

Missoula County Parks and Trails Advisory Board
February 19, 2026
Meeting Minutes – Approved

Parks and Trails Advisory Board		County Staff	Guests
Present	Absent		
Ron Schlader, Vice President Ria Overholt, second alternate Jennifer Thomsen Paige Judnich	Jeff Koch, President Jane Plummer, first alternate Juanita Vero, Commissioner Ian Rufe Steve Snyders Jessica Glebke	Bethany Gunther Nick Zanetos Kelsey Phillips Dede Lienau Randy Arnold Jackson Lee Silas Phillips	Eric Melson Geoffrey Bogie Brian Williams Cathy Kahnle

1) CALL TO ORDER

Vice President, Ron Schlader, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. a lack of quorum.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) January 15, 2026

Approval of Minutes was tabled due to lack of quorum

3) PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no public comments or announcements.

4) ITEMS INVOLVING GUESTS AND ACTION ITEMS

a) Scenic Montana Trails Bond Presentation

The parks board received an informational presentation about the proposed Rice Ridge mountain bike trail system near Seeley Lake. The project is being led by Scenic Montana Trails in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, Missoula County, and other community partners. Organizers plan to build a year-round, non-motorized trail network for biking, hiking, adaptive users, fat biking, and other recreation on U.S. Forest Service land in the Lolo National Forest.

The project was approved through the Highway 83 Good Neighbor Authority environmental review in July 2025. Since then, volunteers have contributed nearly 400 hours of work and have already built about 1.3 miles of trail after receiving training from a professional trail builder. The overall project is expected to cost about \$1.5 million and be completed over four to five years, eventually creating around 30 miles of new trails. Phase One would construct about 19 miles of trails, including beginner-friendly loops, climbing routes, and intermediate downhill trails, with some sections built by volunteers and others by professional contractors to ensure high-quality construction.

Organizers are requesting \$250,000 from Missoula County to help launch Phase One and leverage additional state, federal, and private funding. Supporters say the project could improve recreation access and support economic development in Seeley Lake by attracting visitors, including downhill riders through a planned shuttle-friendly trail design. The U.S. Forest Service confirmed the trails fit within existing land management plans and noted that the broader Highway 83 project closes more roads than it opens. Board members responded positively to the proposal, and it will move to a vote at a future meeting.

b) Board Bylaws Amendment

Tabled due to lack of quorum

c) Horse Park Maintenance and Management Agreement

Tabled due to lack of quorum

5) OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

6) NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

7) STAFF REPORT

Staff shared updates about Marshall Mountain. Work over the winter has focused on planning efforts, including a recreation study conducted with the University of Montana to assess usage rates and public sentiment about current and future infrastructure. Results from that study will be presented at a future meeting. The county is also waiting on a funding decision from the National Park Service for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant that would support improvements to base area facilities and additional trail development at the site. Staff have also been working on vegetation management planning and coordinating with emergency management to identify emergency access routes and landing zones.

8) COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communication updates.

9) ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

The Missoula County Parks and Trails Advisory Board meeting is held on the third Thursday of each month at 1:30 PM.