



FOY'S TO BLACKTAIL TRAILS

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

EMMONS SADDLE UPDATE: WE HAVE A NEW CRAPPER!

Behold, there's a new sweet smelling toilet (SST) installed at Emmons Saddle! Thanks go out to Flathead National Forest (FNF), Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC), and the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for granting funds for the SST.

When the Foy's to Blacktail Trail was built in 2017, we never imagined how popular the access point along Patrick Creek Road would be. Equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers all shuttle to and from this spot, located around 12 miles from Herron Park. More often than not, one would need to "check the nitrate levels in the soil" before venturing out.

Our friends at the Swan Lake Ranger District, being privy to the situation, approached FTBT about an improved parking area, hitching rails, and a kiosk. We applied for RAC funding in 2018 and put the award in the vault for a few years while actual nitrate levels and wildlife impacts were studied.

This year, all agreements got signed and we are proud to announce our commitment to scrub, stock, and pump out the new commode! FNF will supply all the cleaning products and TP while FTBT will supply the labor.

The SST was installed in late July. Once school is back in session, the Heavy Machinery class at FVCC will investigate what exactly runs downhill. That's right, water! The parking area at Emmons Saddle will be improved, graded and filtration gravel will be added to keep unsightly puddles from forming when mother nature does her business.

Materials and FVCC supervisor costs will be paid for through a Community Grant awarded by the Whitefish Community Foundation. We'd like to thank them as yet another partner for this project.

....continue reading on page 3

SUMMING UP SPRING AND SUMMER TRAIL WORK

We had a very productive spring! Trails in and around Herron Park received some TLC including the Direct Route, Horse, and Family trails. In all, more than 100 dips, drains, and swells were sculpted by Montana Made Trails, a local company that specializes in trail design and maintenance. During National Trails Day on June 5, volunteers polished up all trails and we brought back the traditional post-workday BBQ. We were stoked to have Kalispell Daybreak Rotary serving up some grub for our hungry workers. A whopping 50 hours of volunteer labor went into National Trails Day. Pretty darn good for one day of work, indeed!

Big thanks to Flathead Area Mountain Bikers Trail Crew for putting some dirt back on the Notch Trail this May in the form of berms. We appreciate the work and love seeing our dedicated partners pitching in.

Trail signage was updated and you'll see new "You Are Here" signs installed at key locations in Herron Park, the Chase Forest, and the Foy's to Blacktail Trail to make navigation easier for trail users. The upper kiosk is looking spiffy with a face lift and we even touched up the original awning crafted by Jack Beard almost a decade ago! A grant from the Kalispell Tourism and Business Improvement District helped to stretch your donor dollars to make this project possible. Thank you Discover Kalispell!

But wait, there's more! We tackled weed mitigation along the Plum Creek Road, the Chase Trail, and the first two miles of the Foy's to Blacktail Trail. In all, five miles were covered and 35 volunteer hours were spent spraying weeds.

Trail maintenance isn't as sexy (except maybe using power tools) as building new trail but there is something really special about everyone that shows up to make a difference. We really appreciate the contributions of time and sweat equity each and every year. 🌿

Q&A WITH KELLER MITCHELL: STUDENT ATHLETE & MOUNTAIN BIKER

The Montana Interscholastic Cycling League, part of the National Interscholastic Cycling League (NICA), is midway through its 3rd season. The mission of NICA is to build strong minds, bodies, character, and communities through mountain biking. These young people are student athletes, like volleyball and football players, and have decided to focus their energy on skill development, teamwork and personal growth while on two wheels.

The Flathead Cutties are a composite team of middle and high schoolers from around the Flathead Valley that work on mountain bike skills, trail courtesy, fitness, and (most importantly) fun! Five races occur all over western Montana but team members are not required to race. Sometimes it's just about getting better at a something you love doing. This year, more than 40 student athletes practice weekly at Herron Park, Pig Farm, Happy Valley, Whitefish Trail, Whitefish Mountain Resort and other local trails.

Gabe Dillon, FTBT Program Coordinator, sat down with Keller Mitchell, a high school junior and Flathead Cutties student athlete, to find out more about why he loves this sport and what it brings to him. We've added some short descriptions to Keller's replies in some cases so you can understand some of the bike lingo.



Keller Mitchell is a high school junior that mountain bikes for fitness, fun and enjoys racing on a team with other local students with NICA.

A: Out of the 20 races I've done, this year's 12-hour race for 12 & 24 Hours of Flathead is definitely the most memorable. I teamed up with Sean Murphree from Missoula and we traded off laps for the whole 12 hours to win the event. *[Note: 12 & 24 Hours of Flathead is a mountain bike race held at Herron Park in Kalispell. Proceeds from this race provide adaptive equipment and recreational opportunities to those living with paralysis and other life altering disabilities.]*

Q: What is your favorite Flathead Valley trail to ride?

A: The downhill of Notch or Boundary trail at Herron Park [part of the FTBT system in Kalispell].

Q: What's your perception of trail courtesy practices locally? Are folks playing nice?

A: I think it's going to end up being designated trails down the road. I had a bad experience last year with an off leash dog coming down the Notch Trail. The women with the dog were really angry with me when I hit the brakes. I apologized and tried to keep my cool but there didn't seem to be anything else I could do. I don't want there to be a bad name for mountain bikers out there. Otherwise, yeah I think people are playing nice. [City of Kalispell and Herron Park rules require leashed pets on trails.]

Q: How long have you been in to mountain biking?

A: Since I was seven. I started in downhill and went to enduro. *[For the non-bikers out there, enduro racing is pretty simple: pedal yourself to the top of a mountain and race to the bottom time-trial style.]* When COVID hit I started taking the sport more seriously and started training. I bought a [training] plan from Training Peaks and have been following it ever since. I use a heart rate monitor and power meter to measure my fitness.

Q: How long have you been involved with NICA?

A: All three years since it started: 2019, 2020, and 2021. I did two races in 2019: the Herron Hustle and the Lolo Lift-Off on the Rossignol Ranch.

Q: What's your most memorable race experience?

Q: Do you have advice for new people to the sport?

A: Just try to have fun and not take it too seriously. Even though I'm working hard to get better, having fun is the most important part for me. There's no point in getting into something if you're going to hate it later.

Thanks Keller, it was great talking to you! Keep up the great work and training in your sport. And thanks for being a great trail ambassador with other users. We all have the opportunity to make our interactions with other trail folks a positive one.

We'll be rotating interviews with other types of trail users in future newsletter editions. If you know of someone we should consider interviewing, let us know. Send us an email with your suggestions or opinions: info@foystoblacktailtrails.org. 🌿

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS A HORSE DERBY?

By Charline Payne, Herron Park Equestrians (HPE)

Come on out and watch the Herron Park Horse Derby on Saturday, August 28th, starting at 9:00am.

If you are wondering what a Horse Derby is, you are not alone. It's actually quite interesting and riders and horses alike put a lot of time and training into this sport. Let us share a little more and invite you to join us! Spectating is free but remember that horses have the right of way. Be sure to steer clear of the course route and be safe!

The Derby Show will showcase two equestrian disciplines: dressage (pronounce like: druh-saazh) in the morning and jumping in the afternoon.

Dressage will be in the two arenas across from the main parking lot at Herron Park. Dressage means "training" in French and its purpose is to strengthen and limber the horse while providing mental exercise in attention and skill mastery with the rider. This is very much like agility training and competitions for dogs and their handlers. These types of activities between human and animal create a deep bond and connection.

There are a variety of skills tests in dressage from very beginner to super experienced. Each test prepares the horse and rider for the next, more challenging test. As training progresses, the skills become tougher.

Maybe you've noticed the letters on signs in the horse arenas? They are used as focus points or markers for the horse and rider. Dressage often requires a different movement at different letters. For instance, at letter B, the horse and rider may be expected to start trotting (jog) and make a 60' circle. Another test might require the horse to canter (run) at the letter C. This actually takes a lot of communication and teamwork between the horse and rider. Each team is judged on their movement, natural ability, relaxation and accuracy. The most advanced riders and horses can perform as many as 40 moves and the difficulty increases! Spectators are invited to watch from the sides of the arena.

The jumping derby combines stadium jumping (in a sand arena with jumps typically made from wooden poles) and cross-country jumping (a grass course with natural-looking jumps made from wood, hedges and water). This is the fun part of the derby! It's exciting to watch, especially when the horse jumps in and out of water jumps.

On the cross-country course, added tests may also be built in to the competition. For example, with a longer distance between jumps, there may be a test

requirement to canter across the meadow in addition to successful jumping. As in dressage, the skills tests range from the very beginner to the super experienced and increase in difficulty.

These equestrian events were started at Herron Park in 1979! Besides the events, Herron Park provides a safe place for horses and riders to practice their skills, both in the meadow and out on the trails. A public place that offers minimal stable fees for horses is rare and Herron Park Equestrians (a local non-profit organization) has worked hard for more than 40 years to maintain the meadow and horse jumps for all to enjoy.

With more people moving to the Flathead Valley, the word is out about this wonderful resource. Expect to see increased horse activity in the meadow and out on the trails. Remember to communicate clearly with horse and rider and the saying goes: Say Hi, Pass Wide.

Learn more about Herron Park Equestrians and become a member at herronparkeq.org. 🌿

HORSE SAFETY ON MULTI-USE TRAILS

On the trail, talk loudly and consistently to the rider so the horse recognizes you as a person. Remember, horses are prey animals so they tend to be on high-alert and may react quickly to fast-moving or unknown objects.

Approach horses slowly and be 100% certain they know you are present. This is especially true for mountain bikers, trail runners, and excited dogs on the trail. Erratic behavior or sneaking up on a horse and rider could result in severe injuries to you and others.

Always ask the rider or owner if you can approach or touch a horse before you reach out to the animal.



Charline Payne and her trusted horse, Sunny, on Herron Park trails demonstrating great communication with mountain bikers.

EVENTS ARE BACK IN THE PARK! (FOR NOW, AT LEAST)

Doesn't it feel good to get back to events? We absolutely loved seeing all the participants, families, and kiddos out enjoying community events. Smiles all around! Here is a recap of some fun we've had and a reminder about upcoming events.

Herron Half: In all, 225 racers tackled the 5k, 10k and Half Marathon courses. You helped us raise more than \$10,000 that will go directly to trail maintenance and new trail construction. We also appreciate the more than \$1,400 in donations and \$1,600 of merchandise sold at the event. We're pretty much out of all the old swag so look for some new goodies in 2022. The next Herron Half/10k/5k is scheduled for June 12, 2022. Get more details online at FTBTraces.com

12 & 24 Hours of Flathead: More than 70 people participated in the race on August 14-15. Proceeds go to the Last Best Grant, which provides adaptive equipment and recreational opportunities to those living with paralysis and other life-altering disabilities. Even though the smoke rolled in hard that weekend, breezy conditions at Herron Park kept the poor air quality at bay. Details about this race and how to support this effort are online at 24hoursofflathead.org

Equestrian Jumping Derby: The Event Derby at Herron Park on Saturday, August 28 provides a cross-training opportunity for both horse and rider, regardless of their equestrian discipline (dressage and jumping),

and provides a safe venue for new competitors, green horses, as well as a schooling opportunity for the experienced competitor. And as always, spectating is free! Be sure to read the feature article by Charline Payne to learn more about this event or check out more details online at herronparkeq.org

FTBT Marathon: There's still time to sign up for the Foy's to Blacktail Trail Marathon on September 19. We have two buses ready to shuttle you to Lakeside for the best run/hike of your summer. The winner will likely finish in under four hours but we allow enough time for folks to fast hike the course. Our aid station volunteers are already preparing this year's decorations. Be on the look out for pink flamingos, game animals, and skeletons hanging from the trees. More details can be found along with online registration at FTBTraces.com

NICA Herron Hustle: On September 24 and 25, middle school and high school student athletes from around the state will race mountain bikes. This race will take place throughout the meadow and lower trails at Herron Park, with families camping at the stable area. There will be professional start and finish race chutes, team pit zones complete with barbecues and lounge chairs, tents, campers, and even the possibility of a few horses being exercised among the NICA racers. Looking forward to another year of true mountain bike racing, Montana-style! More information can be found online at montanamtb.org/race-series

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 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.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> \$15 Friend | <input type="radio"/> \$250 Sustainer |
| <input type="radio"/> \$45 Family | <input type="radio"/> \$500 TrailBlazer |
| <input type="radio"/> \$100 Supporter | <input type="radio"/> \$ _____ |

DONATE ONLINE AT
FoystoBlacktailTrails.org

EMMONS SADDLE UPDATE, continued from front page...

Urine luck (last pun, we pinky promise), there is more trail scheduled to be built in the FTBT system! We've been bushwhacking all summer designing the Emmons Ridge Trail. Another 4+ miles of singletrack will navigate a series of high points above the current double track south of Patrick Creek Road,

creating multiple nested loop opportunities from the Emmons Saddle Trailhead.

Your donations make all this work possible, and we hope you share our excitement! Check out the photos of the new throne below. Ain't she a beaut?!



TIPPING OUR HATS TO OUR FTBT TRAIL LEADERS

We'd like to thank Luke Johnson and Deb Hoffman for three years of service on the FTBT Board of Directors. Best of luck on your new endeavors and we'll see you out on the trails!

Luke Johnson is a teacher at Somers Middle School. He is an avid cyclist and has pledged to serve lifetime duties doing course set up and take down for our fundraising events. He can be found all over the Flathead Valley on two wheels or two skis, depending on the season.

Deb Hoffman is a pulmonary and sleep physician at Logan Health in Kalispell. She loves running and cycling the trails of Foy's to Blacktail and our surrounding areas. She is a huge supporter of trail development and outdoor recreation. Deb looks forward to ongoing support and volunteer work to maintain this incredible trail system for our community.

Get to know our current board members and please drop us an email if you may be interested in joining the board: info@foystoblacktailtrails.org.

Lynn Foster, Chair

Lynn Foster joined the board in 2019, excited to help grow and maintain the Foy's to Blacktail trail system after enjoying years of multi-sport use. Along with her love of Flathead Valley recreation, Lynn brings extensive fundraising, marketing, and business experience to the board.

Dave Landstrom, Vice Chair

Dave has biked, hiked, and skied at Herron Park and the surrounding country for about 25 years. As a trails enthusiast he has been planning, building and maintaining trails during his career with Montana State Parks and prior to that with the US Forest Service.

....continue reading on last page

AUG 5 - SEPT 17



We need your help! Please donate to the Great Fish Community Challenge.

Thank you to the Whitefish Community Foundation for their community fundraising efforts!

\$20,000

Help us reach our fundraising goal so we can build new trails!

foystoblacktailtrails.org

Donate online. It's fast and easy. Over 61 great non-profits are participating in this community-wide effort.



Jandy Cox, Treasurer

Jandy has been on the FTBT Board for nearly six years and was also part of the founding group to make today's organization a reality. He enjoys skating on perfect ice and nearly every other mode of recreation when conditions are right. Jandy is the owner of Rocky Mountain Outfitter in Kalispell.

Seth Capon, Secretary

Seth Capon is a lifelong Flathead Valley resident, local business owner, proud dad, husband and FTBT board member. "I'd rather be lost up on Foy's to Blacktail Trails than know where I'm going anywhere else."

Travis Coleman

Travis enjoys encouraging youth participation in mountain biking, and has founded two local youth programs in the last eight years. He was delighted to be invited to join the Foy's to Blacktail Trails Board to help develop and maintain this amazing community resource.

Christy Cummings Dawson

The Board of Directors would like to welcome Christy, our newest member, who joined us in June. Christy enjoys trail running and hiking with her family on the many trails in the Flathead Valley. As she sees the area grow in her work as President of Montana West Economic Development, she's excited to volunteer her time with FTBT to leverage that growth into a vibrant trail system that can be enjoyed by all.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hiking boots, to these amazing board members. Your brain power and leadership are a great asset to our work. We appreciate you!

@foystoblacktail #herronpark