

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ABBREVIATED MINUTES

March 8th, 2012

4:00 – 6:00 pm

<b>Present:</b>	Mary Manning	Ethel MacDonald	<b>Absent:</b>
	Tim Aldrich	Adam Liljebblad	
	Bert Lindler	Matt Barnes	
	Jeff Stevens	Gary Knudsen	
	Jed Little	Beth Hann, Park Brd Rep	
	Gabe Millar	Jenny Tollefson	

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr, & Pelah Hoyt, FVLT

**Fieldtrip to 66 Acre Parcel off Deer Creek Rd**

OSAC visited a long narrow 66 acre parcel triangulated between I-90 to the north, the railroad tracks and the shooting range to the south, and Deer Creek Rd to the east. It is poorly suited for housing due to the constant noise from the highway and the sounds of guns blasting during the day at the shooting range, but during the height of the development boom, it was one of the few larger parcels still available on the urban edge. It was purchased by a local developer in late 2006 who planned for fairly dense housing. He has now offered to sell it to the City knowing of our interest in extending the Kim Williams Trail. This parcel represents the best location for the approximately 1 mile section between the current ending point of the KW Trail and Deer Creek Rd. We are waiting for the completion of an appraisal report.

The property exceeded most of our expectations as they were fairly low for this parcel due to its location. It in fact has a nice mix of old and young Ponderosa pine, some open grassland meadows with aspen patches, and a large approximately 20+ acre flat area along Deer Creek Road. The usual weeds such as knapweed are present, but not overwhelming. There does not appear to be any unique attributes or sensitive plant communities present and the property would be considered to have lower conservation values as compared to other City Open Space such as Mt. Jumbo.



We walked along the southern edge of the property along the fence that divides the active BNSF/MRL rail line. There is an approximately 30-40' drop off a steep cut down to the railroad. Between the boundary fence and the drop-off there might have been room for the Kim Williams Trail extension at some point in time, but much of the clay cut has slumped and eroded off and there are many points now where it would be impossible to place a trail. Thus, this property is the only place where the trail can be completed between the current ending point and Deer Creek Road.



We walked to the western tip of the property which ended with a significant drop-off. Jackie said she would get together with Dave Shaw and Morgan to determine how the trail would connect (*she did follow up with them and confirmed there is already a design prepared that will meet ADA grade*).

Over the past few years, demand has increased for more access to single-track dirt jogging trails, mountain bike trails, a bike skills course, and off-leash dog areas. Use of Mt. Jumbo, Mt. Sentinel and North Hills open space continues to increase each year, and these requested additional uses cannot be accommodated in our current open spaces. Jackie talked about the idea that this property could serve to take some pressure off other open spaces that have higher conservation values. The benched topography would allow the possibility of separating out some of these low-impact uses. The land would fall under Morgan's management as a conservation land and using 2006 Open Space Bond funds would preclude uses associated with an urban park, such as soccer fields, picnic shelters, and tennis courts.

Based upon the user groups that could benefit from the purchase of this property, there are increased opportunities for financial partnerships beyond the usual ones. For example, Run Wild Missoula and a couple biking groups could possibly contribute in addition to FWP (RTP grant) and FVLT. Jackie said she would like to target using approximately 2/3s bond funds and 1/3 "other" funding.

The alternative to purchasing the parcel is purchasing a trail easement. Jackie has already mentioned this to the owner.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm with the next meeting date scheduled for 4:00–6:00pm on May 8th at Currents.