



Red Lodge Parks Board

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

The Red Lodge Parks Board is an advisory board to the City Council and the Mayor and fulfills three major roles on City-owned lands: management of parks, trees and trails.

The Board is mostly volunteer consisting of eight members: six are local citizens, one City Council member and one is a Public Works Department employee. The Council member and the Public Works employee are ex-officio non-voting members. The Mayor with City Council approval appoints all members. City Planning staff and the Public Works Department support the Board. Current board members include: Dan Seifert, Chair; Bob Matter, Vice-Chair; Doug Mackay, Treasurer; Rue Freeman; Paul Otsu; Corey Thompson; Bill Foisy, Council representative; and Jim Bushnell, Public Works Director. City Planner James Caniglia provides staff support to the Board.

Detailed information for Parks Board activities can be found at:
<http://cityofredlodge.net/?p=372>

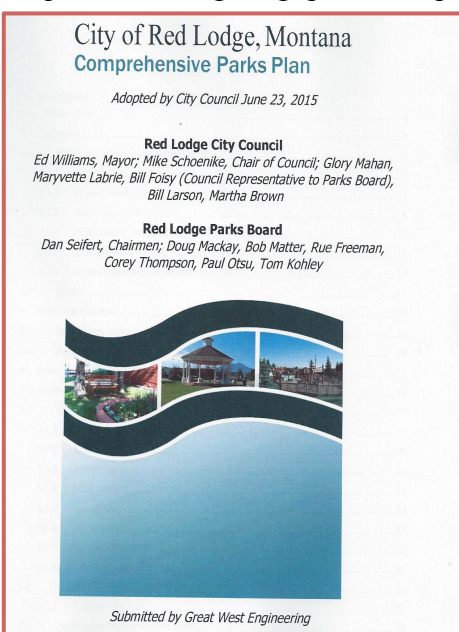
A summary of Parks Board activities for the period July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015 follows:

Comprehensive Parks Plan

A comprehensive Parks Plan was completed and approved in 2015. The purpose of the Red Lodge Comprehensive Parks Plan is to inventory existing parks, present a vision for the development of future parks and recreational activities, as well as provide direction regarding the role of the Parks Board in conjunction with Public Works and the City Council. The Plan is meant to guide public officials in making decisions on land acquisition, budgeting, partnership and park facility upgrades. Based on a needs

assessment and public input, the plan prioritizes services and improvements to meet community needs.

The Council has incorporated the Plan in the Red Lodge Growth Policy and permanent dedication of existing parks is underway. Individual park improvements identified in the Plan are being performed through contract assistance. Linear park development and retention of open space along Rock Creek is being done through trail development behind Coal Miners Park and near the Swimming Hole near 7th St.



The Comprehensive Parks Plan can be found at:
<http://cityofredlodge.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Comprehensive-Parks-Plan-Adopted.pdf>

2015 Park Dedications



Council dedicated **Double Ditch Park, the City Pool and the Skate Park** upon recommendation of the Parks Board. Park dedication means the use of those legally identified parcels must remain as defined unless modified by public vote. This can provide an impetus for long-term improvements. In addition, the dedicated park located behind Mountain Springs Villa was named **Phillips Park** by resolution in recognition of Jim Phillips, the oldest living resident of Mountain Springs Villa and his deceased wife Bev.

It is anticipated that further dedications will be made for Lions Park, Coal Miners Park and near the Swimming Hole.



Newly Dedicated Park Improvements

A permanent fix for repair or replacement of the Pool is necessary. To start, the Council established an endowment for the **City Pool** in cooperation with the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation for the purpose of raising funds to help with the increasing operating costs, largely due to the age of the pool. To donate:

<http://www.rlacf.org/pool-endowment/>



The Parks Board has approved new ramp features at the **Skate Park** and the fencing and concrete are scheduled to be expanded to improve safety and function.

Double Ditch Park was dedicated as a City park with continued use as a dog park. A second gate has been installed, the perimeter fencing fixed, trees removed and trimmed, grass was trimmed and signs providing direction to the dog park were installed.

Lions Park



Moose Trails Playground received some needed maintenance upgrades as new woodchips were purchased by the Parks Board and distributed around the playground, features such as swings and fence posts were repaired and all fencing was re-stained.

The **horseshoe pits** were rebuilt to include new sand and refurbished boards. Covers for three of the larger **trashcans** were rebuilt with a decorative metal container.

Picnic tables are being rebuilt and refinished, trees have been trimmed, a new wall and door was built for the **warming hut**.



Red Lodge Ice was one of the user groups funded by the Parks Board as they acquired a storage shed, a lawn tractor and snow thrower attachment, a DIY (do it yourself) zamboni and a gate and ramp for access onto and off the ice.

A recommendation was made by the Parks Board, approved by Council, for **Cycle Greater Yellowstone** to use Lions Park and Field School Park for camping and staging during the annual event in August. It is important for the hundreds of bicyclists to have easy access to businesses in the downtown area.



Parks Maintenance

The Parks Board has a **contractor** who performs needed maintenance under the direction of the City Planner and the Public Works Department. This position is important as a number of maintenance tasks are identified for each park: Lions, Rotary, Finn, Coal Miners, Pride, Skate Park, Field School and Dog Park. The contractor can concentrate exclusively on the defined maintenance tasks.

Selected maintenance projects in addition to those identified for the three newly dedicated parks include scraping, sanding and painting the bear proof garbage cans and cleaning the grills in **Rotary Park**, removing dead brush, trimming tree branches and scraping, sanding and painting the bear proof container in **Finn Park**, trimming tree branches in **Pride Park**, repairing playground equipment and placed a bear proof garbage can in **Field School Park**, and organizing a volunteer work day at the Shaft Disc Golf Course, replacing broken mains and drip line to all tree plantings, removing dead trees and staining the kids playground at **Coal Miner's Park**.

The City has **memorandums of understanding** with community groups for selected maintenance activities to include the Lions Club for Lions Park, Rotary Club for Rotary Park, Red Lodge Ice at Lions Park and the Beartooth Recreational Trails Association for trails. These agreements are being updated and a new one is being developed for the user groups at Coal Miner's Park.

Weeds Control



The Parks Board budgets each year for the spraying of noxious weeds in Coal Miner's Park, Double Ditch Dog Park, Skate Park, Rotary Park, Lions Park and other public areas including City property around the airport and trail system and on Rock Creek. Education and outreach programs are also conducted.

To report weeds issues contact Stephanie Naftal, Red Lodge Weeds Coordinator at (406) 546-5246, redlodgeweeds@gmail.com

Community Transportation Enhancement Funds (CTEP) from the Montana Department of Transportation

Procurement was completed for the installation of a sprinkler system at Field School Park; installation of a variety of trees, shrubs, weed fabric and mulch at Field School Park, Lions Park and Rotary Park; procurement of a variety of shrubs and perennial flowers to be planted at Pride Park, including installation of a flower bed; and procurement of **30 benches** to be located at multiple parks.



The old mural on the side of Flash's building at Pride Park that depicted an historic map of the Red Lodge area was not able to be funded under the CTEP program. The Parks Board plans to conduct a fundraising project in which major donors will be recognized on a plaque at the new mural.

Urban Forestry Tree Programs



The City received State and Federal grant funding for the Urban Forestry **cost-share tree program** for a second year as 25 trees were planted, 22 in residential neighborhoods placed in boulevards along City streets and three in the boulevard at the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation.

Three trees were planted along 9th Street outside the Smith-Olcott Funeral Chapel, paid for by an **Arbor Day** grant received from the Montana Department of Natural Resources.

The City was recertified as a **Tree City USA** for achieving the standards set forth by the National Arbor Day Foundation for activities conducted by the Parks Board, for having a community tree ordinance, for conducting a Community Forestry Program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita and conducting an Arbor Day observation and proclamation. The City has been a Tree City USA for over a decade.



A supplemental **Tree City USA Growth Award** was awarded to the City for the first time. Points were earned for annual increases in spending on urban forests, continuing education for tree board members, City zoning ordinance regulations updates to improve the standards in trees in parking lots, the cost-share street tree planting program and the wildland fire prevention program.

Twenty-six **tree guards** manufactured by Back Alley Metals were purchased by the Parks Board and installed, with **tree gators**, to better protect boulevard trees from damage. A Parks Board volunteer is watering the downtown boulevard trees on a weekly basis.



Over 100 trees on City street boulevards were **fertilized** by a local contractor, many on a cost-share basis with adjacent property owners. Fertilization included a root injection of special vitamins to promote root growth as well as a foliar fertilizer spray.

Miscellaneous Projects

The **trails along Rock Creek** behind Coal Miner's Park and the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary were extended in summer 2014 under an agreement among the City of Red Lodge, the Beartooth Recreational Trails Association and the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary.

Parks board members participated in a community trails committee that met over the course of winter 2015 to identify trails projects, such as easement acquisition, new construction, and maintenance. The Beartooth Recreational Trails Association funded one week of work by a Montana Conservation Corps crew for trail construction and maintenance on City trails.



The Beartooth Recreational Trails Association developed a letter in support of a Recreational Trails Program grant application for continued Nordic center operations.

Recommendations were provided to the Council on the update of the **Municipal Code for the Parks Board**. The proposed responsibilities of the Parks Board have been expanded to include trails and the Urban Forestry Management Plan. The proposed tree regulations incorporate the provisions of the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

An **annual parks cleanup day** was conducted in cooperation with the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary.

Expenditures

The Parks Board traditionally receives an allocation of resort tax funds for parks activities. The following are the expenditures for FY 2015:

Supplies	\$ 6,360
Weed Control	\$ 7,000
Contractor for Maintenance	\$ 10,805
Woodchips	\$ 7,810
Comprehensive Parks Plan Contract	\$ 4,626
Urban Forestry Tree Program	\$ 10,438
Proud/Beautiful Flower Baskets	\$ 2,000
DNRC Program Development and/or Arbor Day Grant Match	\$ 500
Red Lodge Ice; Tractor, Snow blower, Zamboni, Shed	\$ 4,537
Surveying of Parks for Dedication	\$ 3,604
Unallocated/Miscellaneous	\$ 1,705
Pool Lift	\$ 6,170
TOTAL	\$ 65,506

Some **new projects have been budgeted for FY 2016**, starting July 1, 2015. These include project match for the Community Transportation Enhancement Program projects and development of an Active Transportation Plan. Trees are scheduled to be trimmed in the City Pool area, Finn Park, Rotary Park and Field School Park. Funds have been programmed in support of the use of a Geographic Information System for update of the tree inventory and trails plan. New trail construction and trails maintenance projects are also scheduled.