

2013 HELENA OPEN LANDS WORK PLAN

PRINCIPAL GOAL OF THE HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HOLMAC) WORK PLAN: To outline land management activities scheduled for implementation in the next 12 months. The work plan will be updated annually to address land management needs that have emerged as a result of input from the citizens of Helena, HOLMAC, and/or city staff. In accordance with the goals and objectives defined within the Helena Open Lands Management Plan, land stewardship activities shall be designed and implemented in a manner that will preserve, restore, and enhance the natural character of Helena's open lands and provide Helenans with accessible natural open lands.

FOREST MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

South Hills Fuel Reduction Project – 2009

- Complete approximately 100 acres of forest fuel treatment work in the South Beattie Street area.

McKelvey Trail R.A.C. Grant

- Remove hazard trees located along approximately 6,000 feet of the McKelvey Trail.

Le Grande R.A.C. Grant

- Burn 14 acres of hand piles located within the Crystal Drive/Winscott Lane, NCCC forest treatment unit.

D.N.R.C. - P.S.R. Grant

- Prepare and complete approximately 52.45 acres of forest fuel treatment work with city seasonal staff.
- Process accumulated firewood material where applicable.

Forest Fuel Treatment Grants

- Complete an application for a Western Bark Beetle, PSR Grant with the Montana DNRC for potential implementation within the recently acquired Community Forest property.

Forestry Visuals

- Remove retention tree and boundary identification flagging from all forestry projects completed to date.
- Respond to trash dumping and abandoned transient camps as needed.

Forestry Education

- Participate in community forestry outreach efforts as opportunities arise.

Firewood Distribution

- Harvest, forward, and process approximately 100 cords of firewood material for former clients of the LIEAP program.
- Assist in the organization of volunteers involved in the splitting and distribution of accumulated firewood material during the January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013 timeframe.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION/EXCHANGE:

Property Acquisition

- Assist in the completion of property transfer closings related to the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust (MFWCT) and Community Forest (USDA) Grants acquired in 2012 to purchase Mount Ascension parcels from Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT).
- Participate in a functionality analysis of all open lands properties owned by the City of Helena for the purpose of determining if potential surplus properties exist.
- Respond to public requests regarding potential purchase/sale/exchange of open lands properties.

WEED MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

Subcommittee/Code Enforcement Officer

- Update insect release map and layer file.
- Target fuel reduction units for weed treatment.
- Participate in biological insect collections and releases.

Public Education

- Create educational materials (poster, books, etc.).
- Coordinate weed pulls in multiple locations throughout the summer.

Noxious Weed Treatment

- Use herbicide to treat 2013 selected target areas.
- Participate in collections and release insects for biological control of noxious weeds.
- Participate in insect monitoring and collections.
- Schedule and participate in weed pulls on open lands.

TRAILS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

Prickly Pear Land Trust

Trail Construction

- Complete the connector trail between the Daisy Hill Trail and the Reeders Village Cutoff trail.
- Construct a connector trail between the Le Grande Cannon Blvd Trail and the Northwest Passage trail.
- Complete layout and construction work on a trail route connecting the Mt. Ascension Loop Trail to the Eddy McClure Trail.

Trail Relocation

- Relocate approximately 230 feet of the Far East Trail.
- Relocate 575 feet of the Meatloaf Trail.
- Relocate approximately 200 feet of the Catch-Up Trail.

Trail Obliteration/Rehabilitation

- Complete rehabilitation of the abandoned portion of the Daisy Hill Trail to Reeders Village Cutoff Trail connector trail.
- Obliterate/Rehabilitate a social trail currently connecting the Prospect Shafts Trail to the Dump Out Trail.
- Obliterate/Rehabilitate those portions of the Far East, Meat Loaf, and Catch-Up Trails that are slated to be abandoned during the course of completing the aforementioned trail relocation projects.

Trail Sign Inventory

- Complete a comprehensive inventory and condition analysis of all trail signs and trailhead kiosks currently present within the open lands system.
- Compile a GPS location list for all trail routes/junctions and trailheads requiring identification and/or informational signage.

Trail Condition Analysis

- Complete a comprehensive trail condition report for all designated recreational trails occurring within the open lands system.

Trail Usage

- Conduct a numerical count of trail users originating from the Mount Helena Parking area during a specific time period.

South Hills Trail Plan

- Complete a draft Recreational Trail Plan for Helena's South Hill's area that includes action recommendations for sites owned and managed by the City.

Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer Program

- Proactively engage individuals and groups for participation.
- Publish brochure for advertisement of program.

Helena Parks Department

- Organize and implement activities associated with the Saddle Drive Trail Grant including the construction of 3,200-4,200 feet of granitic surfaced trail and the construction/installation of a pedestrian bridge.
- Install a water crossing feature and construct a trail reroute at the south end of the Old Shooting Range parking area to address issues created by the Cox Lake overflow.
- Complete required boundary line identification work needed to facilitate trail construction activities on the Le Grande Cannon Blvd Trail to Northwest Passage Way Connector Trail, Meat Loaf to Catch-Up Trail connection, and the Mt. Ascension Loop Trail to Eddie McClure Trail connection.
- Construct and install trail signs as determined from PPLT's trail sign inventory.
- Respond to trail issues throughout the year as needs arise.
- Initiate the implementation of social trail management recommendations provided by HOLMAC.

FACILITIES:

Trailheads

- Install trash receptacles at the Old Shooting Range and Meatloaf Trailheads.
- Complete a grant application related to the installation of a vaulted restroom facility at the Mount Helena Trailhead Parking Area.
- Coordinate the completion of activities associated with the Mount Helena and Donaldson Parking Area construction projects.

- Package and deliver the South Beattie Street Trailhead Parking Area design acquired from the City of Helena Engineering Department to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for approval. Upon notification from the BLM that the South Beattie Street Trailhead Parking Area has been formally approved, coordinate with the City Publics Works Department to accomplish construction of said parking area.
- Reconfigure the existing fences found at the Old Shooting Range Parking Area to ensure resource protection.
- Construct a post and rail fence around the Donaldson Disc Golf Parking Area.

Archery Range

- Install a new gate between the parking area and the Archery Range interior.
- Construct a new fence segment to divide the newly constructed parking area from the Archery Range interior.

Donaldson

- Construct a fence that encircles the barn area.
- Install new gutters.
- Replace damaged lights (install motion lights as per Helena Police recommendations).
- Install work bench and tool storage.
- Contract the installation of an automatic garage door on the south facing side of the barn.

FENCE CONSTRUCTION & REMOVAL:

- Construct a post and rail fence at the Upper Westridge open lands access that spans the gap between the sidewalk access the existing open lands boundary fence.
- Identify sections of dysfunctional wire fence occurring upon City of Helena open lands properties and schedule removal.
- Design and construct fence segments required to protect resource needs and/or visually identify open lands property lines.

BOUNDARY IDENTIFICATION:

- Verify open lands boundaries as budgets allow. Prioritize open lands boundary identification needs according to program of work and emerging management issues.

RECLAMATION:

- Utilize a grass seed mixture containing one or more of the following native grasses: Slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus* ssp. *trachycaulus*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis* variety Joseph or Nez Perce), Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum* or *Pseudoroegenaria spicata* var Goldar)
- Seed disturbed areas occurring at the Mount Helena and Donaldson Parking Area construction sites. The possibility of contracting the hydro seeding of both sites will be explored.
- Seed disturbed areas occurring within the Helena South Hills 2009 forest fuel treatment project area.
- Monitor previously seeded areas.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT:

- Identify species and/or habitats of concern.
- Initiate identification of conservation management strategies for species or habitats of concern.
- Expand the dog/wildlife awareness campaign to a larger effort to encourage people to respect Helena's open lands.
- Expand opportunities for interpretive hikes by partnering with ongoing efforts (wild flower hikes, full moon hikes, etc).
- Investigate open lands areas where wildlife viewing opportunities could be enhanced.
- Inventory open lands parcels for aspen enhancement opportunities.
- Continue the investigation of potential partners and funding opportunities associated with purchasing and installing a water collection and distribution device within Helena's open lands properties to benefit wildlife.

CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

- Contract the completion of a Cultural Resource Management Report and associated survey for the FEMA, PDM Helena Open Lands 2010 Forest Fuels Reduction project.