114	For all above, multiuse but no motorized vehicles 3 season. Winter, multiuse, adding snow machines in rural areas and plowing as much of intown trails as possible to allow for walking all year round. Love the trail systems out here!!	3/19/2018 7:38 AM
115	Jewel Basin	3/18/2018 5:58 PM
116	Jewel Basin	3/18/2018 5:57 PM
117	Primarily utilize rails to trails. Would love to see the dead deer on hwy 93 cleaned up more often. It is freaky to run or bike up on one (and they smell).	3/18/2018 2:04 PM
118	thank you!!	3/18/2018 1:00 PM
119	Instead of on-leash only rules for dogs, I would like to see allowances for electronic collars and/or voice restraint for dogs. Many Missoula Parks have done this. It is as easy to enforce as an official can still give tickets if the dogs are running wild but still allows bikers and horseback riders to utilize the parks safely with their dogs.	3/18/2018 10:47 AM
120	I love the Kalispell to Kila trail. It's great, if possible to have trails that are some distance from the highway, if not totally off the highway. It would be so amazing to connect the Flathead Valley communities via trails. It would be great to do this before more growth sets in. I would also love to see trails maintained during the winter because many people will commute in winter if given the opportunity. The roads are way too dangerous with shoulders being full of snow plow.	3/18/2018 9:24 AM
121	Herron park needs a bigger parking lot. It would be nice to have the bike/ walk paths in town plowed in the winter so they could be used.	3/16/2018 6:54 PM
122	Would like to see a separate department for Parks and Trails (separate from Weeds). I use the Rails to Trails paths and also the Foy's to Blacktail Trails at Herron Park.	3/16/2018 10:01 AM
123	My favorite trails are those in and around Herron Park. I think there should be a County Parks and Trails department that is separate from the Weed Department.	3/16/2018 8:06 AM

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124	I love using the Rails to Trail path and the loop in Woodland park. Last time I was both of them I saw drug use, and a possible drug deal. So now I don't feel safe on either trail.	3/16/2018 12:13 AM
125	The valley can always use more multi use trail systems, both hard and soft surface.	3/15/2018 9:09 PM
126	Most trails in Flathead Co are maintained by volunteers of the Back Country Horsemen or other non-profit user groups. My favorite trails are in the Bob Marshall or GNP. I also ride the forest roads around the Hungry Horse Res. but parking and trail heads are not good there.	3/15/2018 4:17 PM
127	All gated roads should have a 'no hang up' device for situations when we come through the gated road that can cause a disaster like hang ups on back cinches or stirrups - I have witnessed these incidents and they are disturbing to all - have reported, suggested, even offered to design so there are no problems passing around them. My favorite ride: I love visiting lookouts - favorite = Fire Fighter - GREAT! BUT happens to be one of the worst getting around the gate - saw a couple of wrecks.	3/15/2018 1:47 PM
128	places like herron park, bike trail to kila, all the whitefish trails are a big part of our quality of life here. More trails = better. An obvious useful one is kalispell to whitefish.	3/15/2018 10:56 AM
129	Enjoy bike loops from Kal to Kila and Kal to Somers including uses of Lower Valley and North Somers Stage. Need safe way to get to Bigfork from Somers with new bridge that will have trail and from bypass south north to east side of Kalispell and public areas (Lensure Isl, Owen Sowewinw, Otter Isl., Old SteEl Bridge	3/15/2018 8:34 AM
130	access for horse trailer parking. horseback riding.	3/14/2018 8:45 PM
131	Northfork trails are my favorite	3/14/2018 7:16 PM
132	Expanding bike trail loops to connect towns will fulfill future needs greatly.	3/14/2018 12:37 PM
133	Herron Park, Whitefish Trails, Coon's Park. Southfork, Spruce Park, Elk Lake, Lake McDonald	3/14/2018 12:36 PM
134	I don't understand why there aren't bik/walking trails connecting most if not all towns here. As someone who likes to commute by bike but still owned multiple vehicles I wish it was easier to use my bike as transportation. Yes I do ride on the road due to lack of paths where I need to go but I can't tell you how many horns have been honked at me, cars that have swerved at me, and general disgust drivers have shown towards me. I've ridden a bike most of my life as my choice for transportation so i'm Used to it I guess but I don't anyone should have to get used to it. And yes I ride to the right of the white line on the road all the time unless there's no road to be on or there is some sort of obstruction in the way.	3/14/2018 7:09 AM
135	I am unaware of where to get a map to even know if other trails other than ones I have discovered by word of mouth	3/13/2018 3:36 PM
136	Would be amazing, but probably a long way off, to have a bike trail connecting Kalispell and Whitefish via Hwy 93, and maybe another connecting Whitefish and Columbia Falls along Edgewood (that road is *really* scary to drive in summer because of so many cyclists and no shoulder for them to ride on).	3/13/2018 3:23 PM
137	We love the trails from Kila to Lakeside.	3/13/2018 2:44 PM
138	rails to trails	3/13/2018 2:07 PM
139	dog owners urged to pick up, why not horse owners, whose animals often litter human trails in Herron? Meaning of sign that says TH in Herron is not obvious to casual users. Could be important, e.g. for person who is lost.	3/13/2018 1:25 PM
140	Bigfork:River trail, Whitefish: Lion Mtn and connected trails, All rails to trails, Whitefish Stage to Lawrence park. Lakeside, Coram paved trails. Keep expanding and continuing the non-motorized trail systems.	3/13/2018 1:14 PM
141	Since moving to Whitefish in November, I have been a consistent user of the trail system, and have a new appreciation of them. I would like to see more front-country horseback riding trails for recreation and pleasure riding.	3/13/2018 1:03 PM
142	Pig farm and Kuhns Herron park	3/13/2018 11:48 AM
143	Meridian to Kila, Somers, Northridge used most. I can't easily locate a map of area bike trails online.	3/13/2018 11:48 AM



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144	Please try to avoid large, intact wildlife habitat areas, wildlife corridors (riparian areas), and wetlands as much as possible. Also, we have a major dog waste issue in this county and we need better public education about the importance of picking up dog waste and the impact to water quality from dog waste.	3/13/2018 10:10 AM
145	Thank you for all you do keeping access to trails.	3/13/2018 8:08 AM
146	We need a separated trail, Flathead lake to Glacier Park!! All that would be needed is a trail from the north industrial park to C Falls veterans Park. There are bits of trail already to connect. It would be a huge draw to the whole of the Flathead Valley. It would validate all the efforts and resources that have been expended in the past decades by many courageous and generous citizens. Please help!!!	3/12/2018 10:17 PM
147	My favorite trails are the FtBT trails above Herron Park.	3/12/2018 5:42 PM
148	I use all existing trails, just rotate around over days and weeks depending on mood, time, and weather. Thank you for putting time and \$\$ towards trails. They are a great investment: way to enjoy the outdoors, promote health, attract visitors.	3/12/2018 4:49 PM
149	favorite trails are those close to home and away from highway traffic danger and noise	3/12/2018 1:22 PM
150	The awesome local trails was one of the draws to move to this valley a year ago, keep up the awesome work! The biggest improvements I can see would be the sweeping for spring debris off the paved trails (KalisPELL-Lakeside) and on shoulders of road (93 north of downtown Kalispell) as well as making a connector trail from downtown Kalispell to the hospital/FVCC complex (and the big box stores). I commute that route daily from snow melt to snow fall and the lack of separate sidewalk/trail (or low volume traffic road) and lack of debris sweeping after winter, with increased car speeds make it very stressful and unsafe. Increased "Share the Road" signage and education would also be helpful--Montanans seem less aware of bike-car etiquette than in other places that I've lived. Thanks again for all you do!!!	3/12/2018 1:03 PM
151	I spend most of my time at Herron Park and on the FTBT trail system but also use the XC ski trails at Blacktail and Foothills quite a bit in the winter	3/12/2018 12:53 PM
152	Thank you for collecting this input. The area above Lakeside has miles of closed roads that could be utilized for NON-motorized recreation.	3/12/2018 12:51 PM
153	too old??/out of shape to keep up anymore but suggest contacting Keith Hammer and Swan Rangers re opinions re Flathead Co trails.	3/12/2018 12:48 PM
154	Whitefish Trail System, Spencer Lake area. Gun Range Area off KM Ranch Road	3/10/2018 4:01 PM
155	Love Herron Park, Lone Pine, Whitefish Trails, even if not technically county...	3/10/2018 3:55 PM
156	Usfs!	3/10/2018 10:59 AM
157	Paths need to connect for people to use them.	3/9/2018 7:46 PM
158	We have great towns with limited networks, they need to be connected with a multi use cycling and pedestrian friendly network that encourages commuting and healthy recreational opportunities for everyone right in the neighborhood. As an example what safe route would you ride from Whitefish to Kalispell with your child? Its unknown! It should be easy fun and safe, these paths need to maintained all year round to encourage something other than car culture.	3/8/2018 11:10 PM
159	I use Rails to Trails, Foys to Blacktail, pig farm and Whitefish Trails.	3/7/2018 5:20 PM
160	Desire connecting of existing isolated trails in the valley	3/7/2018 4:28 PM
161	With the interest in trails and the increasing number of recreational areas under the county, I am wondering why the parks department is still with the weed department.	3/7/2018 12:47 PM
162	With the interest in trails and the increasing number of recreational areas under the county, I am wondering why the parks department is still with the weed department.	3/7/2018 12:47 PM
163	I heard a rumor that the train tracks going from Kalispell to Columbia Falls is proposed trail. This would be awesome!	3/7/2018 9:29 AM
164	My favorite is cedar flats in Columbia Falls. C falls is begging for a good trail system. A growing number of passionate bikers/runners and active people live in c falls.	3/7/2018 8:19 AM
165	We have far more horse trails than needed. Way too few motorized trails. Way too few mountain bike trails. Very few motorized trails close to towns.	3/6/2018 7:54 PM

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166	I know that the east shore of Flathead Lake is a difficult area for walking and cycling. It is also Lake county and Flathead county, but it would be a tremendous boon to our valley to enable people to get from Pablo to Glacier Park. People would come a long way to use it.	3/6/2018 5:41 PM
167	I really like the whitefish legacy partner trail system but i wish they had trails that were exclusively for hikers - no dogs no bikes. I walk side-by-side with my wife (for stability) and the dogs and riders make the trial experience much less than appealing or fun. Thanks for asking	3/6/2018 3:50 PM
168	I would like to see the trails that we have better maintained rather than add more.	3/6/2018 2:51 PM
169	It is unsafe to ride horses on these trails and sometimes just walk. Bicycles and horses do not mix or loose dogs. Beaver lake road trails are narrow and even for walkers you have to stop often to get out of the way of racing bicycles. Designate some trails specific for horse and walking only. It seems that advertising and use of trails is more specific to bicyclist and your losing all the people who want peaceful walks and safe horsebackriding. Large amount of people in those interests. Many times I have avoided the trails so I could just walk without interruption or get out of the way of bicycles. You may be excluding many more donations by leaving out the hiking/horse backriding groups and their interests by catering to bicyclists only	3/6/2018 11:47 AM
170	Favorite is Rails to trails from Kila to kalispell. Smith lake and Browns meadow. Also up Truman Creek area. Hike in GNP frequently and the Swan	3/6/2018 8:48 AM
171	This work is great! Thank you for the coordination. More trails!	3/5/2018 8:47 PM
172	Would be great to have some trails where you can have dogs off leash. Herron park is my favorite	3/5/2018 8:38 PM
173	This is an excellent program.	3/5/2018 8:33 PM
174	Foys to Blacktail Lakeside to Blacktail	3/5/2018 6:37 PM
175	Spencer trails are great. Love the Tally Lake area and Pig Farms.	3/5/2018 6:17 PM
176	I love Herron park!	3/5/2018 4:50 PM
177	Perhaps more signage/updates during hunting season would be helpful. It's a great time of year to be outside, but mixed use during hunting season can seem a bit sketchy with firearms involved. Anything to suggest where hunters can go without too much interference, and also where recreational it's can go without fear of sneaking up on someone with a gun in hand (or eager to shoot furry pets).	3/5/2018 3:14 PM
178	Pretty much hard to argue against trails of any type. Trails get people outside and active!	3/5/2018 2:26 PM
179	Nothing makes the Flathead more special than our trails and public land. As long as funding and protecting them are a priority for all government entities they will be the area's number one economic driver. period.	3/5/2018 2:21 PM
180	Kalispell trail system poor in regards from getting from one end of town to the other. Nothing safe to get either Evergreen to downtown Kalispell or from hospital to downtown Kalispell area.	3/5/2018 2:18 PM
181	Pig Farm and Heron FTBT Please groom Heron Park in the winter as Jim Watson did 3 years ago. Seems that thousands of \$ are spent mowing grass all summer but no budget for winter activity. If dog owners are required to pick up poop then why not horse users??	3/5/2018 1:03 PM
182	Lone Pine and Herron are our favorites!	3/5/2018 12:52 PM
183	Whitefish is flush with good trails, show the southern end of flathead valley some looove! Lol, there's plenty of love just want some more	3/5/2018 12:24 PM
184	The trails that exist are wonderful. With greater population those close to town and becoming a bit congested IE lone pine. Adding more trails on lands close to town would be helpful to disperse this traffic.	3/5/2018 12:10 PM
185	Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I love the County Parks. Tend to use Herron the most. Raised in the Flathead and am impressed how the backyard recreational opportunities are improving. Only recommendation, and I know funds are limited, is to patrol and enforce rules regarding dogs...have, literally, never seen a dog on a leash at Herron. Most of the dogs are friendly so the unleashed thing doesn't bother me as much as their waste just left on the ground...it get's really gross this time of year. Would suggest closing parks to dogs for a season since, barring enforcement, that is the only thing that will get the owners to self police. Thanks for all that you do!	3/5/2018 11:58 AM
186	favorite: Lone Pine, Herron Park, Bigfork wild mile, WF Trail, Glacier High to KRMC	3/5/2018 11:27 AM

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187	A path along Hwy 2 is non-existent in the Evergreen area. I drive from Creston to the airport and see so much use for a safer method for people that currently walk & bike on/along the busy highway.	3/5/2018 11:27 AM
188	Please keep making great free public trails!	3/5/2018 11:03 AM
189	Spencer, Whitefish Trails, Pig farm, Sprucepark, Star Meadows	3/5/2018 10:18 AM
190	I love the trails and I regularly take my kids. Thanks for all you guys do!	3/5/2018 9:34 AM
191	I love public trails and public lands! We get outside all the time and I am HAPPY to pay taxes that support this.	3/5/2018 8:56 AM
192	So great to see multiuse trails springing up through the Flathead. Keep it up!!	3/4/2018 10:43 PM
193	High concerns about education needed in the bike users.. they need to make noise to avoid conflict with hikers, other bikes, horses, and wildlife.	3/4/2018 9:29 PM
194	I am living up the Polebridge and I wish we can have more and cleanest and well signet trails in whitefish range..	3/4/2018 8:32 PM
195	I am a wheeled trail user, both motorized and nonmotorized, and a hunter. We need more trails open to motorcycles and need to not have the trails we do have access to closed. No More Wilderness!	3/4/2018 8:29 PM
196	West Valley...wish it went all the way to Whitefish for a Westvalley - Whitefish commuter path	3/4/2018 8:01 PM
197	Please keep land open for horses and hiking, biking at Bowdish off hwy93. Many love that area so much.	3/4/2018 3:53 PM
198	I love to explore all over the Flathead Valley and surrounding area.	3/4/2018 12:42 PM
199	Please remove the Parks/Rec/Trails dept. from the weed dept. Herron Park	3/2/2018 10:50 PM
200	Favorite - Rails to Trails between Kalispell and Lone Pine. Would like to see a connector between Kalispell and Whitefish - along Whitefish Stage	3/2/2018 1:41 PM
201	Kunes (piggy back trails) off farm to market. Rounds, Herron, bear creek, south fork, peterson creek, piper creek.	3/2/2018 12:56 AM
202	Most trails have been well maintained with friendly users from most sports. I prefer non-motorized trails and spend most of my time on Whitefish Trails, Pig Farms, and Herron Park/ Foy's to Blacktail. I'd love to see more links between trails to make them longer.	3/1/2018 10:26 PM
203	More bike trails interconnecting Flathead communities	3/1/2018 10:17 PM
204	Would love to see trail from Trumble creek canyon creek area; road 316c; to connect with trail on flower point	3/1/2018 4:35 PM
205	Thank you for supporting the expansion of the Foy's to Blacktail Trail and the Herron Park trail system. These trails are beloved by the community and they are an asset to our quality of life here! Trail expansion and access is good for our local economy.	3/1/2018 4:23 PM
206	Trail from Whitefish to Kalispell. Trail along/around Flathead Lake. Trails in Bigfork. Trails everywhere, please!! :)	3/1/2018 3:34 PM
207	thank you :)	3/1/2018 2:43 PM
208	The more trails that safely access public lands with low impact are amazing. Great for public health and enjoyment of our woods	3/1/2018 1:32 PM
209	The biggest thing would be to see where the beaten path is and fix that first meaning no grass do to traffic from any of the list provided of yours	3/1/2018 12:30 PM
210	Herron Park Rails to Trails Lone Pine	3/1/2018 10:39 AM
211	Whitefish trails	2/28/2018 10:38 PM
212	off Meridian	2/28/2018 2:08 PM
213	My favorite ride is to go from my house via the new bypass trail down to Lone Pine State Park and on to Herron Park. I also enjoy riding the Whitefish mountain bike trails and would love to see a trail from Kalispell to Glacier Park!	2/28/2018 2:02 PM
214	Thanks for the opportunity to be heard.	2/28/2018 4:24 AM

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215	Connecting different chunks of trail out to be a priority. Thanks.	2/27/2018 9:06 PM
216	I am one of the planners for a yr.-round hiking group of srs., mostly women. We frequently go hiking in Glacier Park, Jewel Basin and the Whitefish Trail System. ***Marion might be a bit far for us to go but we wouldn't rule it out. We are always open to new trails. Of all the places we go, I think Kila area is under-represented as far as no. of trails available and it seems like there are plenty of open areas for trails. Thanks for reading our comments.	2/27/2018 7:09 PM
217	Rails-ti-trails bike paths are in rough shape. Lots of frost heaves and cracks in the pavement. This may be a reflection of the harsh winters or insufficient surface preparation prior to paving. Unfortunately, the rough surface has a significant negative impact on biking along some of these paths	2/27/2018 4:19 PM
218	N/A	2/27/2018 4:12 PM
219	It would be really nice to have a bike path along Whitefish Stage to connect to Whitefish and Columbia Falls to Kalispell. It would be really nice to have a bike path along Hwy 40 to connect to Whitefish and Columbia Falls.	2/27/2018 4:01 PM
220	Trail connecting Whitefish to Columbia Falls along hwy 40 and both to Kalispell down Whitefish stage road would be something I would help organize and push through. Landowner along wf stage road.	2/27/2018 3:47 PM
221	Need more trail systems developed, need more bike lanes around the valley. We are well behind a lot of places when it comes to bike lanes.	2/27/2018 3:30 PM
222	This is confusing to me. What are "Flathead County Trails"? Every trail that exists in the county? I use the WF Trail system, Herron Park, Swan River trail into Bigfork and the Bigfork Bike trail. I also use the trails in Jewel Basin and Glacier National Park.	2/27/2018 3:29 PM
223	Trails adjacent to high traffic areas are not very healthy with the amount of auto emissions, particularly diesel, we have in the area.	2/27/2018 2:52 PM
224	Round meadows, Pig farm, Herron park	2/27/2018 2:47 PM
225	The new whitefish trails bike system routes that were added in 2017 were well done.	2/27/2018 2:32 PM
226	A continuous bike path from Whitefish to Kalispell to Lakeside would be amazing. Also from Whitefish to Columbia Falls. It would be very nice to have a bike path down Whitefish Stage road :))	2/27/2018 2:31 PM
227	Trails make a community attractive!	2/27/2018 2:18 PM
228	lone pine, blacktail, herron park	2/27/2018 1:56 PM
229	Currently plan to do lots of hiking in the Swan Range in 2018.	2/27/2018 1:45 PM
230	Absolutely love all the Whitefish Trails- expansion has been amazing for access.	2/27/2018 1:26 PM
231	Herron park is great! I use the Rails to Trails starting in Somers or at Meridian and out to Kila all summer long! Thank you!	2/27/2018 1:23 PM
232	My favorite trails are up at Herron Park. However, I'd love to see a paved trail system joining Flathead and Whitefish so people could road bike back and forth or even just walk a section of it. Thanks!	2/27/2018 1:06 PM
233	jeep trail	2/27/2018 1:05 PM
234	Round Meadows for skiing. All bike trails. Would love to see a Flathead Lake/River Trail system.... Wow, right? Bruce in E.H.	2/27/2018 1:04 PM
235	Thanks for your hard work! My favorite trails are in Herron Park, the Pig Farms off Farm to Market, and in Lone Pine.	2/27/2018 12:54 PM
236	Thank you for doing this work. There is a need for more accessible trails in the Kalispell City limits and in Evergreen. If we want to make the health of our community a priority, we need more free safe places for people to recreate. My favorite trail is the River Road in Bigfork	2/27/2018 12:52 PM
237	I mostly use Herron Park Trail System and Foy's to Blacktail. I live and Kila and can ride from my house to the upper section. It might just me but I see more and more of the trails being geared to the bicycles so I find Herron Park to be more horse friendly. Thanks for all you do.	2/27/2018 11:20 AM
238	a bike path around Flathead Lake would be a huge economic boom to all communities involved.	2/27/2018 8:22 AM



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239	public access and parking to Flathead Lake, especially North Shore	2/26/2018 10:31 PM
240	Swan River Nature Trail!	2/26/2018 9:26 PM
241	Accessible trails are excellent benefits to a community.	2/26/2018 4:26 PM
242	Please coordinate better with DNRC in the Whitefish area - they have a lot to offer in the way of solutions to trail connectivity from town	2/26/2018 4:19 PM
243	Bigfork Nature Trails system on the north side of the Swan River.	2/26/2018 3:56 PM
244	Avid hiker / horseback rider so love all the trails that facilitate those activities.	2/26/2018 3:09 PM
245	Thanks for all efforts to increase non-motorized mobility in the Flathead.	2/26/2018 2:16 PM
246	The trail development work done to this point has been regionally organic and addressed specific interests in each area. This approach has been successful to a point, where it does not consider the the potential for a wider user audience with interests outside of the immediate demographic. good luck going forward, its a productive approach, shepherding the process in this fashion, creating an informed plan for the future of recreation in the valley.	2/26/2018 11:37 AM
247	Dog-friendly running trails in a mix of forest and fields would be great!	2/26/2018 10:19 AM
248	Whitefish trail system	2/26/2018 8:39 AM
249	Lone Pine, Herron, Round meadows	2/26/2018 6:31 AM
250	Would love extension of existing trails in town to more rural undeveloped areas so we wouldn't have to run/ walk on the roads. Specifically Columbia Falls area - Hilltop - walsh -Jellison areas.	2/25/2018 1:42 PM
251	Designated lane for cross country skiing on Plum Creek RD at Herron Park , with signage for walkers to stay off please! Perhaps similar to signs on the Whitefish Mtn Trail , ie "Please Stay In Your Own Lane!" One third of the road for skiers only, other two thirds for all user groups .	2/25/2018 8:21 AM
252	Paved bike commuter paths between Whitefish, Kalispel and Columbia Falls would be sweet.	2/25/2018 6:38 AM
253	Foys to Blacktail. Herron Park.	2/24/2018 8:04 PM
254	Really appreciate the efforts of PATHS. Trail maintenance is critical and needs to be led by government as both a recreational and economic stimulator.	2/24/2018 6:56 PM
255	The Trail work in the area is awesome and is being managed extremely well. The new trails have been built extremely well. Unfortunately, the paths/road that connect many of them have no shoulder and are very unsafe to be on. Many people like to run/bike/walk to the trail heads and we do not provide a safe environment for that to happen. This is going to lead to a death and in the meantime increases altercations between motorists and non motorists.	2/24/2018 5:14 PM
256	Connecting the trails is the most important.	2/24/2018 4:26 PM
257	Bigfork to Woods Bay along Hwy 35 desperately needs a trail along this 2 mile stretch!	2/24/2018 3:58 PM
258	I have used Herron Park trail system for years for Horseback Riding it is great, and little or no conflict with multi users, need more areas to start spreading out from this example.	2/24/2018 2:39 PM
259	I would love to have a trail somewhere along the Flathead River	2/24/2018 12:35 PM
260	The rails to trails system is very easy to walk my dog on after work. I use the highway 2 to Kila trail multiple times a week. When we are bored of that we hit Herron Park. Very rarely do we hit other trail systems but hoping to change that this spring.	2/24/2018 9:20 AM
261	Work to connect Kalispell's rails to trails with the CFalls to West Glacier trail. Take opportunities to put bike/walk paths to connect towns. CFalls to WF. WF to Kalispell. We love some WF trails/Heron park style XC mountain bike trails on the east side of the valley (Creston to Bigfork area). I'd love to see a way to safely ride a bike from Creston into Kalispell. I think Glacier Park should be encouraged to groom for XC skiing, there is a huge winter recreation opportunity there that is not taken advantage of. It could be year round destination like Yellowstone!	2/24/2018 9:03 AM
262	I use the Whitefish Trail and the trails and logging roads in the Haskell Basin and Northwoods.	2/24/2018 8:44 AM
263	The addition of trails in Flathead County have made this great place an even greater place to live and work! I would love to see the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department be a separate department as it once was. Recreation is important enough to this countie's economy that this is warranted.	2/24/2018 8:17 AM

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264	Please know that some trails are not conducive to both bikes & pedestrians or horses. When there are blind curves &/or steeper/faster descents for bikers accidents will happen. Some trails should be designated for horses & pedestrians only. While some can be for bikers.	2/23/2018 11:06 PM
265	I LOVE Herron Park and the new segments of trail that have been added. I live near Evergreen and would like to see the Otter Island area cleaned up and made into a safe trail system!	2/23/2018 9:23 PM
266	Would like to see better trail signage at Kuhn's Would like better marked a cleared trails on Mountain Meadow rd.	2/23/2018 8:52 PM
267	Flathead county actually has many and varied trails and we all should feel grateful. However the dogs off leash has gotten out of control. Maybe 1 in 20 dogs are leashed. Love dogs but.....	2/23/2018 7:32 PM
268	Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback!	2/23/2018 7:20 PM
269	Trails are fine but we have enough trails. Our community volunteer base, funding, and presiding government entities are already spending a huge amount of resources to care for them. Anymore will create a basis that we can no longer support over time. In addition, there is conflict with nearby residential areas and a growing concern with how to handle wildlife/human interface. Let's get better at taking care of what we have and dealing with the related success and challenges before adding more.	2/23/2018 4:30 PM
270	Keep up the good work. Good trails prompt good health.	2/23/2018 3:06 PM
271	Cedar Flats is the best dog-walking spot.	2/23/2018 2:43 PM
272	Fairly new to the area so hoping to make use of them more often.	2/23/2018 1:26 PM
273	I only use the trails in the Flathead area a couple of times a year when I visit. I love the Gateway to Glacier path and look forward to there being even more paths to increase safety.	2/23/2018 1:13 PM
274	The Gateway to Glacier Trail is a fabulous addition to the trail system. Now if we can link it to trails around the valley we will expand our growing attraction to the world-wide biking community.	2/23/2018 1:05 PM
275	My answers above are restricted to bike paths, excludes hiking trails. (The questions are too broad if you include any trail) Bike paths are NOT connected, The are useless as a means of safe transportation. I would bike commute a lot except for the very bad bike path situation here and hostile drivers.	2/23/2018 12:57 PM
276	Don't use trails. We live in CA	2/23/2018 12:32 PM
277	Badly need a way to connect off road mtn biking from c falls to Whitefish via Stoltz land. Trail should be designed for general public use and be of moderate difficulty.	2/23/2018 12:25 PM
278	I would love to see the Cedar flats project proposed by Gateway to Glacier trail system come to fruition. I live at Meadow Lake and would like to not have to haul my mountain bike to Beaver Lake trail system to ride. Beaver Lake and Lion Mtn trails are my favorite mountain bike rides. Whitefish golf course is my favorite nordic ski site.	2/23/2018 11:58 AM
279	Please keep forest north of Columbia Falls free from new trails - we have to allow land for animal habitat - and we need to have some space untrammelled by sprawling society	2/23/2018 6:19 AM
280	i wish there were dog free trails available for non dog lovers.... i get tired of them running loose all over scaring the wildlife and pooping everywhere, scaring my horses, etc!!	2/22/2018 11:56 PM
281	Better parking for horse trailers etc. and turn around, camping. Love Foys, Kuhns,Whitefish Kalispell	2/22/2018 8:44 PM
282	Favorites include rail trail Somers to Kila in summer and Blacktail nordic in winter	2/22/2018 8:25 PM
283	Favorites include rail trail Somers to Kila in summer and Blacktail nordic in winter	2/22/2018 8:25 PM
284	We need to connect all three cities with the Park and Lake	2/22/2018 4:38 PM
285	CFalls has become a great family town but desperately needs more outdoor amenities like trails. Favorite trail is new West Glacier bike path.	2/22/2018 4:30 PM
286	County trails and parks are what makes the Flathead special. Improve the amount of public land, ease of access, and information, and you will see your tax base prosper. Public amenities beget growth.	2/22/2018 3:46 PM
287	Herron Park, The Bob, Great Bear, Glacier Park in general	2/22/2018 1:15 PM
288	Swan River trail Mt Aeneas	2/22/2018 1:04 PM

## Flathead County Trail Survey 2018

SurveyMonkey

289	Keep building and refining trails here in the Flathead County..! Especially in the Columbia Falls area! Flathead Area Mountain Bikers along with the Whitefish Legacy Partners are amazing groups for trail work!	2/22/2018 1:03 PM
290	would like to see the sections of Bigfork trail, on Swan River Road connected	2/22/2018 12:01 PM
291	Keep motorized access open. Everybody needs to share our beautiful trail systems.	2/22/2018 10:43 AM
292	Bikes are becoming a hazard to horseback riders as they are going very fast and are quite so that the horseback people and the horse do not hear them coming and this will cause serious accidents.	2/22/2018 10:38 AM
293	Foys to Blacktail	2/22/2018 9:52 AM
294	Herron Park, lion mountain and beaver lakes!	2/22/2018 9:24 AM
295	We really enjoy Lone Pine and Herron Park. The bike path is really awesome, as well!	2/22/2018 9:17 AM
296	Used to love riding up Doris creek trail on my motorcycle but in the last decade it has become overgrown and very difficult to ride.	2/22/2018 7:50 AM
297	Foys to Blacktail should be open to motorized vehicles.	2/22/2018 6:44 AM
298	Herron park used to be more of a favorite for people riding horses but I find myself and peers are not enjoying it as much since it has become more and more used by bikers which has caused some safety issues do to blind corners and bikers Speed	2/22/2018 5:18 AM
299	We are so fortunate to live in an area where we have access to open space and a wonderful trail system. Thank you!	2/22/2018 12:57 AM
300	Foys to Blacktail is incredible. We need more trails like this.	2/21/2018 11:10 PM
301	We appreciate efforts to educate cyclists to yeild to horses, and speak out loud to them. Say "Hi" and pass wide :)	2/21/2018 11:06 PM
302	Kuhn's and pig farm	2/21/2018 11:05 PM
303	Bear dance but I would love a road cycling option in Bigfork or around the east side of the lake-is that totally impossible?!?!?	2/21/2018 10:25 PM
304	Heron park	2/21/2018 10:24 PM
305	Thanks for all you do!	2/21/2018 10:10 PM
306	The Whitefish trails are closest to where I live so I use those the most. I work in Columbia Falls and try to walk or run during lunch around the high school or Columbia Mountain. Sometimes I dream about a hiking trail near the river, but there's a lot of private land.	2/21/2018 9:12 PM
307	Black tail cross country ski, allow fat tire bikes on the snow shoe side of groomed trails. Essex and jewel basin we use a lot	2/21/2018 8:39 PM
308	Love that we can bring our well behaved dog who is always respectful and polite. He responds to voice commands. We love interacting with other people and their dogs on the trails. Appreciate the mutt mits at the start of trails so people clean up after their pets and for the most part it look like people do. Perhaps a mid point trash can labeled on the entry map so people that may not want to carry poop all the way back wouldn't be inclined to leave it. Thanks for all the good work!	2/21/2018 8:34 PM
309	Thank you!	2/21/2018 8:28 PM
310	Thanks for doing this.	2/21/2018 8:19 PM
311	Pig farm	2/21/2018 8:07 PM
312	We most often go to Heron park and by the stillwater river. We also love rails to trails, and would like to see more bike paths.	2/21/2018 7:41 PM
313	THANK YOU for developing and maintaining our area trails! My favorites are off of KM Ranch Road and Beaver Lake trails.	2/21/2018 7:32 PM
314	Herron Park, Lone Pine, Jewel Basin, rails to trails, the pig farm	2/21/2018 7:18 PM
315	Foys To Blacktail at Herron Park and Rails to Trails	2/21/2018 7:12 PM
316	Take care of the weeds. They need to be sprayed??.	2/21/2018 6:55 PM

317	We use Herron frequently but the parking needs to be expanded. Also, there needs to be an enforcement mechanism for dog owners who exempt themselves from the leash rule. I own a German Shepard and would never walk him there unleashed. However, if another dog that is unleashed gets into a fight with my dog, I would not be able to prevent the ensuing carnage. Furthermore, when an unleashed Doberman/Pit Bull/Rottweiler etc. approaches me on the trail, I immediately feel potentially threatened. This is unacceptable. I shouldn't have to carry pepper spray or a handgun because I might be attacked on the trail by an unleashed dog.	2/21/2018 6:31 PM
318	I most frequently use Heron park. However we are moving to Columbia Falls in a month so will be looking for horse trails there that can accommodate horse trailers	2/21/2018 6:30 PM
319	I grew up near Lake Five and have biked, walked, hiked, skied and horse back ridden near Dessert Mtn, strawberry Mtn, Blankenship Bridge, the old ski run, it is still very nice but I have noticed a huge increase in weeds, particularly orange hawkweed and knap weed. I feed certified hay and routinely do weed abatement on the state lands near my home. I think signage might help educate people. Also, I do believe multiple use areas can work in many areas, except wilderness. The Whitefish Trails have great signs, and most users are considerate. In many areas, including the Park... parking is limited. It would be nice to have some designated trailer spots so people with larger trailers could find a spot. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share my opinions with you during this important process.	2/21/2018 6:28 PM
320	Herron and Lonepine	2/21/2018 6:16 PM
321	lake five	2/21/2018 4:57 PM
322	foys to blacktail	2/21/2018 4:55 PM
323	Whitefish trails! Shared use path from Columbia falls to glacier	2/21/2018 4:49 PM
324	We need separation of bicycle riders from equestrian usage-maybe different trails or different time schedule. My favorite and most often used area is Herron Park. But it would be safer for all if we could come up with a plan so all trails have separation between horses and bicycles. Thank you for working on this!	2/21/2018 4:46 PM
325	I love the access to trails in the Flathead. Heron Park is a favorite of mine for hiking and cross country skiing. The whitefish trail system I also use frequently for hiking and skiing. I would like to see a larger focus on bike routes, preferably safe biking routes that run throughout the town of Kalispell. I'd also like completed routes that connect the communities within the Flathead Valley and then take you East to Glacier Park, South all the way down to Lakeside, and going West with some added trails in the Kila area. More bike routes that are safe from traffic! Thanks for the focus on trails in these communities. Access in this area is a huge advantage to living here.	2/21/2018 4:38 PM
326	Foys to Blacktail	2/21/2018 4:36 PM
327	I would like to see trails connect areas like Smith Fields and The Lakes subdivision to downtown Whitefish. We need to finish that trail system, especially with the increased volume at Smith Fields.	2/21/2018 4:28 PM
328	Whitefish trail system is very nicely done	2/21/2018 4:18 PM
329	Favorite trails include: Columbia Mountain, Kokanee Bend,	2/21/2018 4:10 PM
330	Mt. Aeneas. Whitefish trails	2/21/2018 4:07 PM
331	60% of my family's decision to relocate to Flathead County was the development/access of mountain bike trail systems. I use Herron Park and Lone Pine several times a week, WFT including Spencer Mountain several times a month. My lifestyle and career depend on these systems and my volunteer time and charitable giving follow accordingly. I believe further development of other trials systems in additional communities that follow these models would certainly make the county a gem for community involvement, identity, and common culture. It also has unlimited potential for tourism and local industry growth. More trails and more access to all users.	2/21/2018 4:02 PM
332	Herron Park	2/21/2018 4:00 PM
333	The Herron Park system seems to get better every year, keep expanding the trails, especially MTB specific trails, as the trail system gets busy! Some trails specifically for horses would also be nice.	2/21/2018 3:55 PM
334	Riding on trails which allow multi use (bikes, motorized vehicles) is sometimes dangerous with horses. It would be nice to have trails specifically designed for horses/hikers (no wheeled access)	2/21/2018 3:41 PM



## Flathead County Trail Survey 2018

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335	I almost solely use FTBT and alone Pine. I am hopeful there is a plan to put in a bike trail along Foy's Lake road from the bypass to Herron Park. That would be a game changer for so many users. So grateful for TRAILS!	2/21/2018 3:38 PM
336	Thank you for your dedication to public use lands!	2/21/2018 3:35 PM
337	foys to blacktail	2/21/2018 3:32 PM
338	kalisPELL needs more bike paths; dangerous getting around town	2/21/2018 3:15 PM
339	Thank you- I didn't answer the previous question because I really use the WF trail system, not sure I would venture out to the other towns listed.	2/21/2018 3:12 PM
340	i would love to see a better network of non motorized use trails on USFS land near Columbia Falls. Currently lots of trash and people shooting in some potentially nice areas.	2/21/2018 3:12 PM
341	There are thousands of horses in this valley. Hundreds of horse owners paying more than their fair share of taxes, yet they receive little or no attention when it comes to the availability of trails to ride on. I cannot understand why projects like the rails to trails are not built for multi-use, including horses.	2/21/2018 3:12 PM
342	More trails in more areas will encourage more use especially with young people that don't have the time or resources to travel 45 minutes to a trail system everyday. I go to Herron park a lot and it's a great trail system but again we need more options in other areas. Thanks and great job!	2/21/2018 3:00 PM
343	I enjoy all the trails on the Swan Range. The Crane Mountain area and Beardance are the highest rated trails in the area.	2/21/2018 2:58 PM
344	My favorite is Herron Park. The County is doing a good job in light of limited resources. Keep up the good work and keep developing trails!	2/21/2018 2:56 PM
345	Herron Park and Foys To Blacktail are my favorites!	2/21/2018 2:56 PM
346	Herron Park - should separate trail uses. Bikes and hikers on separate trails. Lone Pine and Herron parking limited.	2/21/2018 2:52 PM
347	Our trails are perfect. They just need brushed out. Leave them rugged.	2/21/2018 2:51 PM
348	Herron Park is my happy place. If I had one improvement for the park it would be groomed single-track for winter fatbiking.	2/21/2018 2:44 PM
349	Flathead is one of the best places to horseback ride. I always meet friends there. We generally stay a day or two as well. Keep up the good work	2/21/2018 2:43 PM
350	Lakeside Blacktail Strawberry Lake to Columbia Mtn	2/21/2018 2:39 PM
351	Enjoy coming to Montana for trail riding. Beautiful area, well maintained trails that we don't have to worry about meeting up with things like motorcycles, 4 wheelers, etc.	2/21/2018 2:29 PM
352	Moving here from another more congested state 14 years ago, I'm grateful for the abundance of our public lands in and around the Flathead. As an avid cyclist I'm biased as to how I feel our trails should be developed but I know from experience multi Rec trails gratefully benefit the economies around them by drawing healthy minded people to the area. And make it easier for locals to get involved with easier acces. I feel trail clearing and maintenance of existing trails outweighs new trailheads or expensive signage that just gets shot up. A community like Columbia Falls would be effected in a very positive way if it had local access to Rec trails. I primarily use desert mountain, Whitefish Trail, Spencer mtn, Pig Farms, Herron park to Blacktail, tally lake trail system, access to Alpine seven and whitefish mountain resort. Our valley has Fantastic access. Thank you so much for all your work and interest of public opinion.	2/21/2018 2:14 PM
353	I like them all!	2/21/2018 2:11 PM
354	Keep motorized vehicles off hiking trails, designate certain areas for off road motorized use. Keep up the good work.	2/21/2018 2:08 PM
355	We love the Herron park trail system. Keep up the good work!	2/21/2018 1:57 PM
356	thank you for all you do for our community maintaining these trails. thank you also for the opportunity to give input.	2/21/2018 1:56 PM
357	Herron Park isn't great!	2/21/2018 1:56 PM
358	Parks, Rec, and Trails should be removed from the Weed department into a stand alone department, like it used to be.	2/21/2018 1:48 PM

## Flathead County Trail Survey 2018

SurveyMonkey

359	I would suggest that there need not be a new or stand-alone entity/agency tasked with developing or maintaining the trail system/connectivity. The County Parks Department exists and can serve this function if the commissioners were willing to devote an FTE (or two) to it. No need for more bureaucracy; use the structure that currently exists!!	2/21/2018 1:47 PM
360	These trails are so wonderful and used by all kinds of outdoor sports activities. Please keep them open and safe for all of us.	2/21/2018 1:39 PM
361	Trailheads need to be built with horse trailer parking and turn around in mind	2/21/2018 1:39 PM
362	We love to use trails at Heron Park. Just wish the off-leash & dog waste wasn't such a problem. Would use Rails to Trails more if the transient issue was resolved. Not a safe place around Kalispell.	2/21/2018 1:37 PM
363	Please locate future trails away from riparian areas, berry fields, avalanche slopes, ridgelines, and other areas important to wildlife.	2/21/2018 1:36 PM
364	Additional safety rules on signs concerning bicycles and dogs around horses. Parking for trailers for both snowmobile and horses.	2/21/2018 1:34 PM
365	More trails please!!!!	2/21/2018 1:33 PM
366	We need more consideration for horseback riders. The trail system is being monopolized by cyclists and changes are almost exclusively to their benefit. We need more balance!	2/21/2018 1:19 PM
367	Thanks for all you do!	2/21/2018 1:11 PM
368	Please consider trailer parking when developing trails and continue to allow horses use on trails. Thank you. Herron Park is my favorite place!	2/21/2018 12:58 PM
369	Doing a GREAT job! Please keep it up ??	2/21/2018 12:57 PM
370	Whitefish Trail, Herron Park, Foy's to Blacktail Trail, Desert Mountain	2/21/2018 12:54 PM
371	I enjoy the Whitefish Trail, Lone Pine, and Herron.	2/20/2018 5:29 PM

## **Appendix E: Trail Development Checklist**

- Gather community support via a local sponsor group and define the proposed trail scope and potential source of funding.
- Review the trail project with criteria outlined in the Trail Evaluation Form (Appendix E)
- Submit an Agenda Request Form to the County Parks Department to discuss trail potential at a Parks Board. Information that should be provided to the Board should include:
  - Trail project scope, estimated cost, and description of local sponsor group
  - Description of proposed funding source, grant requirements and if matching funds have been obtained, if applicable
  - Trail Evaluation Form written assessment
- With a positive recommendation from the Board, work with Parks Department, Planning and Zoning Department, and County Grant Administrator to:
  - Put together agrant application
  - Establish a maintenance agreement
- Schedule a meeting with the County Commissioners for final approval of sponsorship of the trail.
- If the grant is awarded, establish a Project Specific Agreement (PSA) to be approved by the Flathead County Commissioners.
- Work with the Parks Department and Grant Administrator to satisfy the requirements of the grant/maintenance agreement.
- Once the trail is established, encourage volunteers to go through volunteer training with the Parks Department.

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**Appendix F: Grant/Reimbursement Programs**

Name	Description	Who may apply?	Eligible activities	Grant Type
<b>Transportation Alternatives (TA)</b>	Authorized under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the program is funded by the set-aside of Surface Transportation Block Grant program and administered by Montana Department of Transportation. The program replaces the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funded by the ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU Acts. Unlike the CTEP program, the TA program is a competitive grant program in which projects are selected from a pool applicants from the State of Montana. *The Safe Routes to School Program has been eliminated as a separate funding source but projects that previously qualified for funding can be sought through the TA program.	Local governments, tribal governments, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts, local education agencies, schools; local or regional governmental agency with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails.	Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized forms of transportation including conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for trails; pavement preservation; construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; community improvement activities including vegetation management in transportation rights-of-ways; environmental mitigation ; Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure related projects on any public road or any bicycle or pedestrian path in the vicinity of schools that will improve students' ability to walk and bike to school; non infrastructure related activities including public awareness campaigns, incentive programs such as mileage clubs, increased traffic enforcement near schools, and educational sessions for students	Matching program: 13.42% / 86.58%
<b>Recreational Trails Program (RTP)</b>	This is a subcategory of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TA) funded by the FAST Act but is administered by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The program provides funds to develop and maintain a broad range of recreational trails and trail-related facilities.	Federal, state, county, or municipal agencies, private associations and clubs	Construction and maintenance of recreational and transportation-oriented trails, environmental protection, safety, and ethics education programs, restoration of areas damaged by trail use, ADA accommodations, trailhead facilities, acquisition of easements and fee simple title for trails, signs and traffic control	Matching program: 20% / 80%
<b>Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)</b>	This is a grant program administered by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and is comprised of two sides-the state side and the federal side. The state side of LWCF allows states to assist their political subdivisions by providing grants for acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.	Cities or towns, counties, school districts, state agencies, and tribal governments	Outdoor recreational facilities including: ball fields, open space acquisitions, golf courses, public parks, swimming pools, skating rinks, picnic facilities, playground equipment, snowmobile facilities, and walking trails. Facilities directly supporting outdoor recreation areas, such as restrooms and maintenance sheds, also are eligible.	Reimbursement of up to 50% total costs
<b>Federal Land Access Program (FLAP)</b>	The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) was established under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and continued under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and administered by the Federal Highway Administration. The program makes funds available for projects that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal Lands. Priority is given to projects accessing high-use Federal recreation sites or Federal economic generators, as identified by the Secretaries of the appropriate Federal land management agencies.	State, local facility owners and operators (Title or maintenance responsibility is vested with State, County, Local Government, or Tribe)	Transportation planning, research, engineering, preventative maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration, construction and reconstruction of Federal land Access Transportation Facilities (FLATFs), adjacent vehicle parking areas, acquisition of scenic easements, provisions for pedestrians and bicycles, environmental mitigation projects, construction/reconstruction of roadside rest areas, other appropriate public road facilities, operation and maintenance of transit facilities	Matching program: 13.42% / 86.58%

<b>Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)</b>	The RTCA program is administered by the National Park Service and offers planning and organizational assistance for local community projects promoting nature-based recreation and environmental, historical, and cultural conservation projects.	State and local agencies, tribes, nonprofit organizations, or citizen groups	Nature-based recreation development, conservation projects, greenways and trail development enhancement, river restoration and watershed planning, open space preservation or planning, recreational access or water trails.	NPS Staff assistance
<b>Secure Rural Schools (SRS)</b>	Project funds may be used by the Secretary for the purpose of making additional investments in, and creating additional employment opportunities through, projects that improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure, implementing stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems, and restoring and improving land health and water quality.	US Forest Service	Road, trail, and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration; Watershed restoration and maintenance; Restoration, maintenance and improvement of wild-life and fish habitat; Improvements in forest ecosystem health; Soil productivity improvement; Control of noxious and exotic weeds; and Reestablishment of native species.	100% funding
<b>Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)</b>	Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) are Federal payments to local governments that help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable Federal lands within their boundaries. Flathead County receives an annual payment from the Federal Government based on the number of acres of qualified Federal land located within its jurisdiction.	Flathead County	Any governmental use	100% funding

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## Appendix G: Trail Evaluation Form

This trail evaluation form is intended to provide objective consistency to the evaluation and prioritization of trail project proposals through consideration of potential limiting constraints and a standard list of relevant criteria. This form should be shared with trail proponents so their proposals can fully address relevant evaluation factors.

### Section 1- Administrative/Implementation Constraints

Administrative/planning activities precede design and construction of a project. This section is used to help understand a project proposal's "real world" issues, opportunities and limiting constraints, which have bearing on the ability of a project proposal to be efficiently administered and realistically implemented.

**Instructions:** Evaluation of the following considerations is intended to be performed by the Parks Board or its assignee(s). In order to ensure efficient productivity and maximization of resources, each consideration outlined in this section shall be affirmatively met for any proposed trail project prior to further expenditure of resources. An attached narrative should thoroughly address each consideration, accompanied by supporting documentation/evidence. A written conclusion shall identify whether or not the project proposal merits ranking and prioritization for programming and implementation via Section 2 of this form.

- Describe how the community will benefit and any expressed local support and/or opposition to the proposed project.
- Is the funding source identified? Has funding, matching funds, and/or in kind donations (land, labor, equipment) been pledged and secured?
- Can the project be implemented in existing public easement(s)/right-of way? If not, can necessary easements/right-of-way be acquired at a reasonable cost from willing owners? Are any owners unwilling to participate and cooperate with the project?
- Has a commitment been made for an adequate maintenance mechanism? Does the proposal represent a judicious use of limited financial resources?
- Describe any anticipated construction challenges.
- Do the benefits justify the anticipated expense?
- May impacts on natural resources or landscape features be reasonably mitigated?
- Does the proposal secure valuable public access in imminent danger of being lost?

### Section 2- Trail Function

This section is used to comparatively rank the value of specific trail project proposals to the goals, policies, and objectives of the Trails Plan. When the county is considering the next trails project to program or a prioritized list of projects, priority should be based on the greatest "Total Score" of this Trail Functions section in conjunction with conclusions from Section 1.

**Instructions:** The nine criteria are weighted to reflect their relative importance of a project proposal to the Trails Plan. Each reviewer should 1) assign a "Value" (0-4) to each criteria, 2) determine the "Score" for each criteria by multiplying the "Weight" by the "Value", and 3) add all criteria scores to determine "Reviewer Total Score". Average the "Reviewer Total Scores" to yield the proposal's "Trail Function Total Score".

<b>Trail Function Criteria</b>	<b>Weight 1-3</b>	<b>Value 0-1-2-3-4 Low- High</b>	<b>Score</b>
Connects existing trail segments (enhance utility through trail network continuity)	3		
Provides safe pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, libraries or other community centers	3		
Provides safe connection between communities and parks/ public lands or between critical gaps in trail network	3		
Services large proportion of population and/or anticipated demand	3		
Provides needed safety improvement	3		
Creates a grade-separated pathway	2		
Provides trailhead facilities	1		
Provides a quality recreational experience	1		
<b>Total Score</b>			



**Appendix H: Parks Board Meeting Item Request Form**  
**FLATHEAD COUNTY WEED/PARKS/RECREATION & BUILDING MAINTENANCE**



1257 Willow Glen - Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 758-5798 OR (406)758-5800  
FAX: (406)758-5888

CONRAD ATHLETIC COMPLEX 758-5805

**Agenda Request Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Individual or group): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of topic to be discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Please attach one copy of documents pertaining to the topic\*\*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions for Agenda Request Forms**

The Flathead County Weed, Parks and Recreation Board generally meets on the first Monday of each month at 8:30 AM in the conference room of the Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation shop located at 311 FFA Drive in Kalispell, MT. All meetings are open to the public. Members of the public wishing to present an item/request to the Board for consideration should provide this form along with any documents pertaining to the request to the Flathead County Parks Department at least 2 weeks prior to the requested meeting. Agenda items are granted on a "first-come, first-serve" basis.

- For trail related agenda items (trail construction, easement acquisition, maintenance, etc.) please provide review the Trail Evaluation Form (Appendix E) found in the Flathead County Trails Plan and provide a written description of how the proposal meets these criteria.
- For park related agenda items (proposed parks, park acquisition, park amenity, etc.) please review the 'Recommended Procedures for Evaluating Park Project Requests' found in the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and provide a written description of how the proposal meets the criteria.
- For weed related agenda items please review the Flathead County Weed Management Plan

## Appendix I: Sample Trail Maintenance Agreement

### AGREEMENT

BETWEEN FLATHEAD COUNTY AND \_\_\_\_\_ "LOCAL SPONSOR GROUP"  
CONCERNING TRAIL FINANCING AND MAINTENANCE

1. Recitals

- A) Flathead County (County) has submitted an application for the \_\_\_\_\_ "Name of grant" as the sponsor for the construction of an approximately  X mile, surface type path located in Flathead County along  Location known as the  Path name (Project).
- B) The grant application requires a matching fund of  X% of the total construction costs which the  "Local sponsor group" (Sponsor) has indicated they will be responsible for raising as indicated by a Project Specific Agreement dated  Date.
- C)  "Local sponsor group" (Sponsor) has agreed to provide an amount equal to 10% of the total anticipated trail construction of  Construction related cost, for use as the maintenance fund 'seed' required by the Flathead County Trail Administrative Policies adopted by the Flathead County Board of Commissioners on  Date.

2. OBLIGATIONS- County

County will act as the designated applicant for the  Name of grant and will be responsible for fulfilling the requirements contained in the Project specific Agreement.

Within 5 years of 'substantial completion' of the project, Flathead County will match the amount in the maintenance fund account, up to 50% of the Sponsor provided maintenance fund 'seed'.

3. OBLIGATIONS- Sponsor

A project maintenance fund account unique to the project has been established with the Flathead County Treasurer's Office (A101-  account number). The account contains  \$X provided by the Sponsor and the purpose of the project maintenance fund is to generate revenue off the principal amount for routine maintenance of the project and for the principal to be available as needed over time for larger trail expenditures.

4. THE PARTIES FURTHER AGREE THAT:

- A) All portions of the trail shall be situated on permanent public access easements.  
B) The trail is not intended by the County to be plowed or groomed for winter use.

DATED \_\_\_\_\_  
(LOCAL SPONSOR GROUP)

DATED \_\_\_\_\_  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Flathead County, Montana

By \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

By \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name), Chair

## Appendix J: Trail Etiquette<sup>1</sup>

### Sharing the Trails

Some of the trails you'll visit on the forest are multiple-use, meaning that hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders and off-highway vehicle riders may all share the same trail. A basic etiquette rule is **Wheels Yield to Heels**. Keep this in mind when approaching other trail users. Bicyclists or motorized vehicles yield to all other users while hikers, walkers, yield to horseback riders.

### Safety on the Trail

It is every trail users responsibility and right to ensure their own safety and expect safe practice from other trail users. Exercise caution at all times, follow guidelines and rules of the trails. Preventing accidents or injuries is the first step, acting responsibly if something does happen is the second. Always think clearly!

### What is Trail Etiquette?

Trail etiquette can be described as the polite way to use trails. It outlines guidelines for the many users that ride, walk, hike, or bike trails. If you have never considered trail etiquette to be one of the more important aspects of trail use, you may want to reconsider. Trail etiquette should be a major part of any trail users experience. Trail use is a privilege that cannot be abused or disrespected, so making trail etiquette a priority allows everyone to enjoy the outdoors and have a good time while being safe and courteous. Also remember everyone is out there for the same reasons, to enjoy nature and to enjoy what they are doing.

When travelling multi-use trails, you may encounter many different forms of trail use, such as hikers, bikers, off-road vehicle users, horseback riders, etc. Therefore the user must adjust to different regulations (who passes first, who slows down, who gets the right of way).

If trail users conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, respect the environment and the other users, the trail experience will only get better. Keep safety and etiquette in mind when you are participating in trail use, this way trails will stay in good condition and the privilege will remain accessible for everyone.

### Basic Trail Etiquette

- Be aware of other trail users.
- Stay to the right of the trail (except when passing).
- Slow down at corners.
- Always clean up after yourselves.
- Obey all the trail rules.
- Give a clear warning signal when passing: call out passing on your left.
- Always look ahead and behind when passing.
- Travel at reasonable speed.



<sup>1</sup> *Sharing the Trails*. US Forest Service, [www.fs.usda.gov/detail/btnf/recreation/?cid=fseprd509212](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/btnf/recreation/?cid=fseprd509212).

- Keep pets on a leash in congested areas.
- Move off the trail when letting others pass.
- Yield to other trail-users when entering and crossing trail.
- Do not disturb wildlife.
- Stay on the trail (respect the environment, do not venture off the trails).
- Do not litter.
- Do not drink or contaminate water sources (wash 100 feet away from any nearby water source).
- Use provided toilet facilities (if you are unable to find a facility, dig a hole 6 inches deep at least 200 feet from any open water).
- Do not make fires in new fire rings (use picnic areas and existing rings if provided).
- Respect wildlife. Your surroundings are home to many plants and animals: you are the visitor.
- Obey all posted signs. These indicate special restrictions that apply to the trail you are on.

### **Hiking with Animals**

- Clean up after your animals.
- Keep them on a leash or lead where required or in crowded areas.
- Give larger animals right of way.
- Do not let your animal disturb wildlife or others.
- Keep them on the trails.

### **General Trail Etiquette for Certain Activities**

#### ***Hikers, Walkers, Backpackers***

- Move off the trail whenever possible for other trail users.
- When meeting someone riding a horse, step off the trail to the downhill side and speak calmly. That allows the horse to recognize you as human.
- Dogs can potentially frighten horses. Be sure to keep your dog quiet, close to you and still when sharing a trail with horseback riders.
- **AVOID SPREADING SEEDS:** Help keep weeds out of our forests. Noxious weeds threaten our healthy ecosystems. Stay on trail, drive on designated roads, use weed-free hay, check your socks, for hitchhikers when you get back to the trailhead. Let's keep our forests strong and clean.
- When hiking in a group, hike single-file, never taking up more than half the trail, and stay on the trail itself. Over time, off-trail use can badly erode switchbacks and destroy drainage diversions. When a group meets a single hiker, it's generally preferable for the single hiker to yield and step safely to the side.
- Hiker v. hiker: hikers going uphill have the right of way. On occasion an uphill hiker may let others come downhill while they take a breather, but remember that's the uphill hiker's call.

#### ***Mountain Bikers, Bikers***

It is important that you let your fellow trail users know you're coming - a friendly greeting is a good method. Anticipate other trail users as you ride around corners. Bicyclists must yield to other non-motorized trail users, unless the trail is clearly signed for bike-only travel. Bicyclists traveling downhill yield to ones headed uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic. In general, we ask that bikers make each pass a safe and courteous one.

- Know your ability, equipment and the area.

- Move off the trail for less mobile users, including hikers and horseback riders.
- Do not ride under conditions where you leave evidence of passing, i.e. after rain.
- Stay on the trail.
- Do not ride through streams.
- Make presence known at corners or blind spots.
- Control your bicycle.
- Always yield trail.
- Conscientious mountain bikers will call out as they come down steep slopes or blind switchbacks, and should also let you know if there are other bikers following them.
- Bikes should never pass a horse from behind. Call out that you want to pass, so the rider can turn the horse around to face the bike. When a horse is coming towards you, bikers should stop, move to the downhill side of the trail and say "hello." If the animal appears anxious, bikers should consider taking off backpacks or helmets and dismounting bikes.
- **AVOID SPREADING SEEDS:** Help keep weeds out of our forests. Noxious weeds threaten our healthy ecosystems and livelihoods. Stay on trail, ride on designated roads, check your socks, and bikes for hitchhikers when you get back to the trailhead. Let's keep our forests strong and clean.

### ***Equestrians***

- Practice minimum impact techniques.
- Observe speed limits.
- Always clean up after your horse.
- Avoid campsites used by other trail users.
- Keep horses in campsite only long enough to unpack or pack them.
- Stock tied to trees ruins trees and turf: do so only for a short time. Use tie lines.
- Never tie horses within 200 feet of lakes, streams or springs.
- **AVOID SPREADING SEEDS:** Help keep weeds out of our forests. Noxious weeds threaten our healthy ecosystems and livelihoods. Stay on trail, use weed seed free hay, check your socks, clothing and horse tails for hitchhikers when you get back to the trailhead. Let's keep our forests strong and clean.

### ***ATVs, Motor vehicles, electric bicycles, off-highway vehicles***

- Approach pedestrians slowly, pull over and turn off your engine.
- When passing someone, follow at a safe distance until you reach a safe place to pass: pass slowly.
- Minimize noise with proper care and operation of your vehicle.
- Respect trail closures.
- Stay on the trail.
- Do not ride on areas that are either wet, have loose soil, steep slopes, meadows or swamps.
- Motorized vehicle riders should stop their vehicle, turn off the engine and let horseback riders pass. Additionally, motorized users should allow the horses to move a considerable distance down the trail before starting the engine back up.
- **AVOID SPREADING SEEDS:** Help keep weeds out of our forests. Noxious weeds threaten our healthy ecosystems and livelihoods. Stay on trail, drive on designated roads, check your vehicle for hitchhikers when you get back to the trailhead. Let's keep our forests strong and clean.

**During hunting season:**

- Hikers should wear at least one article of hunter orange viewable from all directions such as a hat, jacket, or vest. Cover your backpack with orange.
- Horseback riders should wear a hunter orange vest and helmet cover. Use a hunter orange vest or rump sheet on your horse.
- Dogs should wear hunter orange or other visible color, like a vest, leash, coat, shirt or bandana

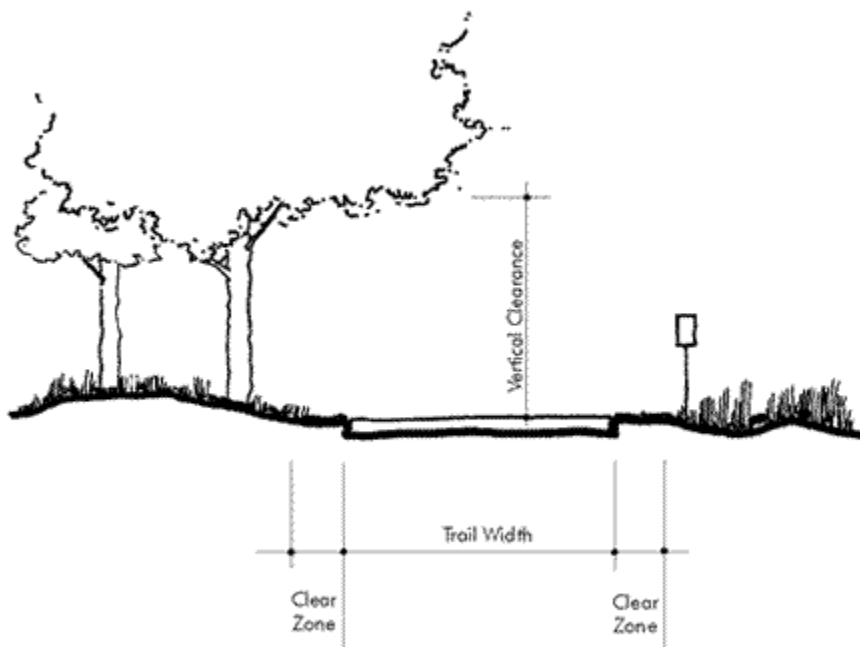
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## Appendix K: Trail Specifications<sup>2</sup>

While it is most common for use modes to be combined on trails or within corridors, *Iowa Trails 2000* discusses each mode to ensure that the needs of various users are thoroughly considered. When combining use modes, the guidelines for each mode should be consulted and the most stringent should be used (see "Multi-Use Corridors"). The modes considered include hiking/walking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian, snowmobiling, off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and motorcycles (canoe trail designation is covered later). Each of these use modes is described below, and guidelines are set forth relating to the following design considerations.

- **Clear Trail Width** refers to the width of the traveled part of the trail that is free of protruding objects and obstacles, such as trees and overgrown vegetation (see Figure 4-5).
- **Clear Zones** refer to the area on each side of the trail between the traveled surface and any obstructions, such as trees, walls, or fences (see Figure 4-5).
- **Vertical Clearance** refers to the height above the trail which is free from protruding objects and overhead obstructions, such as tree branches or bridges (see Figure 4-5).

FIGURE 4-5: TRAIL DIMENSIONS



- **Trail surface** refers to the type of surface on the traveled part of the trail, such as asphalt, concrete, granular, or alternative. Surface quality is affected by tread obstacles, such as roots or rocks, and by any openings such as gaps and grates located within the trail surface.
- **Drainage** refers to techniques used to move and keep water off the trail and trail embankment.

<sup>2</sup> Iowa Trails 2000

<https://iowadot.gov/iowabikes/trails/chapter-four-design-guidelines/section-3-use-modes>

- **Alignment** refers to the horizontal curvature of the trail.



- **Profile** refers to the vertical curvature of the trail.



- **Edge protection** refers to any protective barrier designed to separate the trail from its surrounding environment, such as a fence or curb. As a general rule, curbs should not be less than 4 inches in height. Other types of edge protection are discussed, where appropriate, under each trail mode.

These design guidelines are meant as general recommendations. Many of the design considerations listed above will be impacted by local conditions, such as topography, right-of-way width, and intensity of use. Each trail project is unique, and while these guidelines should be employed wherever possible, deviations may occur.

## Hiking/Walking Trails

Pedestrian facilities can take several forms. Hiking/walking trails, sidewalks and pedestrian trails provide different user experiences for pedestrians.

Hiking/walking trails, covered in this section, are facilities used exclusively by pedestrians, and are typically found in natural areas. They offer a low-impact means of allowing pedestrians to come in contact with the natural environment. Hiking/walking trails are used by a variety of people with a broad range of abilities, skill levels, and desired experiences, and should be designed to accommodate all persons. New and reconstructed trails should be made as accessible as possible while maintaining the essential character of the resource. Furthermore, all trail amenities, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and picnic tables should comply with the ADA accessibility guidelines. Because of their rustic nature, the guidelines for hiking/walking trails are very general, and trail design will be primarily determined by site conditions.

### Clear Trail Width

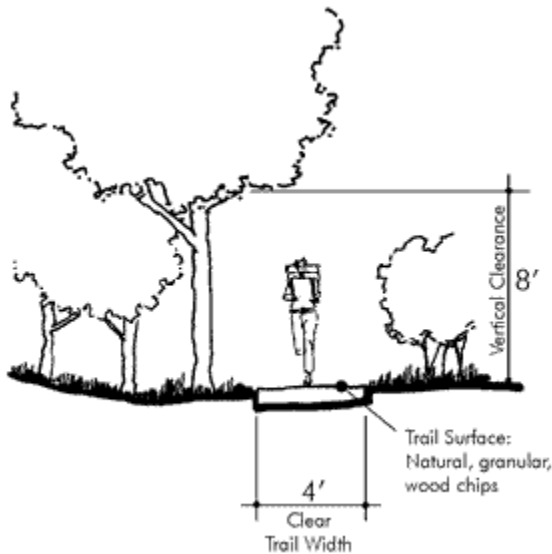
- Recommended clear trail width for hiking/walking trails: 4 feet (this may be reduced based on site conditions and desired trail experience) (see Figure 4-6).
- Hiking/walking trails should include widened areas at regular intervals to allow users to pass one another. These widened areas should be at least 5 feet by 5 feet.
- In urban or suburban locations, hiking/walking trails should be set back at least 5 feet from any roadway curb.

### Clear Zones



Hiking/walking trails do not typically require clear zones, since users are moving at relatively slow speeds. In natural areas, underbrush should be trimmed so that it does not hang over the trail edge or obstruct the traveled way.

**FIGURE 4-6: TRAIL DIMENSIONS FOR HIKING/WALKING TRAILS**



### **Vertical Clearance**

- Hiking/walking trails should maintain an 8-foot minimum vertical clearance (see Figure 4-6). If the hiking/walking trail is used by cross-country skiers during the winter months, the average snow level should be added to the 8-foot minimum.

### **Trail Surface**

- Hiking/walking trails may be surfaced with wood chips or crushed stone, or may be made of compacted earth. In any case, the surface should be firm and stable. It should be noted, however, that wood chips are not considered an accessible surface.
- In wet areas a boardwalk is recommended (see "[Wetland Boardwalks](#)").
- Any tread obstacles, such as rocks or roots, imbedded into the trail surface should be less than 2 inches.
- Any openings within the trail surface, including on bridges, should not permit passage of a 0.5-inch diameter sphere and should be perpendicular to the dominant direction of travel.

### **Drainage**

Because users of a hiking/walking trail will come in direct contact with the trail surface, drainage is very important. Natural surface trails can become watercourses during heavy rains, causing severe erosion. The following methods effectively move water off the trail.

- In flat areas, the trail should be cross-sloped or crowned at approximately 2 percent.
- Where a trail is benched into a slope, a swale on the uphill side should be considered to catch water before it crosses the trail.
- Culverts may be necessary to move water under the trail.
- Disturbed areas should be seeded and mulched or sodded to prevent erosion.

### **Alignment**

Users of hiking/walking trails can navigate even the tightest of turns. Alignment guidelines are not necessary for hiking/walking trails.

### **Profile**

It is recommended that no more than one-third of the total trail length for a hiking/walking trail exceed 8.3 percent. In addition, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Trail grade may be 5 percent or less for any distance.
- Trail grade may be 8.3 percent for a maximum distance of 200 feet.
- Trail grade may be 10 percent for a maximum distance of 30 feet.
- Trail grade may be 12.5 percent for a maximum distance of 10 feet.

The trail grade between the maximum grade segments should return to 5 percent for a minimum distance of 5 feet to allow resting opportunities for people who have difficulty traveling over sloped surfaces.

If, due to local topography, the trail would be steeper than the above recommendations permit, switchbacks should be used to lessen the overall slope.

### **Edge protection**

Edge protection is not required on a hiking/walking trail; however, if provided it should be at least 4 inches. Pedestrians with vision impairments tend to adjust their obstacle detection to a slightly higher level on hiking/walking trails because of all the small obstacles contained within a natural trail surface. Edge protection that is at least 4 inches high is much more likely to be detected.

### **Pedestrian Trails**

Pedestrians are typically accommodated with other trail users such as bicyclists and in-line skaters, within a multi-use corridor. In some cases, however, pedestrians may be accommodated on an exclusive trail, as a means of separating pedestrians from faster moving bicyclists and in-line skaters.

Where pedestrian use is expected, facilities should be accessible to a variety of people with a broad range of abilities, skill levels, and desired experiences, and should be designed to accommodate all persons. New and reconstructed trails should be made as accessible as possible while maintaining the essential character of the resource. Furthermore, all trail amenities, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and picnic tables, should comply with the ADA accessibility guidelines.

Pedestrian trails, unlike hiking/walking trails, are designed for a more formalized trail experience. Whereas hiking/walking trails may be quite rugged, pedestrian trails are typically designed for more leisurely walking on finished surfaces.

### **Clear Trail Width**

- Recommended width for pedestrian trails: 5 feet.

### **Clear Zones**

Because of the relatively slow speed of pedestrians, clear zones are not necessary.

### **Vertical Clearance**

- Pedestrian trails should maintain an 8-foot minimum clearance. If the hiking/walking trail is used by cross-country skiers during the winter months, the average snow level should be added to the 8-foot minimum.

## **Trail Surface**

Pedestrian trails, as discussed above, will almost always exist in conjunction with non-motorized multi-use trails. Their surface, therefore, should be the same as that used for the adjacent multi-use trail. Where pedestrian trails occur alone, they may be asphalt, concrete, or granular. Whenever possible, the surface of a pedestrian trail should be smooth and free of tread obstacles. Any openings imbedded into the trail surface should not permit passage of a 0.5-inch diameter sphere and should be perpendicular to the dominant direction of travel.

## **Drainage**

- Pedestrian trails should have a 2 percent cross-slope.

## **Alignment**

Users of pedestrian trails can navigate even the tightest of turns. Alignment guidelines are not necessary for pedestrian trails.

## **Profile**

It is recommended that no more than one-third of the total trail length for a pedestrian trail exceed 8.3 percent. In addition, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Trail grade may be 5 percent or less for any distance.
- Trail grade may be 8.3 percent for a maximum distance of 200 feet.
- Trail grade may be 10 percent for a maximum distance of 30 feet.
- Trail grade may be 12.5 percent for a maximum distance of 10 feet.

The trail grade between the maximum grade segments should return to 5 percent for a minimum distance of 5 feet to allow resting opportunities for people who have difficulty traveling over sloped surfaces.

## **Edge protection**

Edge protection is not required on a pedestrian trail; however, if provided it should be at least 4 inches.

## **Bicycle Trails**

There are extensive guidelines that have been established for bicycle facilities. Bicycles, however, are unlikely to ever enjoy exclusive use of a trail facility. In most cases, bicycle trails will also accommodate pedestrians and in-line skaters on a single paved treadway.

Because bicycles typically travel at higher speeds than pedestrians, trail geometrics are a major consideration. The AASHTO Guide is an invaluable resource when designing bicycle trails. The guide gives detailed information on alignment and profile layout and design.

## **Clear Trail Width**

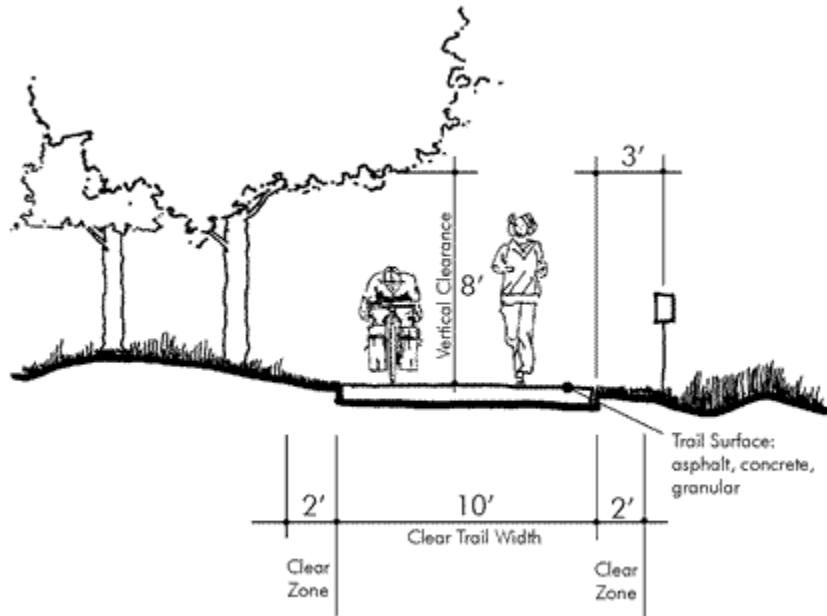
- Recommended width for two-way bicycle trail: 10 feet (may be increased to 12 feet depending trail traffic) (see Figure 4-7).
- Recommended width for one-way bicycle trail: 6 feet (Separated one-way trails in the same corridor should have a minimum 2-foot median between them).

## **Clear Zones**

- Bicycle trails should maintain a minimum 2-foot graded area on each side of the trail, graded at a maximum slope of 6:1 (see Figure 4-7).

- Bicycle trails should maintain a minimum 1-foot buffer zone between the edge of the graded clear zone and any fixed objects such as signs or trees. On bridges this guideline does not apply (see Figure 4-7).

**FIGURE 4-7: TRAIL DIMENSIONS FOR BICYCLE TRAILS**



### **Vertical Clearance**

Bicycle trails should maintain an 8-foot minimum vertical clearance (see Figure 4-7).

### **Trail Surface**

- Asphalt or concrete are the preferred surfaces for bicycle trails.

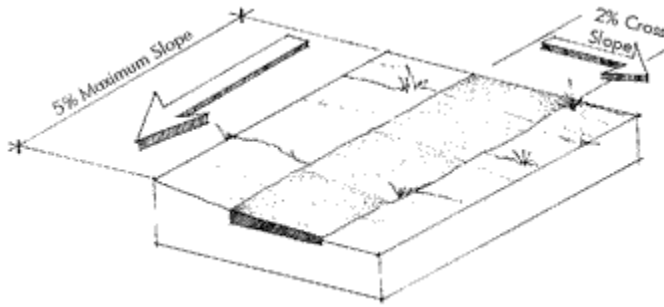
The surface of a bicycle trail should be smooth and free of tread obstacles. In some cases, granular surfacing may be used as an interim solution. Granular trails can be difficult to maintain, and can be harder on bicycles than paved trails. In addition, granular surfacing eliminates use of the trail by in-line skaters. Any decision to use granular surfacing for bicycle trails should be carefully evaluated.

### **Drainage**

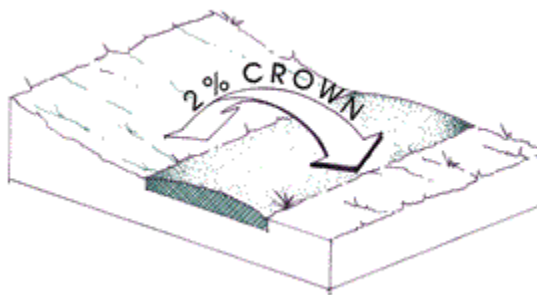
It is very important that bicycle trails are well drained. Standing water on the trail will adversely affect the trail surface and decrease the life and quality of the trail.

- Bicycle trails should not exceed a uniform cross slope of 2 percent (see Figure 4-8). Crowning of the trail at 2 to 3 percent is acceptable, but may be more difficult and costly to construct (see Figure 4-9).
- Where a trail is benched into a slope, a swale on the uphill side should be considered to catch water before it crosses the trail (see Figure 4-10).
- Culverts may be necessary to move water under the trail.
- Disturbed areas should be seeded and mulched or sodded to prevent erosion.

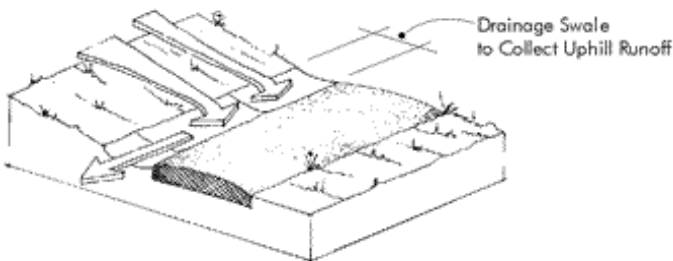
**FIGURE 4-8: TRAIL CROSS SLOPE**



**FIGURE 4-9: CROWNING OF A TRAIL**



**FIGURE 4-10: TRAIL WITH DRAINAGE SWALE**



### **Alignment**

The design of bicycle trail alignment can be as complex as roadway design. Many factors must be taken into consideration, including design speed, the surface type, and sight lines. The AASHTO Guide and "Minnesota Bicycle Transportation Planning and Design Guidelines" offer detailed information on alignment and superelevation. In general, a typical curve radius for a bicycle trail will be approximately 100 feet.

Another issue to consider when designing a trail's alignment is visibility on horizontal curves, which is based on stopping sight distance. Stopping sight distance refers to the amount of time it would take a user to stop once an obstruction has come into view. As a general rule, the distance a user can see along the trail should never be less than the distance it would take that user to stop. Procedures for determining stopping sight distance are detailed in the AASHTO Guide and should be applied to both alignment and profile.

## **Profile**

The profile of a bicycle trail is also a major consideration which requires detailed analysis and design. Issues to consider when designing a trail's profile include steepness (or overall grade of the trail) and stopping sight distance (discussed above). The following recommendations are for general planning purposes only. Final trail design requires more detailed analysis based primarily on the AASHTO Guide.

- Maximum recommended grade for bicycle trails: 5 percent.
- Grades on bicycle trails steeper than 5 percent are possible, but should be restricted to distances as indicated in the AASHTO Guide.

Stopping sight distance applies to vertical curves (hills) just as it does to horizontal curves. This consideration is especially important on downhill sections, as speeds will be higher. As described above, the AASHTO Guide is an invaluable resource for detailed trail design, and should be consulted during the final design process.

## **Edge Protection**

Edge protection, typically in the form of fencing, is required on bicycle trails only in areas where safety is a concern. Such safety considerations should be evaluated in detail during the final design of the trail. If fencing is provided, it should be at least 42 inches high. Some possible situations where fencing might be warranted include:

- Locations where the land on either side of the trail drops off steeply.
- Locations where sharp curves may cause users to lose control and leave the trail.
- Locations where adjacent uses, such as railroad tracks or active industry, may cause a threat to trail user safety.
- Bridges.

Where fencing is included, rub-rails should be installed for the safety of bicyclists and wheelchair users. Rub-rails should be installed at ground level and at the general level of an adult bicyclist's handlebars.

## **Mountain Bike Trails**

Mountain bike trails are typically rugged, off-road facilities. They have far less stringent guidelines than non-motorized multi-use trails, but can accommodate only one type of bicycle. The hallmark of mountain bike trails is the "single track," which is a narrow pathway with many hills and sharp turns. Such facilities can vary greatly in difficulty.

Recently, there has been a surge of people who recreate in off-road wheelchairs that are designed similarly to mountain bikes. However, not every mountain biking trail will accommodate the additional width of off road wheelchairs (approximately 28 to 34 inches). Therefore, trail designers should post objective information about the minimum clear width of the trail, so people who use off road wheelchairs can make informed recreation decisions.

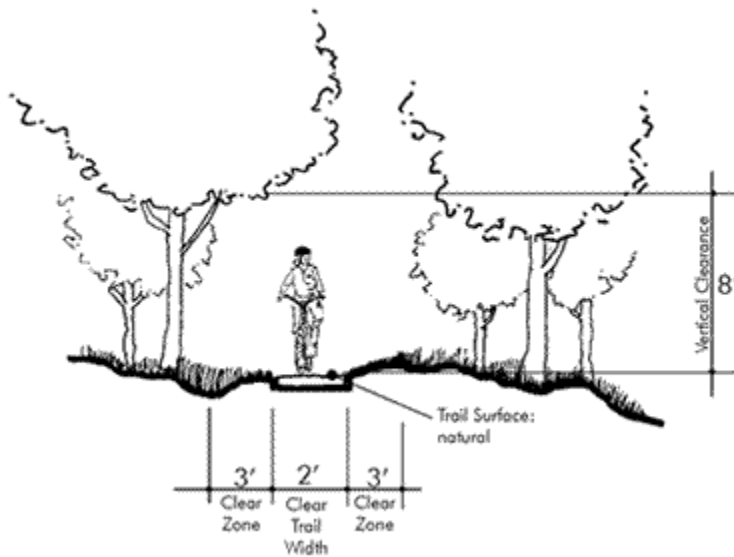
## **Clear Trail Width**

- Desirable width for mountain bike trails: 2 feet (see Figure 4-15).

## **Clear Zones**

- Shrubby vegetation should be removed to a distance of 3 feet on each side of the tread. Established trees and grasses may remain (see Figure 4-15).
-

**FIGURE 4-15: TRAIL DIMENSIONS FOR MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS**



### **Vertical Clearance**

- Mountain bike trails should maintain an 8-foot minimum clearance (see Figure 4-15).

### **Trail Surface**

- Preferred surface for mountain bike trails: compacted earth.

### **Drainage**

Without proper drainage, mountain bike trails may become severely eroded. Several options exist for properly draining mountain bike trails.

- Mountain bike trails should be cross-sloped at 3 to 5 percent.
- Flexible waterbars or swales should be used to remove water from trails.
- Special consideration should be given to placement of trails.

### **Alignment**

Alignment of mountain bike trails will primarily depend on the difficulty of the trail to be constructed. In general, the tighter the turn, the more challenging a trail may become.

### **Profile**

- Maximum overall grade for mountain bike trails: 10 percent. This level of steepness will allow minor increases or decreases in slope to avoid obstacles. Dips and inclines should be built into the trail to provide interest and facilitate drainage.

### **Edge Protection**

Edge protection is not usually required for mountain bike trails. In areas where safety is of great concern, fences with a minimum height of 42 inches should be installed.

### **Snowmobile Trails**

Snowmobile trails are unique among the trail modes considered in *Iowa Trails 2000* because their use will only take place in winter. This seasonal dependency necessitates some unique design considerations. In addition, snowmobiles are capable of high speeds, increasing the need for safety through trail design. As with all motorized trails, signing should be used to warn non-motorized

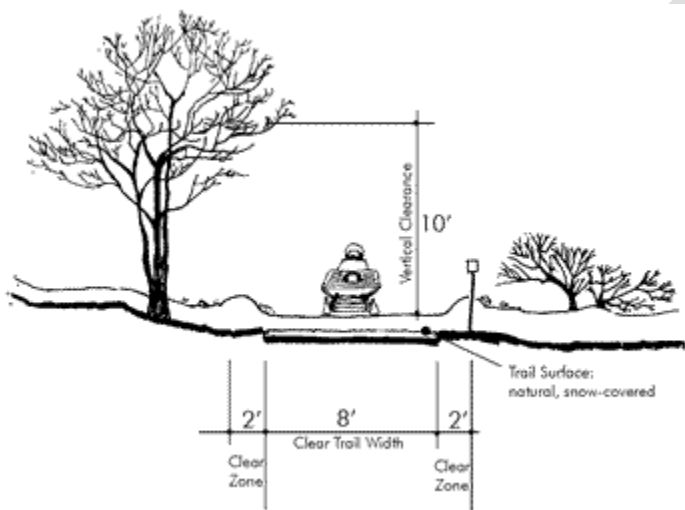
users of the predominate use mode. In some situations clearly indicated dual trails can be indicated for the safe sharing of a corridor by motorized and non-motorized users.

### Clear Trail Width

- Desirable groomed surface for one-way snowmobile trails: 8 feet (see Figure 4-17).
- Desirable groomed surface for two-way snowmobile trails: 10 feet.
- At sharp corners or unusually rugged terrain, the trail should be widened to accommodate grooming equipment and provide user safety.

The groomed surface refers to the area which is free from branches, large rocks, brush, stumps, and other obstructions that would create an uneven and unsafe surface even when the trail is covered with snow.

**FIGURE 4-17: TRAIL DIMENSIONS FOR SNOWMOBILE TRAILS**



### Clear Zones

- Snowmobile trails should maintain a 2-foot clear zone on each side of the groomed surface (see Figure 4-17).

### Vertical Clearance

- Snowmobile trails should maintain at least 10 feet of vertical clearance above the average snow level to accommodate grooming equipment (see Figure 4-17).

### Trail Surface

Many snowmobile trails are enjoyed by other trail users during the summer months. In these situations, the surface should be designed according to the needs of the additional user. If the trail is not used during the summer, a variety of surfaces are possible because the trail will be buried with snow for snowmobile use. The surface should be relatively flat and free from obstructions as listed above.

- Snowmobile trails may exist on an otherwise unprepared surface, provided that stumps, brush, and other obstructions are removed. Snowmobile trails within road rights-of-way demonstrate this type of surface.
- Snowmobile trails may exist on crushed stone surfacing.
- Snowmobile trails may exist on wooden bridges or boardwalks when crossing watercourses or wetlands.



- Placement of snowmobile trails on asphalt surfaces should be avoided, as studs will cause damage to the asphalt. When implementing a snowmobile trail along with an asphalt trail, a natural surface corridor should be provided and clearly marked for snowmobile use.

### **Alignment**

- Minimum forward visibility for snowmobile trails: 50 feet.
- Minimum radius for snowmobile trail curves: 25 feet.
- Where hazards exist (such as a steep drop-off) near a curve, the trail should be superelevated.

### **Profile**

- Maximum slope for snowmobile trails: 12 percent.
- Maximum grade for shorter slopes (100 feet) on snowmobile trails: 25 percent.
- Snowmobile trails should ascend steep slopes at right angles to the contour lines (directly up the fall line). Ascending such slopes at angles could cause sliding of snowmobiles and slope erosion.

### **Edge Protection**

Edge protection is not usually required for snowmobile trails. In areas where safety is of great concern, fences should be installed.

### **Other Points to Consider**

- Water crossings: Even though ice may be in place for much of the snowmobiling season, water crossings without bridges are not acceptable as part of a snowmobile trail.
- Exposure: In order to extend the snowmobiling season, trails should be placed, wherever possible, to retain snow cover. Tree lines, woods, valleys, and north-facing slopes are areas that tend to retain snow, and these areas should be sought out for snowmobile trails.
- Signage: The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has developed uniform signage for snowmobile trails. The DNR's signage scheme should be used for all snowmobile trails. These signs should be installed before the first snowfall and removed in the spring.
- Maintenance: Snowmobile trails require a significant amount of maintenance, since winter storms can take their toll on trailheads, signage, and the groomed trail itself. Such maintenance issues should be considered during the initial planning stages of the project.
- Noise abatement: There is the potential for disturbance from snowmobile noise. For this reason, snowmobile trails should be placed as far as possible from residential areas. Other noise abatement possibilities include placing the trail behind existing vegetation or within valleys. In addition, sound monitoring and enforcement should be initiated to ensure that machines do not exceed the legal limits.

### **Off-Highway Vehicle Trails (3- and 4-wheeled)**

As with snowmobiles, off-highway vehicles (OHVs) are capable of high speeds, and safety is a primary consideration in the establishment of design guidelines. OHV trails may exist as either a nodal or linear facility, with nodal facilities offering looping trails within one designated area or park, and linear facilities offering connections between riding parks, communities, and support services. As with all motorized trails, signing should be used to warn non-motorized users of the predominate use mode. In some situations clearly indicated dual trails can be indicated for the safe sharing of a corridor by motorized and non-motorized users.

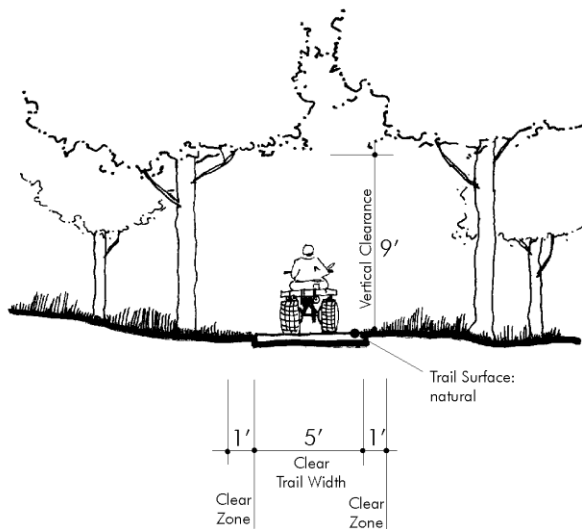
The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has recently established a policy regarding the acquisition and development of OHV parks (nodal facilities).

The following guidelines generally hold true for trails in both nodal and linear facilities.

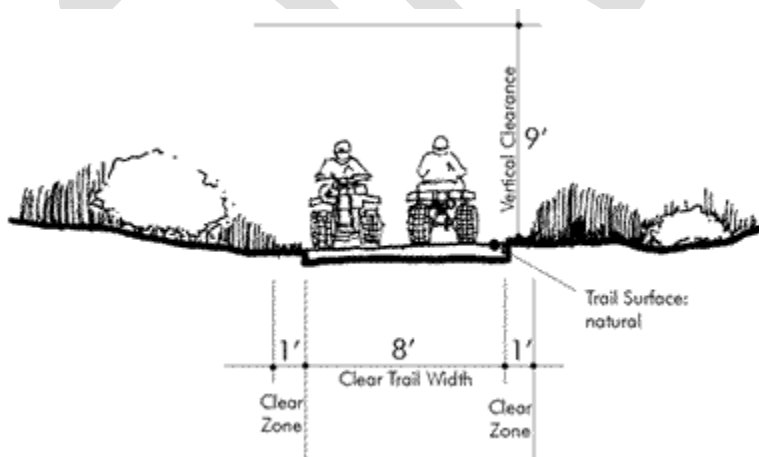
### Clear Trail Width

- Recommended width for a one-way OHV trail in a wooded area: 5 feet (see Figure 4-18).
- Recommended width for a two-way OHV trail in a wooded area: 8 feet.
- Recommended width for a one-way OHV trail in an open or grassy area: 4 feet (see Figure 4-19).
- Recommended width for a two-way OHV trail in an open or grassy area: 8 feet.
- Trail width on switchbacks or in areas with steep side slopes should be increased by 6 to 20 inches.
- On sharp curves, trail width should be increased by 1 foot.

**FIGURE 4-18: TRAIL DIMENSIONS FOR ONE-WAY OHV TRAILS IN WOODED AREAS**



**FIGURE 4-19: TRAIL DIMENSIONS FOR TWO-WAY OHV TRAILS IN OPEN AREAS**



### Clear Zones

- OHV trails should maintain a 1-foot minimum clear zone on each side of the trail (see Figures 4-18 and 4-19).

### **Vertical Clearance**

- OHV trails should maintain a vertical clearance of at least 9 feet (see Figures 4-18 and 4-19).

### **Trail Surface**

- OHV trails should have a natural surface.
- OHV trails should be placed on soils that are resistant to erosion. Sandy soils should be avoided. County soil survey maps should be consulted to determine the best location for an OHV trail.
- The OHV trail surface should be free of logs, large rocks, stumps, brush, and other obstructions, unless a more challenging experience is desired. In such a case, some obstacles may be left in place.

### **Drainage**

Improper drainage on OHV trails can lead to rutting and severe erosion. Trails can be drained by using changes in grade or rolling drain dips. Waterbars should be used as a last resort, as they increase maintenance costs.

### **Alignment**

- Minimum radius for curves on OHV trails: 10 feet.
- OHV trails should be widened slightly at curves for safety reasons (see "Clear Trail Width" above).

### **Profile**

- Variety in grades for OHV trails is recommended, as it increases the challenge and desirability of the trail, and facilitates drainage.
- Minimum slope for OHV trails (for drainage purposes): 2 percent.
- Maximum continuous slope for OHV trails: 8 percent.
- Maximum grade for shorter slopes (100 feet) on OHV trails: 15 percent.

### **Edge Protection**

Edge protection is not usually required for OHV trails. In areas where safety is of great concern, fences should be installed.

### **Other Points to Consider**

- OHV parks: Facilities specifically designated for OHV use can offer great challenge and variety. Such parks are typically designed with a system of loops, beginning at a trailhead and possibly offering several loops of different ability levels. OHV parks are likely to be shared by motorcyclists, so loops should be planned for these users, as well.
- Erosion: To reduce the potential of erosion, OHV trails should avoid unstable soils and provide adequate drainage, especially on steep slopes and hillsides.
- Noise abatement: OHVs may reach noise levels significantly higher than allowed by the Code of Iowa. Natural buffers such as hills, ridges, and existing vegetation can help to mitigate noise impacts. To reduce noise conflicts, OHV parks should have regular sound level monitoring to ensure all OHVs comply with the Iowa Code.

## Appendix L: Draft Trails Coordinator Job Description



### **DRAFT** Trails Coordinator

<b>Department:</b> Parks and Recreation	<b>Reports To:</b> Parks and Recreation Director
	<b>Job Status:</b> Full Time, Regular

#### **Position Summary:**

This position is responsible for preliminary trail development planning, ongoing use planning, volunteer coordination, public communication, grant management, and assisting with trail maintenance projects.

#### **Essential Functions:**

1. Manage the public process for trail planning and maintenance projects.
2. Manage and facilitate the grant process; complete and submit all required reports.
3. Work as volunteer coordinator in recruitment, training, and implementation of volunteer projects.
4. Administer maintenance agreements for County sponsored trails.
5. Maintain trail condition inventories.
6. Manage all County trail maps, signage, wayfinding and gates necessary for proper trail usage.
7. Serve as the primary point-of-contact for all trail user groups, advisory groups, and citizens.
8. Oversee and manage all trail-related agreements.
9. Track upcoming trail projects, create maps for future trail proposals, map trail maintenance areas, coordinate interdepartmental work, and write trail condition reports for local leaders.
10. Perform necessary work and build effective working relationships with applicable internal/external stakeholders and user groups.
11. Act as a liaison between the County government and municipalities of Columbia Falls, Whitefish, and Kalispell.
12. Ensure that trail/park user and citizen groups participate in route planning, design, and trail usage; coordinate with local interest groups to optimize trail stewardship and involvement.
13. Research, develop and make presentations to local groups regarding trail/park issues.

14. Ensure proper and responsible communication about trail opening, closings, maintenance, etc.
15. Perform related tasks as assigned.

**Minimum Position Qualifications:**

**Education:**

A combination of education and/or experience working in one or more areas of planning, recreation, environmental studies, and resource management.

**Skills:**

- Demonstrate strong oral and written communication skills, facilitation, negotiation and interpersonal skills, including experience with public speaking
- Ability to work independently
- Planning, organization, and problem solving skills
- Ability to be innovative in promoting collaboration across organizations
- Experience working with volunteers
- Proficiency in word processing, spreadsheet, database, email, GIS, and other office software
- Knowledge and experience in trail development would be an asset
- Strong interpersonal, organizational, multi-tasking, negotiation and analytical skills with the ability to work independently within a team
- Ability to obtain a Montana Driver's License
- Ability to work occasional evenings and weekends

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Appendix M: Proposed Trail Network

