

# Seeley Lake Trails Project Advisory Board Meeting

August 28, 2016 – 5 pm – The Hub

## 1. Comments, concerns & updates

Katie Knotek passed around a notice about an USFS event titled “*Come Celebrate our National Public Lands*” on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> at the Monture Guard Station.

Lee Boman mentioned that the Flathead National Forest is updating it's plan and good time to submit comments re: the forest plan – due 10/3.

Montana Musers has an announcement (I didn't get the announcement – but have emailed Rob Loveman for it. Jenny Rohrer announced that the next Pure Montana Tales event will be Thursday, Sept. 8 featuring Rick and Susie Graetz presenting “*This is the Crown of the Continent*”. Cathy created a summary of the tourism items from Glacier Country (handout attached). The Celebrate The Clearwater/Trails for Everyone Event was successful on July 10 – but we need ideas from this group for motorized uses, bike uses, etc – please submit!

## 2. Ron Cox: Seeley Lake Community Council Trails Group (SLCCTG)

Ron had emailed a history of the “Connecting the Community” trails network which was started by the Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce with a grant that allowed them to improve existing trails. About 4-5 years ago, it was discovered that the SLCC wasn't eligible to be a signatory on a contract so that slowed down their efforts. Recently, they've done some trails clearing but no trail development. Their strategy now is to cooperate with other non-profits who can get grants, such as the ATV club and the High School trail. They have about \$9,000+ in their bank account. If our Trails group wants to approach the SLCCTrails Group, Ron recommends to go through the Community Council. Their 'loan program' is oriented totally towards 'on the ground' work – not administrative or planning expenses. One unique power that the SLCCTG has is the ability to recommend projects to the County Commissioners (who can then make recommendations to an agency). One pending project is connecting Airport Road from the top of the High School Road to Cottonwood Lakes road – which is stalled more or less in easement questions. Kristin B Dickinson (DNRC) clarified that a portion of the road will cross high school property and is also impacted by the potential sewer construction – and Kristin said that in order for her to move forward with approval there must be an existing road – this is all stalled until what is happening with the sewer becomes more clear.

Another project that has bogged down is the High School to the Airport Trail– putting in a trail along the Airport Road. Public monies are being held back until there is enough money to complete the trail rather than doing work in a piecemeal fashion. Another goal is to connect Boy Scout Road to Archibald Loop Road – but there is a wetland there, so it can't be an all-season road. An additional goal is the creation of a trail north of Seeley by North Boy Scout Road. Another wish list is to have a pathway along Highway 83 so ATVs wouldn't have to use the road proper – the easement seems to be there for this.

Bottom line, the SLCCTG won't be effective unless they can partner with other groups to 'do all of their wish list'. Kristin mentioned that there is an opportunity for a trail to be created in the access road behind the cabins on Boy Scout Road. Rachel Feigley mentioned that it is a great idea to improve those utility easement trails – it would be a great thing to offer visitors if we can create a quality experience. However, it would take patching together the trail through rough easements, then a nice

gravel trail, then the highway – it might take 10 years but it would be worth it. One way Ron mentioned is that they could get more \$\$ from the County if CAPS increases their budget – but that won't touch any big projects.

### **3. Update on Fundraising for the Seeley Lake Trails Project**

CRC has had some success in our fundraising efforts for the Trails Project. We were awarded a \$21,000 planning grant from USDA, \$1,000 from Seeley Lake Community Foundation (SLCF). Headwaters Economics gave \$5,000 which was added to the \$1,800 in individual donations from community members at the July 10 Celebrate the Clearwater event. Add to that the Change Your Pace Challenge matching funds from SLCF, our Trails Funding totals a little over \$31,000. So we need to start working!

Cathy handed out an estimated timeline. Bill Wall stated that we've submitted all our paperwork signed for the USDA grant and are waiting for it to be finalized. Once we get the USDA grant, we have one year (or more with an extension) to complete the plan. In addition, CRC is applying for another grant for a marketing and communications plan through BitterRoot Economic Development District (BREDD). The next deadline is Wednesday, however CRC went to the County Commissioners and were told we need additional letters of support, so won't make this round of applications. As a result, we'll be on the docket for October 26, but BREDD has a 100% track record of success in its funding applications. Bill will be asking for letters of support from the agencies, NGOs and community groups.

### **4. Charter Updates:**

Lee Boman, Anne Beach, and Mark Williams came up with some updates for the charter – we need to finalize the geographic range for the plan, clarify the representation on the Advisory Council, etc. In the October meeting, we'll have a facilitated meeting to finalize the charter. Lee, Mark and Anne also mentioned the need for a solid marketing & communications plan. Lee outlined that we have a very large scope of work – we need to spell out concretely how communications will take place. Mark said that the opportunities exist for economic development, such as the yurt system, which happened because of an entrepreneurial development. Rachel clarified that there are two separate products – a communications strategy and a marketing strategy.

Lisa Moisey mentioned that there's a 1) public outreach plan as we develop our plans, 2) a communication plan as we work together and 3) a marketing strategy to market the plan. Rob Loveman said there should be a place to communicate when groups are doing 'on the ground' work and can ask for help – such as a Facebook Page for Trails. We will have a web page, access to interactive mapping, etc. We need one committee to coordinate these functions, says Lee – because the functions are all inter-related – call it Trails Central Intelligence?

Would communications be separate from economics/marketing? Bill Wall suggested that the communications folks sit down and figure out the best way to work – with the economic committee.

### **5. Trails Project Working Committees:**

Cathy passed out the Scope of Work committee structure featuring work items from the charter and put the tasks in categories. The group participated in defining the tasks for each committee as follows:

#### **Communications Committee Tasks:**

Keep the public engaged and informed – Ken K. mentioned that we need to step our communications to the community who need to understand and support our vision. This committee will coordinate

internal communications within the Trails Group & the community. There is some interface between the Communications and Marketing committee – but both will work on a portion of the overall communications and Marketing strategy and will collaborate to create a unified strategy.

Maintain a webpage, Facebook page, connections with other regional Trails groups. SL has great placement for connections to outlying communities. Consider Youtube – within the August Lockwood mentioned that within the mountain biking community, Youtube is a great resource.

Lisa Moisey said that during the planning process – we need to develop the question – who is our public (our market) – the elderly, the kids, plus the Ride the Divide race. Katie recognizes that we have other partners who market trails here and look at what other information that is out there already – MWA, Glacier Country. The current Tourism Montana Website has inadequate information about our community and members of the SLCF are working to update that site.

**Fundraising Committee Tasks:**– where should it go? Economic committee – or move it out to the side.

**Technical Committee Tasks:**

Coordinate the GIS mapping, develop the inventory - - coordinate with the agencies to get this done. Discovering what's possible – give people opportunity to look at maps and spit that back out. Pre-screen possibilities that don't meet any of the criteria. Review ecological/environmental considerations.

Complete a Trails inventory – USFS has a master trail inventory and there is a TPL report – which is a partial inventory. Do we need more work on inventory – there are private lands, DNRC, etc. Katie mentioned that there are many trails that the public might think are USFS trails, but are really user-made trails. Rachel mentioned that the USFS is willing to share their information. TNC has a roads inventory – which is similar to what DNRC has. Steve Kloetzel mentioned that the TNC inventory doesn't record if there are trees growing on the logging roads at this time – they have 1,200 miles of roads – so an inventory would need to be selective. Katie mentioned that an inventory might bring to light certain pathways that would benefit from being brought up to standard. SK mentioned the interest that mountain bikers have to bring a route up from Missoula through TNC land – that might make sense to look at what is the best route. People can share their input about good trails on FB – which can then lead to a further whittling down of routes. Question about GIS map – can it be designed to include comments? Katie mentioned that a GIS map could be created to record user comments about how trails are used. Larry Dent mentioned that he records his bike trails through on-line mapping systems – there needs to be more loops mapped. Cathy mentioned that we need to find out about these favorite routes that users like – get it out to the community and vote on it. There are apps for maps created by users already. Ken K. mentioned that there are other trails that could be used for motorized – like from the Snowmobile hut to the North Jocko trail. August Lockwood mentioned that when four wheelers come to town – if there aren't places for the ATV riders to go – they'll go other places. Steve mentioned that if this group opens up more Trails – they have to offer help – because the agencies are all beyond capacity now.

Kathleen Dent cautioned that we need to do prioritization of our efforts – maybe starting with the “Connecting the Community” piece – start to work on a prioritized area and build a model for outreach to the public, marketing, based on a smaller chunk of land. Once successful, move it out to the next ‘chunk’ – get the process together by doing a demonstration site. Cathy Kahnle mentioned that we

have to keep in mind a landscape scale approach to make sure that all trails that are considered keep in mind the big picture. we want to know where we want to go before we take on smaller projects so that everything is working toward the bigger picture that the community wants.

Rob Loveman said we first need a full inventory – which would facilitate the public outreach piece – a relatively simple list. Jon said we create overall maps of what we know is out there, and then discover how people are using the trails and what they want to create an initial map that can be a wish list. Swan Valley Connections new Trails map is going to be ready soon – in September. See what how they accomplished this.

**Economic/Marketing Committee Tasks:**

Bill mentioned that Ken Barber has coordinated an economic committee for the Trails Project, and this committee could work on a marketing strategy.

This committee must reach out to the businesses, work with Dept. of Commerce/Tourism, cost out how much it would cost to bring trails to standard, determine what infrastructure would be needed to support trails – trail head signs, bathrooms, etc. and communicate with the Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce.

**Public Participation Committee Tasks: (is this separate now from Communications?)**

Planning and implementing the public participation process – Jennifer Arnold is working to plan this as well. Lisa Moisey asked how broadly is JA's scope of work defined. Cathy mentioned that JA is helping us as much as we can afford. Bill mentioned that it would be good for the committee to have a short summary of her scope of work – Cathy and JA are working on a conceptual outline. Lisa said that she had some good sample conceptual documents that she could send us and would be happy to help Cathy and Jennifer to complete it.

Kathleen mentioned getting feedback from part-time residents from Missoula, Great Falls and Helena.

**Ground Crew Committee Tasks:**

Following up with people's trail ideas- explore where a 'trail head' would be

Implement Low hanging fruit projects

Work with the Forest service – get trained so we can clear trails correctly.

Educate the community about trails and trail maintenance.

Work with Boy Scouts/Girl Scout troops or others looking for projects

Cathy sent around sign up sheets - see the SIGN Ups below.

People expressed interest in doing a social get together in September. Next formal trails meeting will be in October.

Rachel Feigley said there will be a followup to the trails summit – possibly in Lincoln – sometime the first couple weeks in November.

**Ground Crew:**

Vickie Edwards (right of ways and easements)

Carol Fulton

Auguste Lockwood  
Jan Guelff  
Ken Kronsperger  
Katie Knotek (ad hoc)

**Economic/ Marketing:**

Mark Williams  
Jenny Rohrer  
Lee Boman - marketing  
Bill Wall

**Public Engagement/Outreach:**

Ken Kronsperger  
Rachel Feigley  
Jenny Rohrer  
Lee Boman - marketing  
Kathleen Dent  
Rob Loveman  
Jennifer Arnold

**Technical:**

Rob Loveman  
Larry Dent – Gps mapping  
Katie Knotek (ad hoc)