



**HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
August 13, 2019**



City of Helena

GENERAL MEMBERS

- Betsy Ross
- Eric Sivers
- Karen Reese
- Brian Barnes
- Mark O’Keefe

CITY OF HELENA STAFF

- Brad Langsather, Open Lands Manager
- Kristi Ponozzo, Director, P & R, Open Lands
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

CITY-COUNTY PARKS BOARD

- Ross Johnson

HELENA CITIZENS COUNCIL

- Nick Sovner

ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Helena Tourism Alliance Representative

- Andrea Opitz

PPLT Representative

- Evan Kulesa

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 326

TIME: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Call to Order

Welcome/Introductions/Visitors

Minutes Approval

HOLMAC Action Items

New Business

- 2019 Open Lands Work Plan Comments/Responses (See “Exhibit A”)

Reports from Subcommittees

- Report from PPLT

Public Comment

Next Meeting Date: September 10, 2019

Future Agenda Items:

Adjournment:

ADA NOTICE

The City of Helena is committed to providing access to persons with disabilities for its meetings, in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Montana Human Rights Act. The City will not exclude persons with disabilities from participation at its meetings or otherwise deny them the City's services, programs, or activities.

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the city's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following: Phone: (406) 447- 8490; TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 Email: citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov, Mailing address & physical location: 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.

EXHIBIT A

Solutions and a Path for Moving Forward – Mitigating Impacts, Reducing Conflicts & Maintaining the DT's Trail

“Take steps to isolate the directional trails (DT's) and reduce their impacts on pedestrian users of the Eddy McClure trail. Make the DT's self contained, so that mechanized and non-mechanized uses are largely separated, thus minimizing impacts to user experience and conflict”

Mitigation Steps:

- A. Isolate and Decrease Impacts of the Bike Park on other users
 1. Make Eddy McClure unidirectional and only-uphill for bikes in the section from the Arrowhead Trailhead to the 206 Trail junction (slowing bike speed and traffic)
 2. Provide a “sessioning” return route from the bottom of the DTs up an existing 2 track to Eddy McClure (connecting 200 yards below entrance to the DT's)
 3. Establish a single access point to both DTs off of Eddy McClure (currently there are two separate access points and the trails are separated)
 4. a) Close and reclaim that portion of DT trail #1 that begins at the junction of Eddy McClure and Ascension Loop trail down to the beginning of DT #1 downhill course, or
b) make this section above a ‘hikers only’ connector back to Eddy McClure connecting near the Eddy McClure access opening to the DTs (this is the only portion of the DT system that is ‘walkable’)
 5. Establish a parking/main access point to the DT system off the current parking area at the bottom off Arrowroot Dr. Bikers accessing the DT would start at the bottom, cycle to the top of the DT trails and go down
- B. These mitigation steps would:
 1. Keep the DT trail system largely intact , but significantly separated from the Eddy McClure trail
 2. Provide uphill access to the DT with minimal bike use of the Eddy McClure (just several hundred yards of slower travel uphill)
 3. Largely eliminate hiker-biker conflicts on Eddy McClure
 4. Reduce potential for safety issues between user groups
 5. Reduce but not eliminate impacts on Eddy McClure trail amenities and natural aspects valued by pedestrian users



2019 Open Lands Work Plan FINAL Comment Form

Submitted On:
July 16th, 2019 @ 10:20am

Helena, MT

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 1	Forest Management
COMMENT - 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This plan ignores current science, which shows that logging and thinning actually increase, not decrease, fire likelihood. Removal of shade causes the forest to dry out, making it far more fire-prone than an intact forest. Intact forests hold moisture and are far less likely to burn than logged and thinned forests.2. Thinning the open lands, especially Mt. Helena's north side, actually creates much greater danger of a wind-whipped fire spreading to the city of Helena than if the forest is left intact. This plan ignores current science, which shows that logging and thinning increase, not decrease, forest fire intensity. Thinning opens up the forest to much higher wind velocity, which spreads fires far more rapidly and much farther than in an intact forest where wind speed is slowed by trees.3. I object to logging and thinning, especially on the north side of Mt. Helena. A comprehensive environmental review need to be done for any further logging or thinning, especially for the fragile ecosystem on the north side of Mt. Helena.4. The ecosystem on the north side of Mt. Helena is particularly fragile, with mosses, ferns and other vegetation that rely on the wetter environment of the north slope. Such vegetation, being moist, actually decreases the chances of a major fire on the north slope, simply because moister vegetation is less likely to burn. Logging Mt. Helena's north slope will destroy that fragile moisture-loving vegetation, making the area more fire prone. Thinning destroys the shade and dries out the area, thereby killing the mosses, ferns, etc. and turning the grasses from green to yellow/brown, making the entire area more fire-prone.5. Logging and thinning ALWAYS bring in noxious weeds, and all logged areas on Mt. Helena harbor more weeds than unlogged areas. For many years, I did volunteer weed mapping on Mt. Helena for the city of Helena, and found that logged areas ALWAYS had more noxious weeds, especially knapweed, thistles and cheatgrass, than areas where logging had not occurred. Spraying for weeds after logging primarily killed native plants such as arrowleaf balsamroot (yellow daisies), but did not effectively stop the knapweed, thistles or cheatgrass. Weeds in logged and burned have persisted for years and years, and have spread.6. Details about your proposed logging activities need to be provided to the public, including machines you plan to use, spacing of thinned trees, weed control plans, etc. Maps of proposed logging areas need to be provided to the public, so that we, the owners of this public land, know in detail exactly where your logging activities are proposed. The Open Space Plan omits many important details.
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 2	Trails and Recreation Management

COMMENT - 2

1. Bikes are a huge danger to hikers on trails, because mountain bikers almost never stop or even slow down for hikers. I hike Mt. Helena nearly every day, and nearly every day I am forced to leap off the trail to avoid being run down, hit, injured or killed by mountain bikers who refuse to yield to hikers, refuse to slow down, and refuse to stop for hikers. They are selfish, rude and inconsiderate, often careening downhill out of control, endangering hikers' lives for their own selfish thrills. Bike should be banned from the trails before they kill someone.

2. Mountain bikers continually build illegal trails on our open lands. I myself have discovered and obliterated three separate illegal trails built on Mt. Helena by mountain bikers. This is another reason mountain bikes should be banned from the trails, because they refuse to follow the rules and relentlessly pursue their own selfish desires.

3. Ban all mountain bikes from Mt. Helena, and keep them on Mt. Ascension, which they've already commandeered with their illegal trail building. That way, we hikers will have a safe place to hike in peace without risking being injured or killed by mountain bikers.

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 3

COMMENT - 3

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 4

COMMENT - 4

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 5

COMMENT - 5

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 6

COMMENT - 6

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 7

COMMENT - 7

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 8

COMMENT - 8

**GENERAL - OVERALL PLAN
COMMENT**

Please let us know who you are:

**Do you wish to be contacted if we
have questions about your
comments?**

Yes, by email

Email

Phone Number

Signature Data

07/16/2019 10:19 AM
07/16/2019 10:19 AM
07/16/2019 10:19 AM

Signed at: 07/16/2019 10:19AM



2019 Open Lands Work Plan FINAL Comment Form

Submitted On:
July 16th, 2019 @ 10:21am

Helena, MT

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 1	Trails and Recreation Management
COMMENT - 1	Please keep Helena's trails multi-use! What a special way to live, sharing our public backyard with so many passionate users and groups. It is also impressive to see so many volunteer organizations that work so hard to maintain and make safe our trail system. Let's not be reduced to fighting among groups.
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 2	Weed Management
COMMENT - 2	Educating the public is key - I see a lot of pulled weeds that have already gone to seed, scattered along the trails. This helps spread weeds.
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 3	Property Acquisition/Exchange
COMMENT - 3	
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 4	
COMMENT - 4	
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 5	
COMMENT - 5	
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 6	
COMMENT - 6	
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 7	
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OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 8	
COMMENT - 8	
GENERAL - OVERALL PLAN COMMENT	
Please let us know who you are:	

Do you wish to be contacted if we have questions about your comments?

Yes, by email

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Phone Number

Signature Data

Signed at: 07/16/2019 10:21AM



2019 Open Lands Work Plan FINAL Comment Form

Submitted On:
July 26th, 2019 @ 4:05pm

Helena, MT

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 1	Weed Management
COMMENT - 1	Please prioritize weed management and let interested citizens know how to help with obtaining funding for and assisting directly with weed management. I think this is one of the biggest issues threatening our incredible open spaces right now. Please look into grant availability for obtaining additional insects for biocontrol and also alternative weed control methods (such as sheep grazing as used in Missoula open space).
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 2	Weed Management
COMMENT - 2	Please look beyond just noxious weeds (although these are of course incredibly important). I have noticed an unbelievable proliferation of sweet clover, both <i>Mellilotus officianalis</i> (yellow) and <i>Mellilotus alba</i> (white) on Mount Helena this summer. While these species are not classified as noxious weeds, they utterly take over areas of prairie grassland effectively choking out native species. I have attached pictures of one infested area on Mount Helena's west side near the Mike Cormier trail. The area just below the Mount Helena Trail parking lot is also heavily affected. This species is difficult to eradicate because the seeds can persist in soil for many decades, so preventing these plants from flowering next year will be key to keeping further proliferation in check.
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 3	Weed Management
COMMENT - 3	Focus on controlling sources of weed spread (weed reservoirs) that are by and large heavily concentrated in areas close to roads and trailheads. One such area is at the bottom of the Rodney Meadows/Davis Gulch trail where I know there has been a lot of Knapweed in the past, although I haven't been there recently enough to know what the situation is this season. Another is along the closed off part of Le Grand Cannon that is a walking trail between Holter and Lincoln. There is a massive amount of Knapweed and non-native thistle, as well as Sweet Clover and more scattered toadflax along this section which I believe is now spreading up the hill in the area between the Mike Cormier trail and the Mt. Helena trailhead.
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 4	Reclamation
COMMENT - 4	Please close off some of the multitude of use trails that have proliferated on the lower slopes of Mt. Helena and post signs about staying on trail. There is an absolute network of extremely short intersecting trails, especially on the west side near the Mike Cormier trail, and I believe this contributes to the spread and proliferation of weeds. Photo attached.
OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT - 5	Trails and Recreation Management

COMMENT - 5

Please post signs and add additional dog poop bag stations. I am a dog owner but I am nonetheless horrified by the amount of dog poop on or immediately adjacent to trails and the extent to which people don't pick up after their dogs. Dog poop does not biodegrade as quickly or effectively as wild animal poop and is of course also bad for water sources, as well as being unsightly. I am really interested in the idea of setting up some dog poop composting stations at major trailheads, and would love to work on fundraising or grant writing to support this idea, as adding plastic bags of dog poop to landfills is also problematic. Some larger cities compost pet waste, but I think it would be possible to build what is effectively a composting toilet for pet waste and supply compostable bags at trailheads.

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 6

COMMENT - 6

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 7

COMMENT - 7

OBJECTIVE SECTION FOR COMMENT

- 8

COMMENT - 8

**GENERAL - OVERALL PLAN
COMMENT**

Please let us know who you are:

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comments?**

Yes, by email

Email

Phone Number

Signature Data

Signed at: 07/26/2019 04:05PM