

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE HAILEY PARKS & LANDS BOARD
Held Tuesday, January 06, 2009**

Present: Board members Janet Fugate, Tom Downey, Cheryl Kramer, Jill Swanger, Dean Hernandez and Kathy Noble; Tom Hellen and Becki Keefer, staff. **Not present:** Darin Sales; Fritz Haemmerle; Council Liaison

New Business:

Election of Officers for 2009:

Cheryl nominated Janet to continue as Chair; Tom seconded the nomination, and all voted in favor. Dean nominated Tom Downey as Vice-Chair; Jill seconded the nomination, and all voted in favor.

Wood River Land Trust for the Croy Creek Wetlands Project:

Kathryn Goldman, Project Director for WRLT, explained that WRLT and the City of Hailey shared common goals with restoration of the Croy Creek Wetlands and cooperative trails to allow public access to the restored area. Kathryn oriented the Board with property ownership at the south end of Lions Park, which abuts the WRLT's Draper Preserve to the south. The Draper Preserve includes property on the east side of the river (formerly known as the Cedar Bend Preserve) and a portion of Della Mountain on the west side of the river. The WRLT's property lies between the city's Lions Park and Friedman Preserve.

In regards to the "cooperative" project for the restoration of the Croy Creek Wetlands, Phase I of the project is now complete. Through a water quality grant received from DEQ, 1200 tons of debris and excess fill were excavated and removed by city crews and equipment between the southern parking area at Lions Parks and the beaver ponds to the west. WRLT organized volunteers in initial plantings to restore the vegetation, and irrigation lines to establish the plantings. Phase II, which is partially funded through this grant, will install a boardwalk to revive public access in a manner that will protect the plantings installed in Phase I. As the beaver ponds and wetlands are likely to expand, the boardwalks will provide safe and likely to be seasonal access for the public to view the area. The WRLT would like to increase wildlife access to the expanded wetlands. The WRLT wants to construct the boardwalk in a looped trail, rather than an out-and-back. The south end of the loop would be on Draper Preserve property, beyond the southern boundary of the city's property at Lions Park. Most, if not all, of the boardwalk can be constructed with existing grant funds, and the WRLT intends to augment those funds with a fundraising campaign in order to build viewing platforms at the west side of Lions Park. WRLT would also prefer to limit access to the boardwalk in order to protect wildlife.

Kathryn also pointed out that their long-term wish list includes a pedestrian bridge across the river, ideally on their Draper Preserve property, as well as interpretive signage on site for the Croy Creek Wetlands. She explained that it would be cooperative signage and they would work with our city standards, and most signs will be on the east side of the river. The signs are part of Phase II, but are not funded through the grant.

Tom Downey asked if the boardwalk would be raised? Kathryn said that it would be in some lower areas, but it would not be raised on areas that remain above the wetlands. It is likely that the boardwalk could be under water in high water periods.

Kathryn added that they have been in contact with the city regarding the DEQ Brownfields Assessment currently underway at the parking area of Lions Park (where the ice rink was proposed),

and DEQ will be installing additional test wells for additional data and expansion of the wetlands restoration. Kathryn feels this would enhance the southern portion of the park, although the parking area would be closed. (Kathy and Janet reassert that we didn't want parking at south end of park anyway.) Kathryn added that the grant preapplication was due in February, a final application would be due in April, and funds would be available in 2010. Similar to the Howard Preserve in Bellevue, the area has had bad public behavior prior to restoration.

Janet asked if this would preclude our plans to access our property at the Friedman Preserve. Kathryn said that at this time, the WRLT is not interested in providing any access. Becki asked what would need to change for the WRLT to grant access in the future, but Kathryn amended her statement to reflect that the WRLT would never allow access. WRLT staff feels that their proposed expanded boardwalk provides all the access that the public would need. Janet asked if WRLT might change their mind "down the road", and Kathryn said they were "not going to shut the door", but they had decided to contain the public to the north side of the creek only. The boardwalk is a visual clue to keep people there and not to wander at will. They are trying to keep the wildlife corridor intact down to Colorado Gulch. Elk and deer use the game trail on the southern side of the creek year round. Tom Downey asked if there would use restrictions on the boardwalk, and Kathryn said the boardwalk would not be conducive to bikes. Janet suggested restricting dogs, as well; it was our intention to prohibit dogs on the Friedman Preserve.

Dean said that he likes the idea of not having a bridge across the creek, but understands the Board's desire to connect to our own property. Janet asked if we had heard from Fish & Game yet, but we hadn't written a letter to them yet. Kathy was adamant that Fish & Game will take months and months to respond to us, so we need to write the letter ASAP and then keep reminding them to respond. Janet said she loves the idea of continuing WRLT at the south end of our property, but she wants to hear from F&G first and would like to discuss this again with WRLT then. Kathryn said they're trying to direct people to where it is appropriate, and as Hailey grows, WRLT may reconsider access in the future.

Becki expressed how disappointed she was in WRLT's decision, and Kathy agreed. However, Janet tried to smooth it over diplomatically. Tom Downey appreciates WRLT efforts, but wants public access to public lands. Janet likes the expanded project, and noted that restoration efforts are not always noticed. Kathryn said that she had talked to several members on Council, and they were on board with the expanded project. Tom Hellen suggested that Kathryn get on the Council's agenda for January 26 for their formal review. Kathryn agreed, and left the meeting. Janet asked for a motion of recommendation, but no one offered any.

Becki and Tom Hellen again expressed their disappointment and frustration. Tom reminded us that there will be a period of several months to get additional information from F&G. Dean felt that it simply may not be appropriate to allow public access to the Friedman Preserve. Becki pointed out that we were simply trying to recognize the donor's wishes to allow public access to public land – that's why he gave it to the city instead of WRLT. Kathy again strongly recommended getting F&G review.

Reports:

Tom Hellen said he would like the Board to revisit park use permits and fees, and he needs direction on finishing off Keefer Park with the plaza area.

Cheryl asked if we could get a new Council Liaison, one that would actually come to our meetings.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of October 7, 2008: Cheryl moved to approve, and Kathy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Minutes of December 2, 2008: Dean moved to approve, and Cheryl seconded. All voted in favor.

Adjourned.