

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ABBREVIATED MINUTES  
August 12th, 2010  
4:00 – 6:00 pm

<b>Present:</b>	Tim Aldrich	Jenny Tollefson	<b>Absent:</b>
	Jed Little	Mary Manning	Jeff Stevens
	Bob Clark	Gary Knudsen	
	Ethel MacDonald	Bert Lindler	
	Adam Liljebblad	Maureen Hartman	

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr

**Updates from Jackie**

Jackie and Tim and many other local conservationists attended the Senator Baucus LWCF event at the Blackfoot River, Johnsrud. Jackie explained that LWCF dollars are generally divided between "stateside" funding and federal projects. The stateside funding goes directly to FWP who administers the program. Cities, Counties, and the State can apply to receive the funds. The LWCF bill introduced by Baucus currently does not specify any percentage set-aside for stateside projects. While full funding of LWCF is the most important issue, we also need state set-aside to continue to provide "close to home" nature and recreational opportunities for our citizens, which is especially important during these tough economic times. Jackie mentioned a 10 page report that's really helpful in understanding the history of LWCF funding: [http://www.rff.org/RFF/Documents/RFF-BCK-ORRG\\_LWCF.pdf](http://www.rff.org/RFF/Documents/RFF-BCK-ORRG_LWCF.pdf)

On page 4 there is a graph that shows how the state-side funding was strong in the 1960s and 70s, which helped to build community parks all across the nation, including small rural towns all across Montana that would not have otherwise had the funds to do so. It also helped to build many river access points, including the one Senator Baucus took out at the Blackfoot River. But Stateside funding fell off in the 1980s and 90s. During the past several years, State set-aside from LWCF has only been ~10%, which has meant ~\$200,000 for all of MT state and local parks. Full LWCF funding with 40% State set-aside would provide more than \$3 million/year to MT state and local parks and projects.

Bob suggested that OSAC could write a letter to Baucus supporting an equitable share for stateside of LWCF funding, everyone agreed, and Tim volunteered to write the letter.

**Deschamps 1036 Acres**

Bob suggested that this property, since it is an active ranch with cattle grazing, should not be represented as habitat for wolves and coyote as they are listed by RMEF in the species list of the Level One application for County bond funding. It's more likely that coyotes are tolerated by the landowners to some degree (as Jackie and Council members did see one with pups on the Council fieldtrip) and wolves just pass through occasionally (as evidenced by the tracks & scat we saw on the OSAC fieldtrip). Jackie said she would mention it to RMEF and would not list those species in her referral to Council. Tim Aldrich asked if we were clear on whether or not there is public access along the west boundary of the area to be included in the conservation easement. Jackie said we should operate under the position that no public access will exist there.

Members then prepared their Final Evaluations for the property and unanimously scored it high enough to recommend the project for bond funding to Council.

### **Rough Cut - Thompson/Huff Properties in the Rattlesnake Valley**

Members discussed the Rough Cut evaluation criteria as it applied to the Bonnie Thompson and Rod Huff properties located at the base of Mt. Jumbo near the intersection of Rattlesnake Drive and Missoula Avenue. Bonnie's parcel is about 8.57 acres and Rod's parcel is 20.57 acres. Bonnie and Rod would like to "sell" the remainder of the acreage on Bonnie's parcel (6.28 acres) in fee title and grant a conservation easement on about 19.16 acres of Rod's parcel to the City for \$9,810, the cost of surveying and re-zoning . This low price reflects that Jackie would contribute a significant amount of her time to helping with the re-zoning request to OPG. This would essentially protect another 25.44 acres on Mt. Jumbo for \$385/acre. Although this land could not be further developed than as proposed, undevelopable open space land generally is valued around \$1000/acre.

Tim began the evaluation discussion by reminding everyone that since this property is in the Rattlesnake, it will be scrutinized solely due to its location. Jed said that Mt. Jumbo is a crown jewel in our open space system and thus we should continue to fill in the gaps whenever possible, especially at this low price. We observed how the property is heavily impacted by leafy spurge, but the City owns the property immediately adjacent to most of the property and on those lands, native grasses and forbs dominate the vegetation. It is important to continue protection of these native grasses by controlling weeds. Ethel said people from all over town use and enjoy Mt. Jumbo, not just Rattlesnake residents. Bob strongly felt that this is such a bargain that we should not pass it up. Mary said that removal of the barbed wire fencing that runs almost 1/2 way up the mountain for the benefit to wildlife is worth the price alone. Jenny said she was most swayed by Jed's statement about filling in the gaps.

Committee members were unable to say "yes" for the 4th criteria in the Ordinance Requirements section of the form (Expenditure balances open space types in the urban area?). After considerable discussion, it was determined that the 4<sup>th</sup> criterion did not reflect a requirement in the Ordinance.<sup>1</sup> A motion to remove this criterion from the group of Ordinance Requirements and put it in a new category, "Balance" was unanimously approved. This enabled completion of the Rough Cut Matrix by members. This resulted in unanimously approving continuing OSAC consideration of this project.

### **Other News:**

Adam indicated that he had heard that the USFS might be selling their Equipment Shop Facilities located at 14<sup>th</sup> and Catlin. This is of interest to the Committee and it was determined that Tim would pursue additional information and report back to the members.

Jackie announced that the new Park Board Representative to OSAC is Beth Hahn and her first meeting with us will be in September.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm with the next meeting date scheduled for 3:30 – 6:00pm on Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at Currents.

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<sup>1</sup> Jackie provided OSAC via email the next day the language from ordinance **12.56.080 Committee's review of conservation proposals** so that members could confirm balance must be considered for each project, but it is not a criteria that fails a project.