

PARKS AND TRAILS PLAN

MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS PROGRAM

Public Input Process

The most important aspect of this *Parks and Trails Plan* is the meaningful input we will work hard to collect from rural communities throughout Missoula County. Our county is blessed with a great diversity of landscapes, cultures, and communities..each with their own unique sense of place. In order to best understand the important priorities and interests of our county residents, this plan is using multiple approaches to the public input process. Community involvement in the plan will be a combination of both qualitative and quantitative input in order to capture the prevailing needs of our residents related to county parks and trails.

The following methods and opportunities will comprise the public input process for the Missoula County *Parks and Trails Plan*:

1. **Leadership and Stakeholder Interviews** – we have been conducting interviews of key leadership groups and stakeholders from throughout the County starting in April 2010. This process will continue throughout first six months of the project for collecting data and insight, totaling over 12 separate interviews including nearly 50 participants. Interviews were organized and scheduled by the Missoula County project team, and included a variety of recreational user groups, community leadership, related stakeholders, and public officials.
2. **Community Workshops** – in order to create open forum discussions in each of the major communities of Missoula County, this project will feature eight (8) community workshops. These will be interactive sessions that are open to the public for residents to come and directly share their priorities and relevant needs with the consultant team and County staff. These workshops will be advertised in advance in each of the communities in which they are held, and are planned to be facilitated in August, September and October 2010. For a list of workshops please [click here](#).

These forums will be designed to build goodwill and awareness around the details of the project within the local community.

3. **Public Forums** – the project team will hold three (3) public forums at locations to be determined in the County towards the end of the project (January – April 2011) to go over preliminary recommendations and alternatives with members of the public.
4. **Community Survey** – we will administer a statistically valid survey throughout Missoula County and including the City of Missoula. The methods in which this survey will be utilized will allow the project team to differentiate responses from different parts of the County, especially to separate respondents from City of Missoula from respondents in the rural and unincorporated areas. Overall results will have a 95% level of confidence with a margin of error of +/-5.0% overall.
5. **Project Website** – we will maintain a project website on the Missoula County web page, under the Rural Initiatives and Parks and Trails Program pages. This website will provide progress reports on the *Parks and Trail Plan* process, a schedule of upcoming public input opportunities, and recent products associated with the project. Most importantly, an informal questionnaire will be provided on the website in which members of the public are encouraged to share with us your thoughts and priorities related to the planning process. This informal questionnaire will be updated throughout the planning process.