



Foy's to Blacktail Trails | PO Box 81 | Kalispell, MT 59903 | FoyToBlacktailTrails.org

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Seth Capon, FTBT Board Chair

I'm driving, on my way to Herron Park. It's drizzling rain, and my mind is a mess worrying over everything going on right now. My gym is closed, my favorite restaurants are closed and I've been cooped up for weeks. As I start to round Foy's Lake I notice a pair of geese peacefully meandering around the water together. They appear to be happy and relaxed...and possibly in love. Not a care in the world. My mood begins to shift.

I make my way to the parking lot and to my surprise it is full. There are families down playing frisbee in the field together. There are people emerging from the various trails, laughing and carrying on, people dining together under the pavilion. Curious children walking the nature trail with their parents, learning first-hand about the local flora and fauna of the forest. People are joyful and engaging, and everyone is maintaining their respectful distances from each other. It's a different world up here. My worries have vanished. I unload my bike and begin my ride. After passing by two cheerful families on my way up I continue to the top of Chase Overlook and up the Foy's to Blacktail Trail. For the last hour I haven't seen a single soul. Just me, with the deer and the flowers letting me know that everything is going to be okay.

In these trying times, Herron Park and the Foy's to Blacktail trails have become more than just a trail system. They've become a sanctuary. A place where we can all forget about our troubles for a while and be returned to our true selves.

More than ever, these current events have shown us all how important our local trail systems are to the community. When there has been nowhere else to go to get out of our homes, to safely recreate and enjoy each other's company, there have been the trails. On those early warm spring days when they appeared to be ravaged—with bike tire ruts, hoof and boot prints—they dried out and flattened themselves. This is a testimony to how well they were designed and built to handle drainage and erosion.

Now more than ever we all can appreciate the importance of supporting these invaluable trails. To think about the maintenance that will be required to maintain and protect what we already have. To support the future design and forethought of expanding these trails to accommodate the growing demands of our new reality. Foy's to Blacktail Trails, now more than ever, is honored to be this sanctuary for the local community. Please help support us as we continue to support you.



Seth Capon, FTBT Board Chair, getting after it in Glacier NP.

IT IS STILL WILD UP THERE

By Luke Johnson

Herron Park and the FTBT are close to civilization, but the area is still brimming with wildlife, adventure, and danger. I was reminded of this on a crisp morning last summer.

As I rode my bike up the Family Trail at daybreak with my mind on the sunrise, a bunny scurried across my path. I did not think much of it and kept pedaling. At Scary Stump another rabbit crossed my path. On the final switchbacks before the Chase Overlook, yet another rabbit jumped in front of me. I thought, "Wow! What a day for rabbits!" as I continued up to the Chase Overlook to see the sun rise.

At the top, standing with my feet among wildflowers and looking out to the city and beyond to another

set of snow-capped mountains, I thought, "It does not get better than this." But like all sunrises, it was over too quickly, and I was back on my bike pedaling on the FTBT. I did not have a plan besides seeing the sunrise, so anything now was a bonus (one that I would never forget).

I was at Dromedary when I saw something moving ahead. Maybe I was looking for a camel? I crept over the hump and saw a long, tan tail wave at me through the grass. Then the tail twisted out of view and the feline's face stared into my eyes. My heart was racing faster than my mind. I remember being told to make myself big, but all I wanted to do is curl up in a ball and hide. I fought my instinct and held my bike above my head and yelled as loudly as I could. That big cat just looked at me. I yelled again, telling her to go home. Then I thought, "that was dumb, she is at home." Finally, as I yelled a third time, she turned and sauntered down the trail without a trace of fear. I spun around, jumped on my bike, and sped toward the Hike-A-Bike Trail. I rode as fast as I could. On later reflection, I understand how silly that must've appeared. One, I am not that fast. Secondly, did I think I was going to outrun a mountain lion?

Three miles away at Hike-a-Bike, feeling a little safer, my heart rate coming back to normal, a tremendously loud flapping noise sent my heart rate soaring, again. As if the sound of the grouse was not enough, it flew right into my chest. I stayed upright, but I did not think that my heart would ever be the same.

I continued down the Plum Creek Road to the Horse Trail with no further wildlife encounters, and I was grateful for the lack of adventure. With my guard down, a turkey ran right in front of me. I braked hard, but I still hit some tail feathers. I found some later in my helmet.

As I approached the parking lot, I thought, "How do those innocent bunnies survive in this wild place?"



While rare, bears and mountain lions are part of the landscape on the Foy's to Blacktail trail system. Practice caution, make noise around blind corners, and carry bear spray. Tell others your plans and keep a cell phone handy in the event you need to contact someone. And be kind to fellow trail users, man and beast alike. Don't allow dogs to chase wildlife. 📷 Whipsaw Creative.

IF YOU USE THESE TRAILS, IT'S TIME TO BECOME A MEMBER!

If you're a routine trail-user please consider donating one dollar for each time you have enjoyed your outside time at Herron Park or on Foy's to Blacktail Trails this past year. Your gift supports trail building, stewardship, youth education, signage and way-finding, maps and more! Get involved and support the place you love.



Mail checks and donation form to **FTBT, PO Box 81, Kalispell, MT 59903** or donate online on the FTBT website via PayPal at FoystoBlacktailTrails.org. Questions? Contact us at (406)203.3939 or info@FoystoBlacktailTrails.org

HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU ENJOY FTBT TRAILS THIS YEAR?

WOULD YOU CONSIDER DONATING \$1/DAY?

Become a FTBT Member for as little as \$15 a year and feel great about pitching in! And, even better, please encourage others to get on board when you rock your FTBT membership sticker. All the cool kids do, ya know.

- \$15 Friend
- \$45 Family
- \$100 Supporter
- \$250 Sustainer
- \$500 TrailBlazer
- \$ _____

DONATE ONLINE AT
FoystoBlacktailTrails.org

Do **NOT** send me a membership decal

HERRON PARK MAKEOVER

By Gabriel Dillon

Anyone that's been out to Herron Park last fall and this spring has likely noticed the plethora of holes, ruts, and soft spots on the trails. Notch has been hit particularly hard, and sections of Family, Horse, Direct Route and Overlook are showing major signs of erosion. Even the recently constructed Boundary Trail doesn't look quite as nice as in 2016-2017.

In November FTBT met with a professional trail planner and walked the park looking for solutions. In some places, the tread has eroded enough that original drainage features are not able to shed water and it pools in the wrong spot. In other places, the trail and surrounding terrain is too flat to drain at all, requiring the need for a "rolling dip", which creates a swell in order to channel water off the trail rather than down it. Five years ago with fewer people visiting the park, these problem areas would dry out before damage occurred. Trail use is increasing, so a solution must be found.



The east side of the Overlook Trail will be a major area of focus for our project this fall.

FTBT is making an investment in the future of Herron Park and the John Chase Forest. We are embarking on a \$20,000 project to professionally sculpt drainage features on the entire 16-mile stacked loop system of trails. We applied for a \$16,000 grant through the Recreational Trails Program but did not receive funding. The available funds for 2020 of \$1.6 million were up against 70 applications totaling \$3.6 million. Projects with greater need were selected over the FTBT request.

Historically, FTBT completes projects using grant money because it is one of the best ways to stretch your donor dollars. However, the Foy's to Blacktail Board of Directors decided in April that this maintenance is too pressing to wait, so we are paying out-of-pocket for this one. Your generosity over the years has put us into a strong financial position, and we have the utmost confidence that you will continue to support us for years to come. Thanks again and always!



We are blown away at your generosity on May 5-6! In 28 hours, we raised \$10,055, and nonprofits across the Flathead Valley and Eureka received \$486,707 in donations. The Whitefish Community Foundation supplied an additional \$75,000 in matching

grant funds and waived all credit card fees to the individual nonprofits, so 100% of donations went to 74 nonprofits! Total award for the campaign was \$561,707. Results can be found at whitefishcommunityfoundation.org > Day of Unity & Giving. Thank you for stepping up to support Foy's to Blacktail Trails!



THIS JUST IN!

REI (Recreational Equipment, Inc.) recently awarded FTBT with \$5,000 to help with Herron Park trail maintenance. We will put those dollars to good use! Thank you, REI!



FTBT & HERRON PARK EVENTS

Events subject to change due to COVID-19.

- **July to August:** Herron Park Equestrians holds several events featuring a variety of disciplines such as dressage, show jumping, working equitation and trail riding. herronparkeq.org
- **July to September:** Flathead Area Mountain Bikers offers a women's clinic and youth skills clinics at Herron Park. flatheadamb.org
- **August 15-16: The 12 and 24 Hours of Flathead**
This mountain bike race provides adaptive equipment and recreational opportunities to those living with paralysis and other life-altering disabilities. 24hoursofflathead.org
- **September 5: The NICA Youth MTB Race**
Montana Interscholastic Cycling League will be hosting this race at Herron Park. The Montana League is dedicated to building relationships in Montana communities that help promote healthy lifestyles in middle and high school youth, grades 6-12, through the lifelong sport of cycling. montanamtb.org
- **September 20: The Herron Half/10k/5k**
All proceeds from these races support trail maintenance Foy's to Blacktail trail system. ftbtraces.com

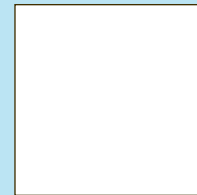


Follow us online for news and stay tuned to FoystoBlacktailTrails.org

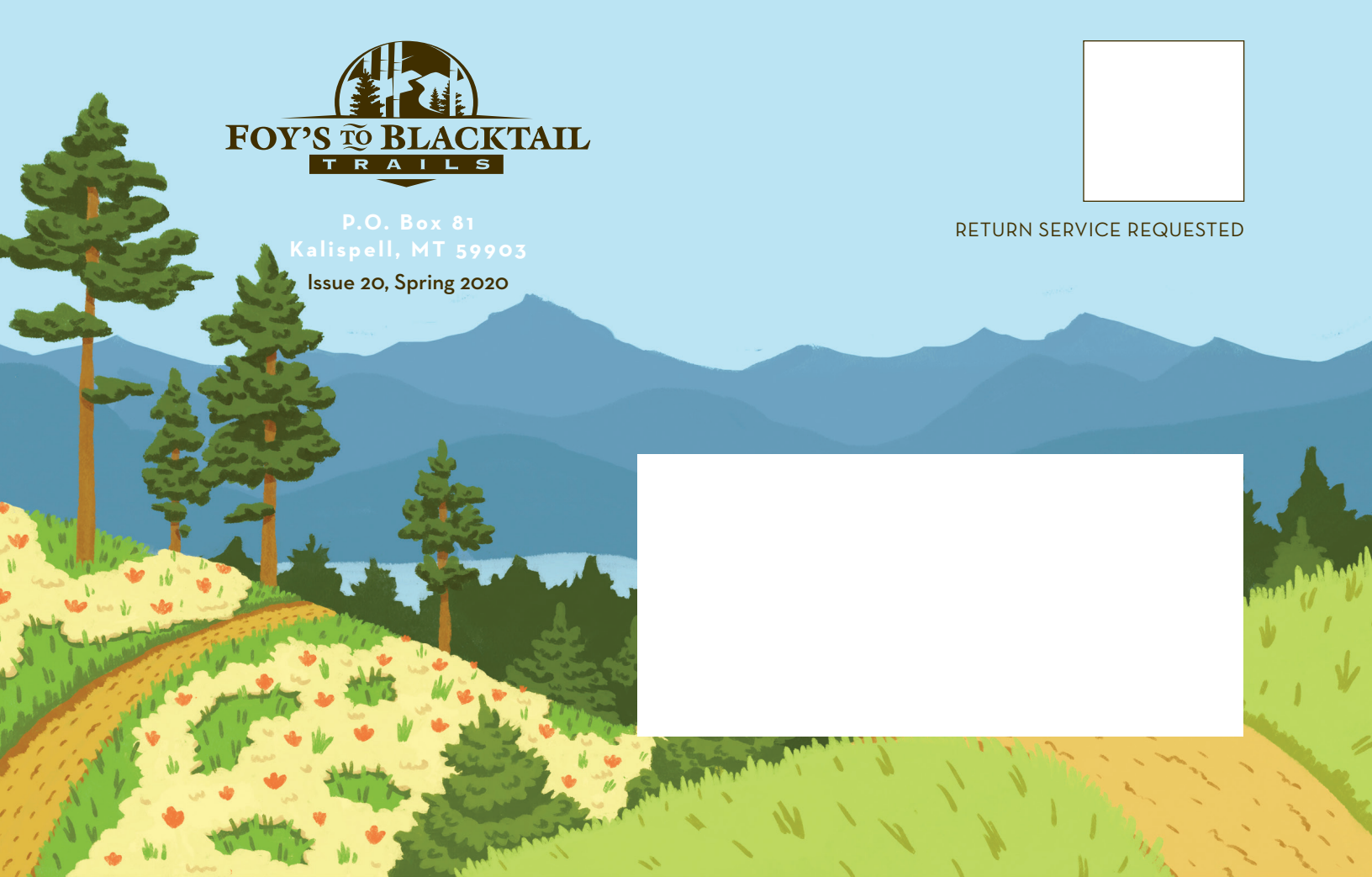


P.O. Box 81
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**THANK
YOU
—FOR—
YOUR
SUPPORT!**

IN MEMORY OF STEVE MULLER

Steve was an early FTBT supporter and will be missed by many. From the Daily Interlake obituary: "Three years after a brain cancer diagnosis, and two weeks after his final ski, Steve took his last breaths Jan. 29, 2020. It was just after 5 a.m., when he would have been on his way to Glacier, or to run, bike, ski or kayak. He was surrounded by his wife and daughters, as a song written by his brother played."

TOP 10 REASONS YOU SHOULD DONATE TO FTBT!

1. You and your dog/boots/bike literally go to Herron Park 365 days a year.
2. You bike, hike, XC ski, fat bike, bring the kids, ride your horse, bird watch, paint, run, sled, fly kites and/or catch some rays 12 months out of the year.
3. You understand what an asset Herron Park is to our community.
4. Trails relieve your stress and warm your heart.
5. You love that on a bike, from just about anywhere in Herron Park or the Chase Overlook, you are less than 15 minutes from the parking lot.
6. You got married, proposed to, or remembered a loved one on these trails.
7. After an hour on the trails, you realize you spent 40 of those minutes happily talking to other park users.
8. You are a better parent, spouse, and co-worker after spending time with nature. We know. Tell the truth.
9. You can count on meeting friendly faces on the trails, and you Say Hi, Pass Wide for your trail interactions.
10. More than half the mileage of the FTBT trail system lies outside of Herron Park and serves people in Kila, Somers, Lakeside, and beyond.

@foystoblacktail #herronpark