



HOPE • GROW • THRIVE



2022 Annual Report

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Well, it's been quite a year for Foy's to Blacktail Trails. There really is more for me to talk about than space in this newsletter! What happened in 2022...

We met most of our fund-raising goals, received 100% of our grant requests, held two successful events (the Herron 5k/10k/Half and the FTBT Trail Marathon), completed a significant amount of trail maintenance, and got in a solid start on 5.5 miles of new singletrack. The new Emmons Saddle Trailhead has seen regular, respectful use. The trails at Herron Park have seen higher than normal usage with very few negative user interactions and a wide variety of equestrian, youth, cycling, and running events.

This year we are lucky to welcome two new board members, Amber Steed and Jason Davis. Their unique backgrounds, knowledge, thoughtfulness, and love for our community trails are proving invaluable to the organization. Our board has become a solid team, and we've enjoyed building a vision for the future that we can all be proud of.

We are also happy to announce that our part-time project coordinator, Brian Roland, has accepted the position of administrative director and trails coordinator! Brian comes to us with an impressive trails background and has been learning all about the administrative side of FTBT this summer. He'll be taking over the reins in December.

On the flip side of that, FTBT will be saying goodbye to Gabe Dillon as our program coordinator at the end of the month. Gabe has been the driving force both behind the scenes and on the ground for the past five years. He plans to still be involved at some level with FTBT, but is moving on to other employment opportunities. We cannot thank him enough for what he has given FTBT and we look forward to seeing him out enjoying time on the trails he helped create!



Last, but certainly not least, the Foy's to Blacktail Board of Directors has spent quite a lot of time discussing where we go from here. The initial (simplified) goal of the FTBT organization was to create a multi-user trail that connected Herron Park to Blacktail Mountain. Once the Emmons Ridge trail section currently being built is completed, that vision will also be complete. So, where do we go from here? We want more. We envision a destination trail system in the Flathead Valley. Our newly defined mission statement:

"Enhance and steward a multi-use, community-focused trail system and advocate for access and trail connectivity between BlackTail Mountain, Herron Park, and the greater Flathead Valley."

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Foy's to Blacktail Trails and the Flathead Valley community. It truly is a pleasure.

Lynn Foster  
Board Chair, Foy's to Blacktail Trails



# BY THE NUMBERS 2022: TRAIL DOLLARS THRIVING

2022 TOTAL TRAIL REVENUE: \$244,455

## GREAT FISH COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

\$40,987

For the second year, FTBT was proud to participate in this community-wide fundraising effort! Your generosity helped us top the \$40k threshold and we cannot thank you enough. Immense gratitude also goes to The Whitefish Community Foundation.

## RACES & RAFFLES

\$32,239

The Herron Half and the FTBT Marathon went smoothly this year. Big thanks to our event sponsors and runners. And thanks to Whitefish Outfitters, we raffled off an e-bike adventure and raised a few extra bucks. We are so appreciative for the trail magic and support. Thank you.

## AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

\$15,000

Enacted into law in 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act allocated funds to address the deferred maintenance backlog for 5 federal agencies. Our amazing US Forest Service partners were able to share a portion of their funding with FTBT for our local trails.

## GRANT FUNDING

\$139,542

Three grants helped fund the new trail construction at Emmons Ridge: Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program \$40,982; MT State Recreational Trails Program \$71,560; Flathead County Resource Advisory Committee \$12,000.

## VOLUNTEER TRAIL VALUE

\$6,300

Volunteer trail work is immensely rewarding, whether it's digging new drainage features, creating better sight lines, or staining picnic tables. We cannot say thank you enough to the 68 people who came out to volunteer for their local trail organization this year!

## LOCAL TRAIL USERS

\$10,387

Every single year YOU give back to your local trails and there are not enough ways to say thank you. Hikers, bikers, runners, equestrians, dog-walkers, families, photographers, and everyone that pitches in to support FTBT... thank you so much!

## G R O W T H

### EVENTS & OUTREACH

\$26,000

Details such as event logistics, insurance and communication require time and money and are critical to outdoor/event safety.

### WAGES & OPERATIONS

\$41,000

Our organization's responsibilities grew enough that we needed to add a second, greatly appreciated, part-time staff member.

### TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

\$76,788

Building trails isn't cheap or easy, but so worth it! We are close (2023!) to completing the newest section of trail at Emmons Ridge.

### ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTION

\$27,000

We are building the FTBT nest egg. In 2022, our endowment fund balance grew to over \$45,000 and will be a priority effort for 2023.

## INVESTMENT

Individual commitment to a group effort makes a team work, a society work, a civilization work. 🗣️ Vince Lombardi

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now. 🗣️ Chinese Proverb



# THE FOY'S LEGACY

A CHAT WITH GUY FOY, BY JASON DAVIS

*Gabe Dillon, FTBT program director, and Jason Davis, FTBT board member, recently enjoyed a conversation with Guy Foy, Flathead Valley old-timer, about his younger years on Foy's Lake.*

Before the scenic Foy's to Blacktail Trail (FTBT) connected Blacktail Mountain and Herron Park, before paved roads reached the shores of Foy's Lake, and even before EuroAmericans established a permanent township (Demersville) along the Flathead River, the early Montana pioneer John M. Foy landed on the northern shores of Flathead Lake with aspirations to establish a new life for himself and his family.

By the telling of Guy Foy, one of John M. Foy's descendants, the Flathead Valley was a true frontier in those days.

"It was wild," Guy described of Demersville, the upper Flathead's first incorporated township whose saloons, trading posts, and brothels served locals years before its first post office opened in 1889. This same area around Foy's

Lake, where the FTBT system is partially located, was also wild in the natural sense.

"There were natural springs that fed upper Foy's Lake," and there was a creek that "ran from the upper lake down to the two smaller lakes below and then down into Ashley Creek."

Guy, who spent a portion of his childhood living in a newspaper-insulated shack on the southern shore of Foy's Lake, also remembers the hardships and challenges of living in the undeveloped expanse surrounding Foy's Lake.

"If we wanted water in winter, we'd take an axe down to the lake and chop a hole" and "if we wanted to eat, we picked up a rifle and walked up into the hills," remembered Guy.



## MEMORY LANE

*Guy's reflection and family stories are reminders of what's worth remembering and worth preserving.*

What's the takeaway from the stories, the history, and tall tales from a Flathead Valley old-timer that grew up around Foy's Lake? In a word, legacy.

Consistent with the new vision and mission of the Foy's to Blacktail Trail organization, the desire of FTBT is to build and secure a legacy for the Flathead Valley through a trail system that maintains and enriches the outdoor experiences of the people of the Flathead—present and future. Guy's memories and family stories remind us of what's worth remembering and protecting.

When asked to Guy, "What do you want people to remember about the Foy's Lake region in 200 years? What do you want them to remember about this place?" His answer was simple but profound. Guy openly said, "People. People helped people back then. If we knew someone was in need, we'd go hunting and leave [what they needed] at their doorstep."

As you enjoy your adventures on FTBT trails, please remember Guy's words and let's do our best to honor them. People help other people around these parts. And that's a legacy worth preserving. 🌿

**FTBT:** Is the lake properly called Foy Lake or Foy's Lake?

**Guy Foy:** Foy's Lake.

**FTBT:** Your grandfather owned a sawmill at Foy's Lake, is that right?

**Guy Foy:** At the time, the property extended nearly 5,000 acres to include what is now Lone Pine State Park and the entire chain of lakes. In those days, access from town was limited but water flowed enough to float logs from Foy's Lake all the way down to Ashley Creek.

**FTBT:** When did you live there? What was it like?

**Guy Foy:** Between 1955 and 1961 when I turned 10 years old. We lived in a slab shack with no windows. There were only two other houses at the lake, one owned by the Egan family and the other by the Price family. I remember as a kid, Francis Egan's house was like a mansion because it had two stories and real windows! We worked hard in those days, and any extra time was spent hunting or fishing. I had an uncle that would come [to visit] for a couple weeks each year and we'd fill several five-gallon buckets with perch. Half the day we'd spend fishing and the other half cleaning. Our catch would last us through the winter.

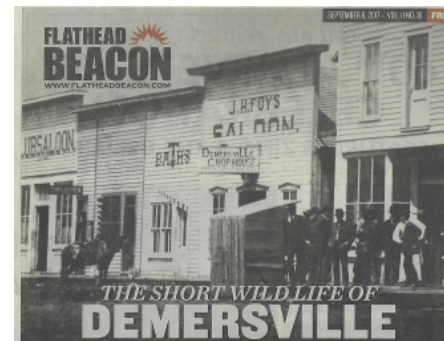


**FTBT:** Does the Foy family own any property at the lake today?

**Guy Foy:** I really wish we still held onto something from that time, but times were hard. The road out to the lake was little more than a trail and resources were limited so we eventually moved into town.

**FTBT:** When you reflect on your life from those early times, what message would you like to share?

**Guy Foy:** It was a time when people helped people. If you didn't grow it or raise it, your food probably came from someone that did. If you saw someone hungry, you'd catch a rabbit and bring them some meat. Life at a basic level meant that kindness was the most important thing. It still is. **“**



*Article from the Demersville Interlake:*

May 9, 1890: *The Flathead Lake Country eclipses all. No other place in Montana combines so many advantages.*

*There has been no time within the past few years when the Flathead lake region, its advantages and resources have failed to attract attention from the outside world. If the press of other sections is to be taken as fairly representative of the current thought of its numerous constituents, Demersville and our whole Flathead country, is regarded by some with admiration, by others with a humorous wonder, and by all with interest; sometimes the recipient of lavish praise, and sometimes criticized with asperity, it is in either phase evidently the object of wide spread observation, showing that it possesses claim which entitles it to special consideration.*

*The unprecedented growth of Demersville from Demer's tent store of a few years ago, to the rank of a garrison town and steam boat terminus, justifies the interest with which it is regarded. The causes of Demersville's growth and prosperity are many, of which we will now enumerate a few.*

- 1st. Its central geographical position.
- 2nd. Its accessibility by land and water.
- 3rd. Its excellent hotel accommodations.
- 4th. Its superior stores.
- 5th. Its magnificent climate.
- 6th. Its unsurpassed saw and grist mill site.
- 7th. Its possession of United States troops.
- 8th. Its pure water.
- 9th. Its inexhaustible forest of saw timber.
- 10th. Its matchless hunting and fishing.



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## DONATE ONLINE

[foystoblacktailtrails.org](https://foystoblacktailtrails.org)

### END OF YEAR GIVING

DONATE & LET'S  
**BUILD  
NEW  
TRAIL**

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR GENEROUS  
SUPPORT**

- In just 5 years, trail maintenance costs have increased from \$300/mile to \$550/mile. Here's the quick math: it costs us \$22,000 a year to simply maintain this 40-mile trail system (not including the administrative costs).
- FTBT donations average about \$80/donor. Every dollar counts to help us carry out our mission!
- We are only 150 donations away from reaching our 2022 fundraising goal. Please pitch in for year-end giving.