



Foy's to Blacktail Trails • P.O. Box 81 • Kalispell, MT 59903 • [www.foystoblacktailtrails.org](http://www.foystoblacktailtrails.org)

## First 40 Acres: DONE!

Greetings Foy's to Blacktail Enthusiasts!

Just before this newsletter went to print Foy's to Blacktail Trails received some exciting news – Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks is expected to award FTBT a \$70,000 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant, the largest ever awarded.

This grant, combined with the money we have raised thus far, will be used to purchase the first of eight 40-acre parcels of The Conservation Fund property. This is the first critical piece in the sequential purchasing plan that aims to eventually add 320 acres to existing Herron Park (read more about this plan in the newsletter). This is indeed an invigorating benchmark for our organization.

Sincere thanks are due to those who spent many hours drafting, revising and collating the grant proposal. Thanks also to Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks for recognizing the value of this worthy project and demonstrating its support with a grant that will enable us to make our first land purchase.

It's very encouraging to consider the momentum FTBT has right now. Though no additional trails were built in 2009, the typical sign of a trails project's progress, much has happened that will contribute to the advancement of our effort to promote and increase recreational opportunities stemming from Herron Park.

We are proud to unveil our first-ever Trails Plan for Herron Park and The Conservation Fund property, something we expect to present publicly for comment this winter; read Matt's article to find out more specifics.

In addition to the RTP grant, we received grants that will enable better organizational capacity, including one from the Sustainability Fund to pursue a part-time administrative assistant.

We also strengthened our partnership with Flathead County, our project well-integrated in the county-wide Master Plan.

And this summer we again hosted the annual Herron Hustle trail run and Foy's Fest outreach event, as well as a first-ever donor appreciation function.

The fall is a great time to get out in Herron Park. The larches provide a bursting landscape through which to walk or ride. As the snow begins to accumulate, the recreational opportunities remain, so don't hesitate to strap on some skis, snowshoes or saddle up the trusty mare to explore the area our organization, with your support, will someday soon protect in its entirety.

While you're out there, consider how lucky we all are to be in a position to safeguard forever the opportunity for extensive, year-round recreational opportunities just outside our front door.

Best Regards,

**Clifford Kipp**  
**FTBT Board Chair**



*"Dog's Eye View of Foy's Overlook." In memory of Milo – a great friend and avid runner of the Foy's to Blacktail Trails. You're missed buddy.*

# Trails Plan Becomes a Reality

*Matt Brake, Trails Chair*



I am pleased to announce the Trails Committee has completed a proposed master trails plan for an enlarged 440-acre Herron Park (120 ac. existing + 320 ac. FTBT plans to purchase).

The existing trails beyond Herron Park have served us well over the years, but many shortcomings are becoming apparent with time. Many do not shed water well and are prone to long term erosion problems. In addition, portions of existing trails are not sustainable and enjoyable because of their steepness. Finally, there are many areas where an old logging road simply dead ends without providing any connectivity.

It is our intention, with this proposed trails plan, to address these concerns and to enhance the enjoyment of the trails for a broader group of users for decades to come, with the ability to add new trails later.

With these goals in mind, we contracted with David Noftsinger and Greg Gunderson of Forestration Inc., professional trail designers also utilized by A Trail Runs Through It project in Whitefish. I am pleased to say the final product is very exciting.

The heart of the new trails plan is the Family Trail. As its name implies, the Family Trail will be an easy trail, averaging about 5% grade. Children, joggers, casual walkers, cyclists, cross country skiers and anyone who feels the existing trails to the upper kiosk are too steep, will have a trail that takes them there and beyond. You will be able to do this without overexertion or fear of the descent down to the meadow.

In addition, the Family Trail will serve as a major connecting trail for those seeking looped opportunities.

One of the limitations of the existing trails is while there are many miles of them, they are largely devoid of loops. Therefore, much of the proposed new singletrack interconnects the existing system.

In total we are planning for almost six miles of new trail, which when combined with the Foy's Overlook trail (0.4 mi/built in 2008), the John Chase Trail (2.5 mi/built in 2007), and the existing double-track trails, will bring the total to 14 miles of trail. More importantly, there will be dozens of loop options of varied difficulty.

Where new singletrack is proposed, as much as possible we routed the trail to be aesthetically pleasing by intentionally

visiting unique places on the land, such as significant trees, view sites, rock outcroppings, etc.

In total, more than 50 hours were spent planning the location of these proposed trails and collecting GPS data for building these trails as land is purchased in phases.

We found some wonderful places on the property and in almost all instances we were able to route the trail to visit them along the way to another fabulous place.

The possibility I see is for a trail system so fun and enjoyable for so many diverse users, that Herron Park will take on regional significance as an asset for our Valley, but just be out our front door for those of us lucky enough to call this place home.

For a closer look at the trails plan, check out our fresh new website, [www.foystoblacktailtrails.org](http://www.foystoblacktailtrails.org)

*Part of the planning for this proposed trail system is a public comment period with the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Board. If you would like to receive notification of this opportunity send an e-mail to [matt.ftbt@gmail.com](mailto:matt.ftbt@gmail.com). Please put "public comment" in the subject line and I'll add your e-mail to the notification list.*

## Phasing Purchase: What Does it Mean?

*We've been using the term "phasing" for quite some time now to describe the purchase plan of the 320-acre Conservation Fund property. We wanted to explain this idea more clearly.*

*FTBT's plan is for eight phases of purchase. Phase 1 is the 40 acres immediately northwest of the current boundary of Herron Park, making the park a 160-acre square once this piece is purchased and added to it.*

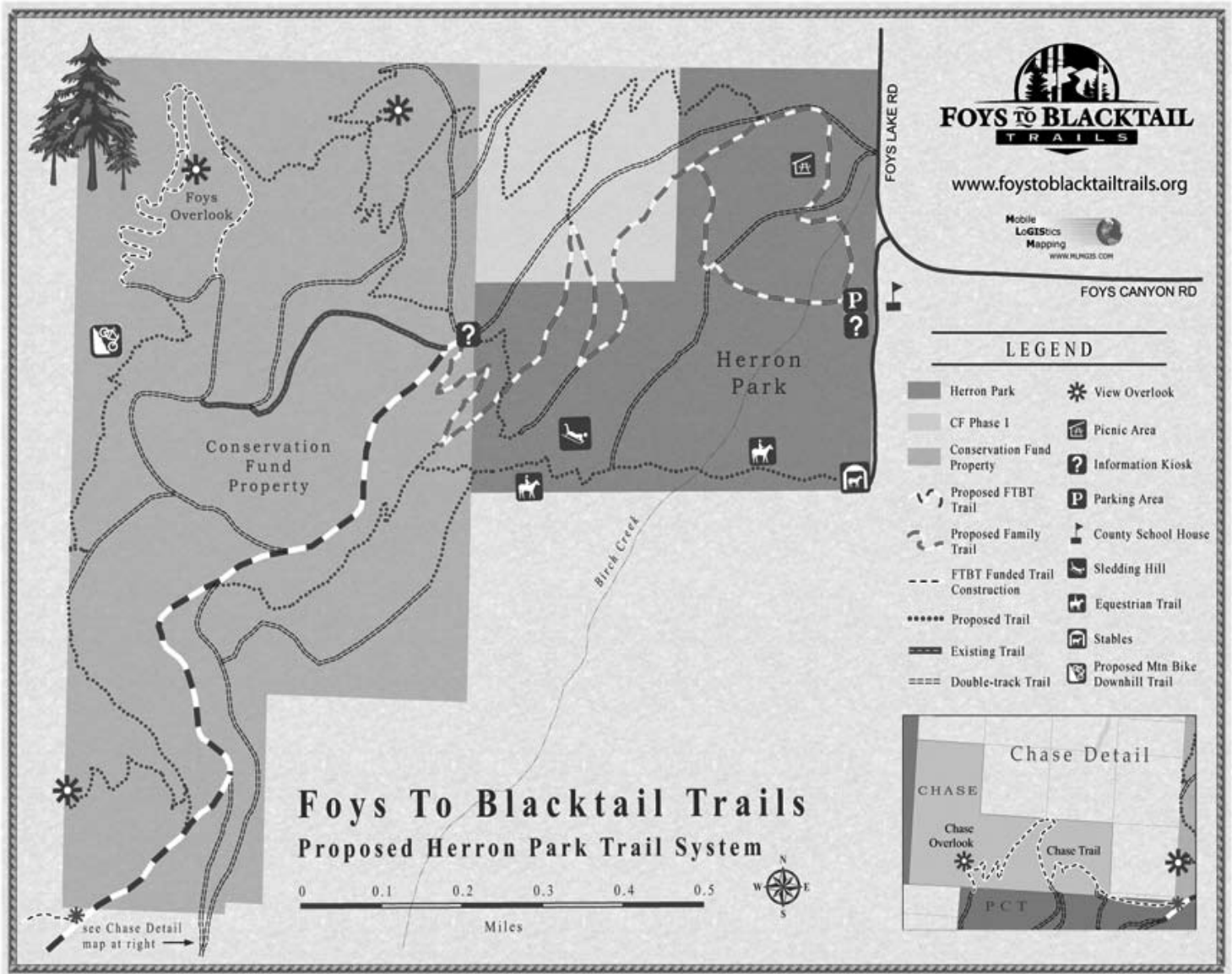
*FTBT will use the final, publicly approved Trail Plan to help determine the sequence in which to purchase the remaining tracts of The Conservation Fund property. This Phasing Plan will parse the property into approximately seven additional tracts of about 40 acres each. As money for each piece (Phase) is raised, FTBT will purchase it and add it to Herron Park.*

*FTBT fundraising efforts are to purchase land. Funds for trail building are more readily available in the form of grants. As each 40-acre tract is purchased and added to Herron Park and therefore Flathead County, both FTBT and Flathead County can apply for trail building grants that will make our trails plan a reality.*

*As this newsletter goes to press, we will have raised the dollars needed to purchase Phase I! Please consider what financial commitment you can make to have Phase II become a reality!*

*- Carol Bibler*





## Organization Supports Trails Through Racing

*Sheli Thomas, Vice-President, Flathead Cycling Race Team*

The Flathead Cycling Race Team held their first annual Herron Park XC Race on the FTBT above Herron Park on August 16th. Though our turnout was small, (this being our first year), enthusiasm was high and a good time was had by all! This was a USAC sanctioned race and was part of the MBRA mountain bike series. In addition to the sanctioned races, a fun youth race was held in the upper meadow.

Our plan is to make this race an annual fundraiser for Foy's to Blacktail Trails. This year we were able to contribute our entire profit to the organization.

Those of us at Flathead Cycling fully realize the importance of keeping and maintaining the trails we ride on above Herron Park. We are proud to help in the further expansion of lands above the park, so we all may continue the joy of riding on these precious trails!



*Participant in Herron Park XC Race.*

## FTBT User Profile



*Jeannine Pukas, Flathead Combined Training Association Secretary*

I grew up in a small row home in Philadelphia, where brick walls, metal fences and concrete steps made up our "outside playground." Me, my husband, our 2 ½ year old daughter Annabelle, and our dog moved to the Flathead Valley more than 6 years ago. I never imagined a place existed where there were more trees than people!

After moving here, I started riding horses and some friends took me to Herron Park for a trail ride. I couldn't believe how wonderful it was to take a trail ride up into the woods, see spectacular views and hear nothing but the hooves of our horses clapping along the trail. Horseback riding in Chester County, Pennsylvania generally included riders skirting alongside the road or only riding in an arena.

When I began Eventing, I got involved with the Flathead Combined Training Association (FCTA) and became the secretary of the Board. At one of our meetings, Pat Young presented the fundraising feat FTBT was undertaking. FCTA considered the options and realized – how could we NOT contribute! Without an organization like FTBT who else would be making sure this unique trail connecting Herron Park to Blacktail Mountain remains open?

I highly advise other organizations to consider donating to the FTBT cause. With open land disappearing at an alarming rate, it's so important for us to act now so we don't lose this amazing opportunity to keep this land open for public use. Every dollar counts. Talk it up to your organization today! Great job FTBT!



*Participants in the 2nd Annual Paddlethon (canoe/kayak, mountain bike and trail run). A big thanks to race organizer, Steve Muller, and their proceeds donation to FTBT.*



## Notes from a Memorial Day Hike

*Tom Esch, Recreationalist and Board Member*

Charlene, Logan, Shadow and I parked at the Emmons Creek Saddle on Memorial Day and hiked down the trail. It took four hours going slow, at my chug-chug-gasp pace. There was very little snow and the trail was in good shape. It was well flagged and easy to find, with just a few blow-down trees across the trail.

The wild flowers were amazing – glacier lily, violets, penstemon, clematis, paintbrush, arnica and balsam root with more to come.

I was thinking what a great trail this is – so close to town – and how grateful I am to know the people working to preserve and promote this awesome resource. Thank You!





On a beautiful fall day, local photographer Jessica Lowry was able to capture the essence of what makes the Foy's to Blacktail Trails project such a passion for so many of us. We would like to extend our gratitude to Jessica for her interest and artistry with FTBT. If you are as impressed with her work as we are, check her out at: [www.jessicalowry.com](http://www.jessicalowry.com).

Please send us your photographs of FTBT – we would love to include them in our upcoming newsletters as well as our website – [info@foystoblacktailtrails.org](mailto:info@foystoblacktailtrails.org).

## New Website Coming Soon!

By December 10 you will see a new and improved FTBT website. We're anxious to see what you think and welcome your comments and suggestions. You'll also be able to sign up for an electronic version of the newsletter if you wish – [www.foystoblacktailtrails.org](http://www.foystoblacktailtrails.org).



## Retraction

In our last issue we incorrectly cited parts of an article as being from the *Lakeshore Country Journal* when in fact it was from reporter Jacob Doran of the *West Shore News*. Our sincere apologies.

## Foy's to Blacktail Board of Directors

Clifford Kipp, Chairman  
 Liz Makman, Vice Chairman  
 Rosemary McKinnon, Secretary  
 Liz Seabaugh, Treasurer  
 Matt Brake  
 Danielle Coffman  
 Cathy McDevitt  
 Tom Esch

## Our Mission

To secure historic access to trails and lands connecting Herron Park to the forest lands at Blacktail Mountain.

To provide long term stewardship of this corridor.

To accomplish this mission through voluntary and cooperative means.

*Dear Friends,*

Ahh, the holidays. Warm gingerbread, sleighbells, peace on Earth...and endless appeals to buy this, eat that, shop here, mail early, exchange gifts, string lights, please come, try one, be jolly...

Enough already. Remember, there's an easy stress reliever right outside your Front Door! Isn't it wonderful that in just a few minutes you can be walking, skiing or snowshoeing in the woods above Herron Park? Solitude surrounds you as you head up the trail, and when you come back your mood is brightened.

Don't take this unique place for granted. Please take a moment to send a special donation to Foy's to Blacktail Trails. Our volunteers have made great strides this year in keeping these trails open for you and future generations to enjoy. However, much fundraising remains to be done. We have enclosed a donation envelope in this newsletter for your convenience. Whatever the amount, the important thing is to act now.

Thanks for remembering FTBT in your year-end giving. Enjoy the trails!

Sincerely,

**Foy's to Blacktail Trails, Inc.**



***We've got the first 40 - but it's only a start.  
See what's going on inside  
And be sure to do your part!***

**[www.foystoblacktailtrails.org](http://www.foystoblacktailtrails.org)**

**We're on the web!**



**Return Service Requested**

**Foy's to Blacktail Trails  
P.O. Box 81  
Kalispell, MT 59903**

