



MARSHALL MOUNTAIN PARK

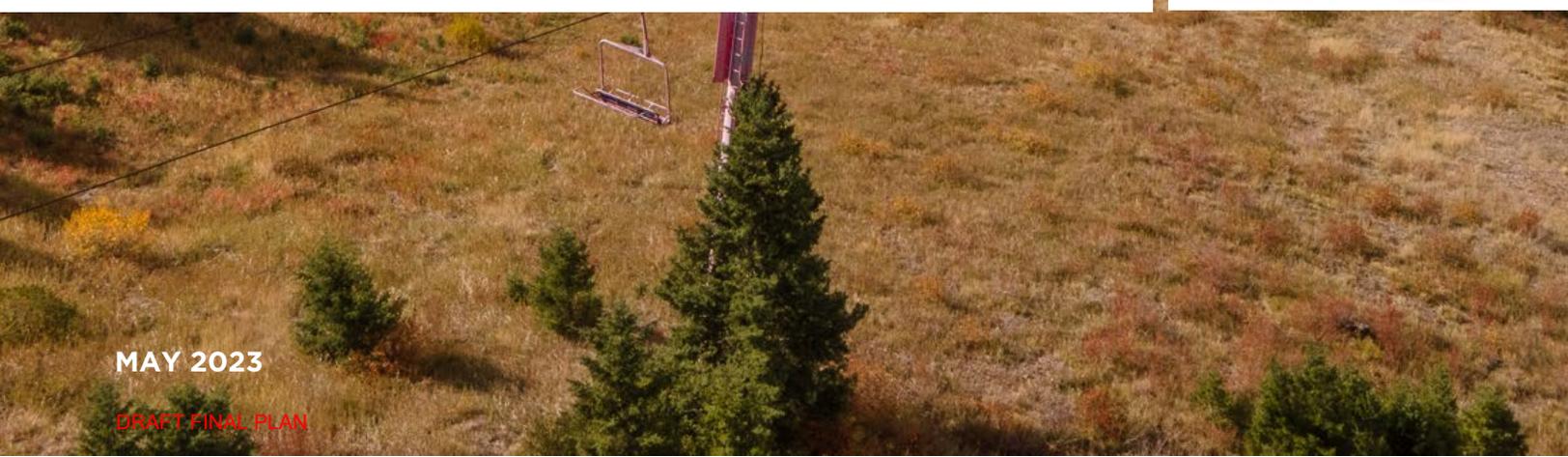
Conceptual Master Plan



Missoula
COUNTY



MISSOULA



MAY 2023

DRAFT FINAL PLAN

Acknowledgements

This *Conceptual Master Plan* is built on a foundation of passionate support from residents of Missoula County and the City of Missoula. The following list of acknowledgements recognizes organizations that were deeply involved in the development of this plan; however, we extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the creation of this plan in any way:

- ❖ Izzy Dog, LLC
- ❖ Five Valleys Land Trust
- ❖ MTB Missoula
- ❖ Friends of Marshall Mountain
- ❖ Missoula County
- ❖ City of Missoula Parks and Recreation

Additionally, the *Conceptual Master Plan* development process was supported by a team of consultants consisting of:

- ❖ SE Group
- ❖ MMW Architects
- ❖ Morrison Maierle Engineers
- ❖ DCI Engineers
- ❖ ConsultEcon

Photos courtesy of the City of Missoula, Five Valleys Land Trust, City of Bozeman, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service

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Additional Resources

Additional detailed resources have been developed by Missoula County and the City of Missoula to guide the implementation of this *Conceptual Master Plan*. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Existing park facilities assessment & recreation infrastructure summary
- ❖ Estimated capital costs for new park facilities
- ❖ Estimated operational costs and revenues
- ❖ Natural resources and climate assessment
- ❖ Permitting and land management review
- ❖ Public engagement & visioning summary

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction



Introduction

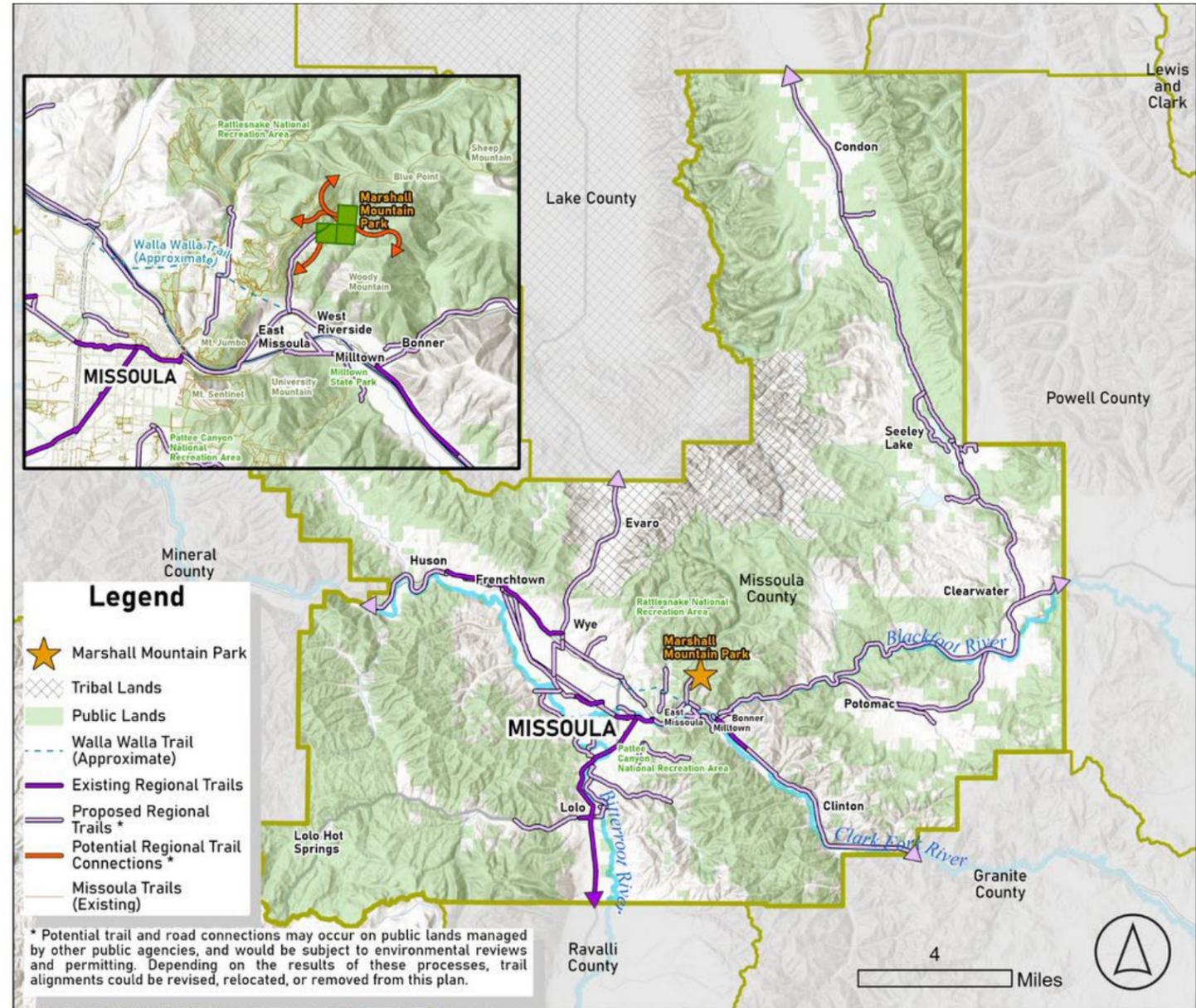
A regional hub for outdoor recreation, Marshall Mountain is located in the center of Missoula County, just a few miles from the communities of Missoula, East Missoula, and Bonner-West Riverside. In the 1920's and 1930's, sections of the mountain transitioned into a local ski hill, with primitive rope tows, a simple lodge, and several ski runs. By the 1960's, full-functioning chair lifts were constructed and more runs were cleared, but, due to the low-elevation of the site and the need for expensive infrastructure upgrades, the ski resort closed its doors in 2003.

Many years later, however, Marshall Mountain still provides thousands of local residents with a unique opportunity to enjoy various outdoor recreational activities, thanks to the efforts of local governments, various conservation and non-profit groups, and citizen-led initiatives to temporarily conserve the site. Hiking, back-country skiing, mountain biking, trail running, community events, youth camps and programs, outdoor education, and other activities and events take place each year on the mountain, and use of the site only seems to be increasing. It's clear that local residents want to continue to recreate at Marshall Mountain for many years to come.

NOTE: The Marshall Mountain area is important to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and the Séliš Ql'ispé Culture Committee is drafting text for this section that recognizes the significance of place and Tribal perspectives. That text will be incorporated prior to finalizing the Conceptual Master Plan.



PARK LOCATION & REGIONAL CONTEXT



Marshall Mountain is located along Marshall Creek, an important trout spawning tributary of the Clark Fork River. It is situated at the southern end of a massive block of public and tribal land extending north to Glacier National Park, connecting to multiple Wilderness Areas, including the nearby Rattlesnake Wilderness Area. The site provides unparalleled access to Lolo National Forest lands, and is close to other Federal, State, City, and County lands, trails and recreation areas.

Marshall Mountain is uniquely suited to connect to a variety of community services, including population centers, schools, other public lands, and existing and proposed regional and local recreational and commuter trails.

Looking Ahead

As one of the fastest growing regions in the State of Montana, the city and county are constantly exploring new ways to protect long-cherished public access that is threatened by expanding development pressures. Many of the existing trails, trailheads, parks, and other open spaces in Missoula's "Front Country," are at risk of being closed off due to private development. Being located in such close proximity to the majority of residents in the region, Marshall Mountain provides a rare opportunity to protect public access and expand recreational opportunities in response to consistent population growth.

Preservation and recreational development of the mountain supports local climate resiliency and equity goals, as residents can travel less to utilize more outdoor recreational amenities closer to their homes. Likewise, the site provides unprecedented opportunities for youth recreation programs and services, as well as environmental education. This not only benefits the youth that participate in them, but also provides parents with much needed childcare afterschool on weekdays, and during the summer months.

COMMUNITY GOALS FOR MARSHALL MOUNTAIN

The *Marshall Mountain Conceptual Master Plan* is a **community-based plan**. The strategies and recommendations presented within are intended to serve the recreational needs and desires of **residents** first and foremost. The following community goals for Marshall Mountain were identified through public engagement efforts in 2021 and were essential in guiding the development of the *Conceptual Master Plan*:

- ❖ Be a high use, all-season, all-access, public outdoor recreation and education area.
- ❖ Promote responsible land stewardship through active programming, on-site education and access for all.
- ❖ Be planned in a manner that honors the character and legacy of Marshall Mountain, specifically with nostalgic uses in mind, including but not limited to snow-based sports, mountain biking, and community events.
- ❖ Continue to provide, as it has done for generations, a place for Missoula's youth to learn responsible recreation and land stewardship principles, a sense of place, outdoor recreation-based sports, and competitive events.

HONORING PAST PUBLIC PROCESSES

2019 PROST Survey (Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails)

In March and April 2019, Missoula County and City conducted a mail-based needs assessment and statistically-valid survey of area households.

TOP FIVE DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

1. Natural areas/wildlife habitat
2. Dirt trails for hiking, biking, and running
3. River access sites
4. Paved trails for walking and biking
5. Outdoor/environmental education

THE FOUR MOST SUPPORTED ACTIONS

1. Protecting water quality
2. Protecting air quality
3. Ensuring natural areas are available to visit for recreation
4. Protecting land for habitat and environmental reasons

OPEN SPACE FOR ALL

The 2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan identifies lands around Mount Jumbo and Marshall Canyon as having important open space values and defines these lands as regional open space "cornerstones". Marshall Mountain is located within this open space "cornerstone" and fills an important niche for residents and visitors alike.

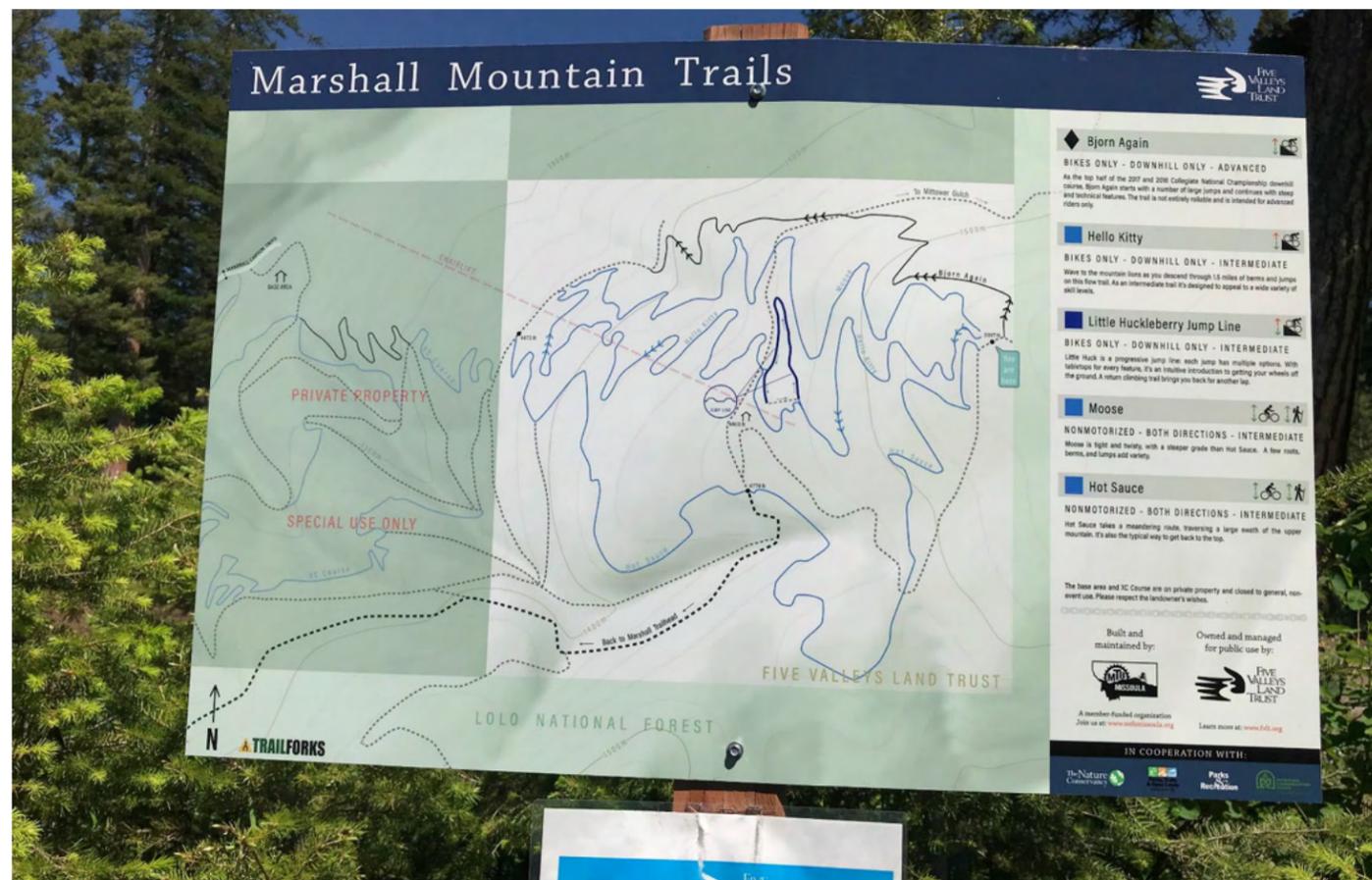
For many years, residents have consistently shown a high level of support for ensuring that Marshall Mountain remains accessible to the general public, and support continued recreational programming and site development to make sure the property can remain a community asset for many years to come. Recent public surveys, including a 2019 survey of both county and city residents, indicate overwhelming support for securing public ownership of the mountain and providing more access and recreational amenities.

Why We Created This Conceptual Master Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide conceptual recommendations for how to protect Marshall Mountain as a public park and improve recreational opportunities and natural resource conservation. These recommendations are derived from community input, detailed site analysis, and feasibility studies. This plan will assist communities and partners in making informed decisions for investments in park experiences, facilities, conservation, and programming.

To achieve this desired success, this *Conceptual Master Plan* offers:

- ❖ Conceptual designs and plans for recreational facilities, trails, and supporting infrastructure.
- ❖ Recommendations for programs and activities that recreational facilities and trails will support.
- ❖ Strategies for developing recreational facilities, implementing programs, and managing the park.
- ❖ A strategic approach to park implementation that identifies near-term priorities and long-term possibilities while factoring in the costs of park operation.



Park Planning Process

The *Marshall Mountain Park Conceptual Master Plan* is the culmination of a multi-year planning process. The process began in 2021 with outreach to community stakeholders and project partners, community open houses and public surveys. In response to extensive and documented community support, project partners used this feedback to develop conceptual designs, potential programs and activities, and operational strategies for Marshall Mountain Park throughout 2022. Residents were asked to share their thoughts on conceptual designs and plans near the end of 2022, and this feedback was used to inform the development of the final plan in 2023.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In September 2021, local partners involved with Marshall Mountain convened to develop and adopt a set of guiding principles for the development of Marshall Mountain Park. Project partners included the City of Missoula, Missoula County, Five Valleys Land Trust, MTB Missoula, and Izzy Dog, LLC.

The Guiding Principles establish key opportunities and considerations for Marshall Mountain Park, including:

- Programming and events of a range of sizes and types;
- Trails to support challenges and skill building for a variety of user groups;
- Youth educational experiences and multi-generational opportunities;
- Long-term fiscal sustainability for management and staffing of the property;
- Balancing recreational access and natural resource conservation.



PUBLIC OUTREACH

In fall 2021, the City of Missoula engaged members of the public to identify priorities for the use and development of Marshall Mountain Regional Park. Ninety-three attendees participated in online visioning sessions held in November 2021, and the City received 1,338 responses for an online survey hosted on the Engage Missoula website.

In addition to the 2021 survey and open house, the project team consulted the results of a 2018 survey conducted by City of Missoula Parks and Recreation and Missoula County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands on outdoor recreation needs and desires in Missoula County. Surveys were mailed to 7,000 households in Missoula County, of which 672 useable responses were received. Survey responses were weighted using demographic data to be representative of Missoula County's population.

KEY FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC OUTREACH

- ❖ Respondent feedback was largely aligned with the Guiding Principles developed by the project partners in 2021.
- ❖ Respondents expressed support for a balanced approach to recreational access and conservation of natural resources and ecosystems.
- ❖ Respondents expressed demand for more adaptive recreation opportunities.
- ❖ Respondents expressed support for youth programming, environmental education, public events, and private events at Marshall Mountain.
- ❖ Respondents expressed varying attitudes regarding the use of fees at Marshall Mountain Park.
- ❖ Respondents expressed the highest support for the following base area amenities: bike skills park, open air pavilion/shelter, snow sliding/tubing area, beginner ski area, and an outdoor stage for performances/events. Additionally, many the priorities expressed by respondents were indicative of the need for a base area building, which would support indoor community events, youth programming, classroom space, and park operations.
- ❖ Respondents expressed the highest support for the following mid/upper-mountain features and amenities: trails, passive recreation/open space, upper mountain shelter, and backcountry campsites. Most respondents indicated that they would prefer not to access the upper mountain using a surface or aerial lift.



CHAPTER 2

Existing Conditions at Marshall Mountain



Site Features & Facilities

Currently, Marshall Mountain features remnants from prior ski area operations as well as more recent recreational facility improvements. The base area includes most of the former ski area infrastructure, including the lodge and base buildings, chairlift, and maintenance and utility sheds. The upper mountain includes the former ski trails (now in varying states of revegetation) as well as a network of mountain bike trails developed in recent years by MTB Missoula.

KEY FINDINGS – SITE FEATURES & FACILITIES

❖ Building and infrastructure condition.

- The former lodge building featuring the clock tower has stood vacant for many years. An architectural and structure evaluation conclude the structure is in very poor condition should be removed. A creative reuse of desirable building features such as the clock tower or salvage of historic elements from the 1950's era cabin could be achieved with enough financial support.
- The newer base building is in fair condition, though extensive rehabilitation is needed before public use could be permitted. The building lacks ADA access and is in need of significant upgrades to comply with current building codes.
- The former chairlift is inoperable and would be extremely costly to restore to working order.
- Site utilities are in fair to good condition and could be used with repairs and upgrades, depending on needed capacity.

❖ Challenging topography.

- The Marshall Mountain property consists of steep mountainous terrain, creating challenges for development of new facilities.
- Due to a lack of flat outdoor space, preserving the existing terraced lawn area is critical for supporting events, programming, and parking.
- The initial pitch of the mountain is quite steep as well, making the development of accessible and beginner-friendly trails more difficult.

❖ Accessibility.

- The base area is steeply terraced and lacks accessible paths and accessible internal building circulation.



Recreational Uses

CURRENT ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMS

❖ Multi-use trail system.

- Marshall Mountain features a multi-use trail system that includes purpose-built singletrack mountain biking trails as well as double-track that are used for hiking and biking. MTB Missoula and Five Valleys Land Trust have been the lead organizations for trail development and maintenance.
- Primarily due to steep topography, the current trail system is oriented towards more experienced and physically-fit trail users. Most trails have steeper grades, and the upper mountain trails require a significant amount of climbing to access.

❖ Events.

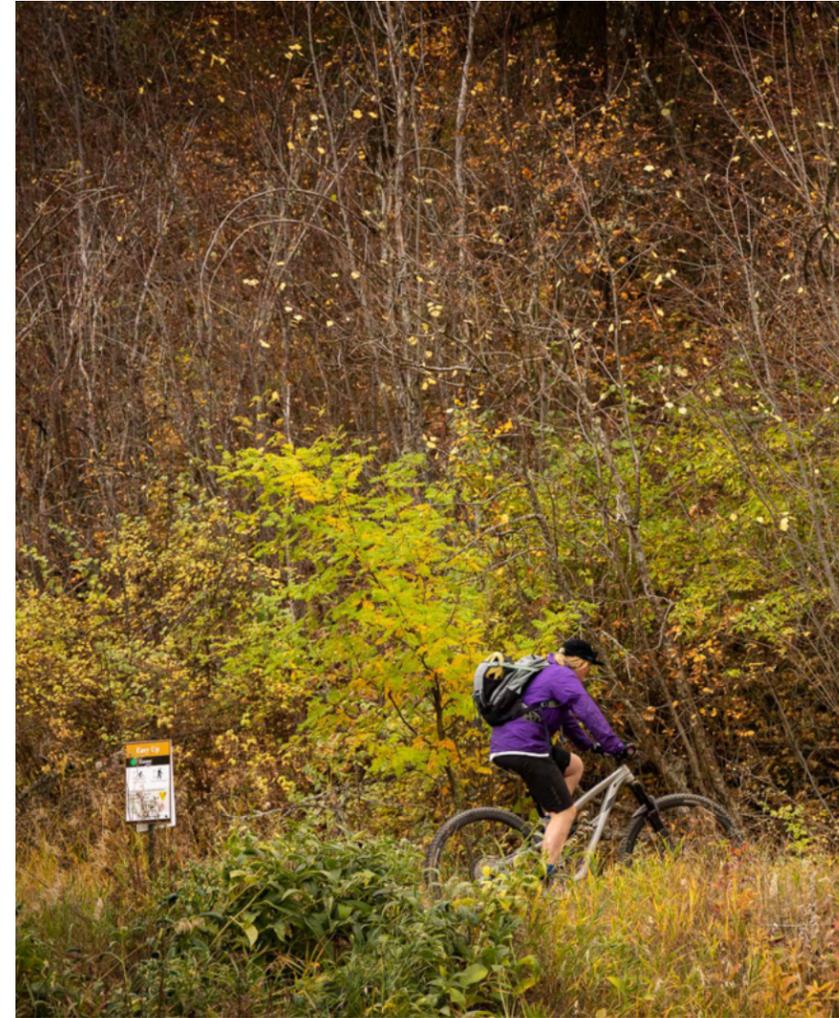
- Marshall Mountain has hosted a variety of private and public events in recent years, including mountain bike races, weddings, and trail runs. Event organizers are required to obtain a special use permit from the City.
- The property lacks formal event facilities (i.e., covered indoor space, restrooms). Due to the current layout of the lower mountain trails, events can conflict with public use of the trail system.

❖ Youth programs.

- Marshall Mountain has been a home for youth programs from various recreation based organizations, environmental non-profits, and City of Missoula Parks and Recreation.

❖ Human-powered winter recreation.

- Marshall Mountain is a popular location for backcountry ski touring, due to the proximity to Missoula and existing ski trails. There have been several uphill ski races held at Marshall Mountain in recent years as well.



Natural Resources & Climate

Key Findings & Considerations

- ❖ Care should be taken to minimize the impacts of trail development and other park features areas with important ecological value including habitat trees and associated nesting bird populations. Habitat trees should not be removed unless posing a safety risk.
- ❖ Marshall Creek is artificially channelized through the base area and has a limited riparian buffer. The portions of Marshall Creek which flow through the site contain isolated populations of genetically pure Westslope Cutthroat Trout (State Species of Concern), identified by the State of Montana as a core population to be conserved. Perched culverts and former snowmaking ponds limit upstream fish passage.
- ❖ Flammulated owls (a Region 1 sensitive species) have mapped habitat north of Marshall Canyon Rd.
- ❖ Planning for Marshall Mountain Park should be undertaken with an understanding of the park's location within regional habitat corridors that are critical for species resiliency.
- ❖ The season length for winter recreation activities around Marshall Mountain Park is projected to decline due to warming temperatures, primarily as a result of earlier spring snowmelt.
- ❖ It is likely that there will be more variable snow conditions during the winter season due to warmer temperatures, with an increased likelihood of rain or mixed precipitation.
- ❖ However, this region is predicted to fare better than other regions in the United States in terms of the future viability of snow sports.
- ❖ There is a projected increase in "extreme caution" heat index days in the region. This presents potential safety concerns for summer users of Marshall Mountain Park, particularly for youth and those participating in prolonged and/or intense outdoor activities. Indoor and covered outdoor facilities could be beneficial. However, the projected number of extreme caution days remains relatively low compared to other regions of the country.
- ❖ There are projected increases in "extreme danger" conditions for wildfire that could pose elevated threats to human safety, park facilities, and air quality.



Permitting & Land Management

KEY FINDINGS & CONSIDERATIONS

The Marshall Mountain project area is located in unincorporated Missoula County where the zoning and code requirements of the County are in effect. This zoning establishes allowable uses and dimensional standards for buildings on the site. These implications, as they relate to potential elements at Marshall Mountain, are discussed herein. Further, the upper parcel, currently owned by Five Valleys Land Trust has certain restrictions under the terms of the past sale.

Missoula County Zoning Requirements

- ❖ Missoula County updated its zoning and code in 2022. The rezoning changed the Marshall Mountain project area from the Open and Resource Lands (C-A1) district to the Agriculture, Working 40 (AGW) district, with the surrounding USFS land as Resource and Open Lands (RO). To note, the Forest Service would have primary jurisdiction on USFS land.
- ❖ The new code states that the “purpose of the AGW district is to conserve the integrity and quality of the rural character, providing opportunities for rural residential lifestyles” with some income generation.
- ❖ Rezoning the Marshall Mountain project area was done with the development of future recreational uses in mind. There are notable restrictions on the development of new buildings in this district; however, the zoning code includes provisions for additional allowable uses if they are considered to be accessory to developed outdoor recreation uses.
- ❖ The code includes provisions regarding riparian buffers, which will need to be considered for any site development adjacent to Marshall Creek.

Five Valleys Land Trust

- ❖ The restrictions in place for the upper parcel owned by Five Valleys Land Trust are that it not be subdivided or developed as residential use and that public access be maintained and protected in perpetuity.



KEY FINDINGS & CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

National Forest System Land

- The project area is surrounded by the Lolo National Forest on all sides, though a portion of the western boundary abuts private property. There may be opportunities to extend the recreational opportunities on Marshall Mountain on National Forest System (USFS) land to offer more elevation, connectivity to other area trail systems, and different recreational experiences.
- The Lolo National Forest guides uses on USFS land through the Lolo National Forest Plan (Forest Plan) from 1986. The plan divides the forest into 28 different management areas. In the Forest Plan, each management area has goals, objectives, and guidelines for existing and future uses. Any proposed trail development on National Forest land will trigger a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) permitting process through Lolo National Forest.
- The Lolo National Forest will begin the process to update the Forest Plan in early 2023, undertaking what is typically a 4-year process. During this process, the Forest Service will likely revise different forest management areas based on current resource and habitat information, existing uses, location/proximity, and public comment, among other factors.
- Much of the surrounding USFS land is mapped critical lynx habitat and grizzly bear habitat. These species have both been federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This can limit the type of projects and events that are permitted on USFS land, notably motorized uses and large events.

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CHAPTER 3

Facilities, Activities, & Programs



FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES, & PROGRAMS

This chapter identifies proposed improvements to Marshall Mountain Park that will make it into a high-quality, four-season park for the community. Pages 26 – 37 provide a breakdown of the activities and programs that could be offered at Marshall Mountain Park, as well as the facilities needed to support those activities and programs. Pages 38 – 45 provide conceptual plans showing proposed park facility and trail locations.

OUR PLANNING PROCESS FOR FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES, & PROGRAMS

To ensure that the proposed recreational facilities, activities, and programs at Marshall Mountain Park meet the needs of the community, a **tiered planning framework** was used. The framework is an acknowledgement that there are many potential uses of Marshall Mountain that must be considered and balanced when planning for the park.

Based on the feedback received from the public and project partners, **the day-to-day use of Marshall Mountain Park by the general public was the primary focus of park planning efforts**. This process emphasized that programs and events are important recreational offerings for the park, and that they should not overly impact the general public's ability to access and enjoy the park.

TIERED PARK PLANNING FRAMEWORK:

Tier #1 (Primary Planning Focus) - Self-Initiated Recreation: Park users who are using park facilities and grounds for personal recreation (i.e., mountain biking, hiking, picnicking).

Tier #2 - Programmed Recreation: Park users who are participating in organized programs, such as City of Missoula youth summer camps or non-profit-operated programming.

Tier #3 - Public Events: Organized events that are open and accessible to the general public (i.e., free or ticketed events). For example, a mountain bike race would be free for the public to attend but may charge a fee for participation in the race.

Tier #4 - Private Events: Organized events not open to the general public (e.g., weddings, workplace retreats).

PARK DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

This *Conceptual Master Plan* covers a large span of potential facilities, activities, and programs at Marshall Mountain Park. A **prioritized approach** to park development allows Missoula County, the City of Missoula, and project partners to focus on implementing critical near-term park improvements while doing needed planning and evaluation for additional facilities, activities, and programs.

Additionally, many of the proposed facilities, activities, and programs included in the *Conceptual Master Plan* are **scalable** - meaning that there is some flexibility in how they are implemented based on available funding, changes in project costs or community needs, and other potential constraints that could arise in the future.

IMMEDIATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS FOR SAFETY & PUBLIC ACCESS

These are investments in Marshall Mountain Park that are critical to establishing public access to the park (including acquisition of park land), promoting park safety and accessibility, expanding recreational facilities for a variety of users, and supporting current programming and events.

ESSENTIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

These are additional investments that restore park habitat, complete the initial buildout of the trail network (p. 41), and facilitate broader use of the park.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

These are park investments that are priorities for the public and park partners but are in need of additional future planning, evaluation, and/or fundraising before decisions can be made about implementation.

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

These are additional park investments that could add to the recreational experiences and amenities at Marshall Mountain that are dependent on adequate park facilities being developed and should be evaluated in the future to see if they are feasible and meet the needs of the community.

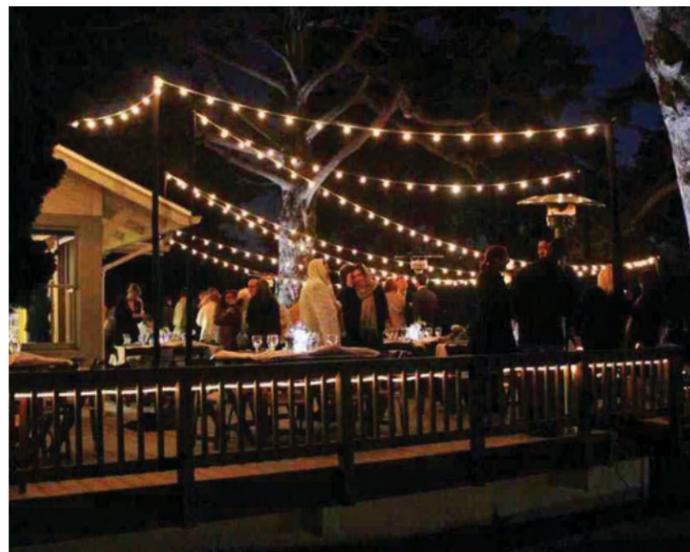
BASE AREA ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES

BASE AREA BUILDING ENVELOPE

FUTURE

The base building would be overhauled to provide accessible, flexible, multi-purpose space that supports a variety of community programming and events. The Base Area Design Concept (p. 39) designates a building envelope that supports **several options** for building(s):

- **Remodeled Base Building:** The remodeled base building would serve public and private functions and could include accessible restrooms, flexible indoor space/warming area to support a variety of public or private events, and office and storage space. In addition, a walkout basement would host storage and shop space for Missoula Parks and Recreation programs and serve as a base of operations for site management.
- **Base Building Expansion:** Expanding the base building within the building envelope would provide indoor and outdoor space for larger public and private events, such as weddings, with the potential to generate more revenue. The concept design optimizes the site's natural beauty and would become part of an attractive arrival sequence featuring up-mountain views and landscaping.
- **New Building Construction:** As project costs and programming needs are further defined, project partners may determine that removing the Base building and constructing new indoor space on site is most effective. If this occurs, a new building would be constructed within the designated building envelope shown on the plan.



EVENT LAWN

IMMEDIATE

Flat terrain at Marshall Mountain is both limited and important. Designers have carefully planned the base area to preserve flat outdoor areas for flexible public use and to support events and programming. The removal of the former lodge building will provide critical additional flat lawn space. When not in use for events, this area will be available for recreational activities such as picnicking. Flat lawn space is particularly important for events and programs needing a place for tents, games, and outdoor seating and gathering space.



BASE AREA TRAILHEADS

IMMEDIATE

Providing multiple trailheads (as shown on the Base Area Concept on page 39) with pit toilets and informational kiosks will provide convenient trail access from parking areas, improve back-country connections, and enable the public to continue to access trails during base area events.

CHAIRLIFT TERMINAL PAVILION

ESSENTIAL

It is not economical or practical to repair the existing ski lift. The lift will be removed, but the chairlift terminal could be preserved and repurposed into a small pavilion for public use. Lift elements could be preserved to capture the nostalgia of the site. The shelter could be available for first-come, first-served use or reserved for small groups and events.



BASE AREA ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES (continued)

BASE AREA LOOP TRAIL

IMMEDIATE

This loop around the base of Marshall Mountain will be the most beginner-friendly trail in the park. It will form an essential connection between base area facilities and much of the trail system, and will be used by hikers, bikers, balance bikes, and program participants. The trail will also support a variety of environmental education opportunities. Trail grades and corners will be designed to allow for all levels of cyclists, including adaptive riders. Bike skill features such as drops, skinnies, jumps and rock gardens could be incorporated as optional features and designed to be progressive to accommodate a variety of skill levels. Due to moderate grades throughout, this trail could be used for winter recreation as well.



IMPROVED SITE CIRCULATION & PARKING

ESSENTIAL

Parking areas, drop-off zones, and driveways have been designed to provide orderly and convenient site access. ADA parking is provided directly adjacent to base area building(s), and the upper level of the base area will be accessible via an ADA-compliant ramp. A one-way drive can be gated off for events while maintaining convenient parking for day users. Native plant landscaping will provide an attractive arrival sequence and educational opportunities.



PUMP TRACK

FUTURE

A pump track would complement the Base Area Loop Trail and provide a safe, observable area for mountain biking skill development.



ADDITIONAL BASE AREA WINTER RECREATION

FUTURE

It may be possible to accommodate additional winter activities at the Marshall Mountain Park base area. Groomed Nordic skiing and fat biking trail(s) could be included if feasible based on trail design, operational costs, topography, snow conditions, and community support.



LEARN-TO-SKI & RIDE AREA

LONG-TERM

If feasible, based on funding and public support, a "learn to ski & ride" area could be built at the base area utilizing the former beginner ski trail. Magic carpet surface lifts and lighting could be installed to provide uphill service and night skiing, and the new base building would provide an indoor warming area and base of operations. Future planning would include developing an operational schedule and financial plan, evaluating snowmaking needs and operations, and working with community partners to develop programs.



AERIAL ROPES COURSE

LONG-TERM

The City's existing challenge course (low ropes & high ropes) in McCormick Park is slated to be removed in the future. Relocating this course to Marshall Mountain would integrate well with the proposed improvements and could be designed to emphasize the unique terrain of the base area. A ropes course could also generate revenues that can offset the costs of park operations.



SHUTTLE SERVICE

FUTURE

A round-trip shuttle service between central locations in Missoula and adjacent communities to the park could limit vehicular trips to the site, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and limit parking demand on site.

ON-MOUNTAIN ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES

MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL NETWORK

The Early Phase Trails Plan (presented on page 41) is the first phase of trail development at Marshall. Based on feedback from the Community Vision, the plan attempts to increase accessibility, preserve backcountry access, provide trails for various users and abilities, create multiple loop trail options, minimize user conflicts, and connect to the broader landscape.

This is done through a variety of trail types, including multi-use trails, downhill-only mountain bike trails, a gentle climbing trail, and an adaptive bike-friendly loop trail. In addition, the early phase trails plan provides essential connectivity and a base system upon which additional trails, with more options for advanced/expert level mountain biking and landscape-scale connections can be built.

IMMEDIATE

Several trails identified in the Early Phase Trails Plan would be completed initially to provide more beginner- and adaptive-friendly trail options. This would include three trails: 1) the multi-use Base Area Loop Trail (see p. 28), 2) a easier multi-use trail that provides an “easy up” climbing trail for bikes, and 3) an easier downhill-only bike trail. All three of these trails would be built to adaptive bike standards and would form an adaptive-friendly bike loop.

ESSENTIAL

Subsequent phases of trail development would include the completion of all remaining trails identified in the Early Phase Trails Plan.

FUTURE

Future phases of trail development will consider additional on-site trails as well as off-site trail connections to nearby trails and destinations on the Lolo National Forest (see p. 42 & 43)



BACKCOUNTRY WINTER RECREATION

ESSENTIAL

Backcountry skiing/riding and snowshoeing have been popular winter activities at Marshall and will continue. While these activities typically do not require specialized trails or infrastructure, it is crucial to establish winter recreation zones to limit conflict and protect natural resources.

The Winter Recreation Plan (see p. 44) highlights areas where vegetation management could include keeping select existing downhill ski runs relatively clear while encouraging forest regeneration in other areas. Additionally, uphill routes have been identified to help direct backcountry traffic. Uphill routes and downhill runs would be chosen for vegetation management based on historic use trends, quality of skiing and riding experiences, topography, safety, and habitat and natural resource needs.

Backcountry skiing would use natural snow conditions (no snowmaking or grooming), be accessed via human-powered means (skinning or hiking) and would be clearly advertised to users as being “at your own risk” with no regular ski patrols or avalanche management.

MID-MOUNTAIN SHADE SHELTER

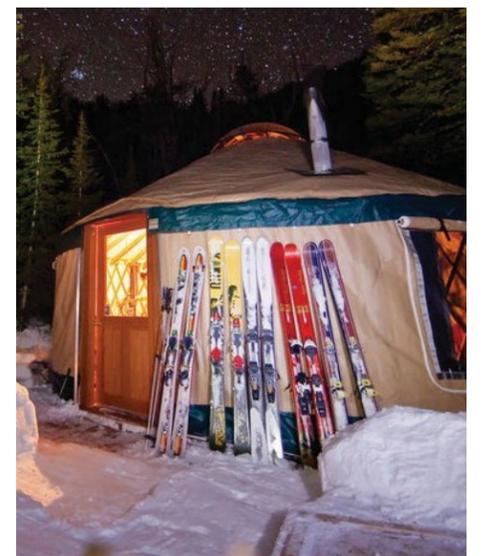
FUTURE

The area near the former T-bar lift terminal is a suitable location for a mid-mountain shade shelter. This spot features scenic sub-alpine habitat and views and is located at the confluence of several existing trails, making it an ideal location for gathering and resting while out on the trails. This area could also host a privy and emergency landing spot.

MID-MOUNTAIN CAMPING

FUTURE

There are several suitable locations for a reservable overnight camping spot in the mid-mountain area. This could be a reservable cabin, yurt, or more primitive campsites. This camping spot would be more accessible to a wider range of users than other more remote backcountry campsites in the area.



PROGRAMS

CURRENT YOUTH PROGRAMS

EXISTING PROGRAMS WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION

There is a variety of youth programming already occurring at Marshall Mountain via City-run programs that are open to City and County residents. **Zootown Derailleurs** (ZTD) is a mountain biking program for children aged 3 to 18. ZTD includes after school programs in the fall and spring, as well as week-long camps in the summer; participants use the trails on Marshall Mountain as well as other trail networks and park facilities. City **Afterschool programs** and **School's Out Day Camps** currently use lawn areas and trails at Marshall Mountain as well.

The current size of the ZTD program is based on staffing levels, use permit requirements, cost/availability of transportation, and facility capacity. For a typical ZTD week-long summer camp, there are approximately 50 kids who attempt to register but cannot be added to the program due to program size limitations. The development of base area facilities and trails at Marshall Mountain could potentially support an expansion of this program by providing additional facility capacity, skill development opportunities, and revenue generation options.

Similarly, for a typical City summer camp program, there are approximately 75 kids who attempt to register but cannot be added to the program due to program size limitations. Proposed flexible office and multi-purpose space in the base building could support Marshall Mountain-based summer camp programs, as well as increased use of the park by existing programs.



ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS FOR ALL

EXISTING PROGRAMS

A variety of City, non-profit, and private organizations have used Marshall Mountain for various youth and adult programs in recent years, including youth cycling teams, outdoor educators, and the Missoula Movers adult hiking program. Program offerings are currently limited by the lack of base area facilities and poor accessibility.

POTENTIAL PROGRAM EXPANSIONS & NEW PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The development of the base area facilities and trails at Marshall Mountain would support expanded opportunities for a variety of programming. Flexible classroom, office, and storage space in new base building would significantly bolster the ability of the City and County to support program offerings and associated revenue generation opportunities.

- **Environmental/Outdoor Education:** Marshall Mountain is uniquely well-suited for youth and adult environmental education programs. Proposed indoor and outdoor base area facilities would have direct access to trails and a variety of natural habitats (stream and riparian areas, wetlands, forests, sub-alpine). Skill-building programs around mountain biking, hiking, camping, and wilderness survival could provide diverse opportunities for residents to participate in outdoor recreation.
- **Youth Teams & Camps:** A combination of indoor and outdoor facilities with direct access to trails and activity lawns will bolster the potential offerings for a variety of non-profit and private youth programs.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

LONG-TERM

The development of base area facilities at Marshall Mountain could be the catalyst for future planning by the County and City for additional programs that go beyond typical park programming in supporting populations in need. For example, an outdoor-focused pre-school program based at Marshall Mountain could help address the need for more affordable childcare options in the region.

EVENTS

PUBLIC EVENTS

"Public events" refer to events that are generally open for public attendance (e.g., live music, community dinners, mountain bike races, etc.).

EXISTING

Marshall Mountain has hosted a variety of public events in recent years, including mountain bike and ski mountaineering races. Event permitting fees generate revenues that help offset the costs of park maintenance and administering events. The current lack of base area facilities, lack of flat outdoor areas, and poor accessibility constrain event offerings at Marshall.

ESSENTIAL

Upgraded lawn space, improved parking and site circulation, and vendor hookups would allow for improved outdoor event offerings at Marshall Mountain Park. In addition to enhancing event experiences, this would allow for greater revenue generation opportunities to support park operations and programming. The design of the base area will allow the park to remain open to the public during most events.

FUTURE

The development of flexible indoor base area facilities would make Marshall Mountain a desirable location for a broad swath of events, including large-scale, multi-day events and the ability to host events that occur during cold-weather months. In addition to providing additional opportunities for quality community events, these facilities would further enhance revenue generation opportunities to support park operations and programming.



PRIVATE EVENTS

"Private events" refer to events where attendance is restricted to invited attendees, such as weddings, retreats, and family reunions.

EXISTING

Marshall Mountain has been used for a few one-off private events in recent years, such as weddings and private parties. The current lack of base area facilities, lack of flat outdoor areas, and poor accessibility constrain event offerings at Marshall Mountain.

ESSENTIAL

Upgraded lawn space, improved parking and site circulation, and vendor hookups could enhance private event offerings at Marshall Mountain Park. While accommodating private events would not be the primary reason for initiating these improvements, the enhanced event offerings could result in increased revenue generation to support park operations and programming.

FUTURE

Combined with its scenic setting, the development of flexible indoor base area facilities would make Marshall Mountain a desirable location for private events such as weddings and retreats. While private events are not intended to be a primary focus of Marshall Mountain's operations and programming, these events have the potential to generate revenues to offset the costs of park maintenance and event management, and the design of the base area will allow the City to keep the park open to the public during most events.



EVENT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

While events are envisioned to be an important component of Marshall Mountain Park, the day-to-day use of the park by the general public for personal recreation is considered the highest priority (see p. 24). The conceptual base area design is intended to help facilitate continued public use of the park during events; however, in certain cases it may be necessary to close some park facilities to accommodate larger events. Charging additional fees for events that limit public access to park facilities would help compensate for these temporary closures.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

SENSITIVE RESOURCE AREAS

IMMEDIATE

The Base Area Concept Plan (p. 39) designates two sensitive resource areas at the base area. Management approaches in these areas will prioritize natural resource values, discourage recreational use, and limit or preclude trail and facility development.

The area northwest of Marshall Canyon Rd features flammulated owl habitat (a Region 1 protected species), while the area south of the base area along Marshall Creek consists of wetland features that support a range of species that frequent or rely on wetland/riparian habitat types.

Additional sensitive resource areas may be identified in the future as additional information is learned about resource conditions. Overall habitat conservation will be a priority throughout the entire park. Recreation management, trail construction and facility development will be carefully implemented, recognizing the importance of habitat and ecosystem conservation.



FOREST MANAGEMENT

ESSENTIAL

Marshall Mountain features areas of unnaturally dense undergrowth, as well as areas of shrubby revegetation on former downhill ski runs. Following the acquisition of the park, development of a comprehensive forest management plan will be required. Thinning dense standards of juvenile trees, and other undergrowth at Marshall Mountain will serve several purposes: 1) reduce the overall fuel load to limit risk of damaging and dangerous wildfire; 2) limit vegetation growth to promote winter recreation on the mountain; and 3) improve forest health by reducing intra-specific competition and spread of forest pathogens.

Forest management activities would occur over the course of many years and would be revisited as needed to promote ecosystem health and human safety. Initial forest management priorities would focus on removal of thickets of Douglas fir within high-priority wildfire management zones. An established road network on site would facilitate commercial timber harvest on site for areas where tree removal would be too difficult for typical forest management activities.



RESTORED FISH PASSAGE

ESSENTIAL

Upstream passage for trout and other aquatic organisms along Marshall Creek is currently limited by perched culverts and former snowmaking retention ponds. Working with fisheries conservation partners, these perched culverts and retention ponds would be removed and restored. Crossings of Marshall Creek would be achieved using bridges that span the bankfull width of the creek and allow for natural flows and improved wildlife passage through more developed portions of the site.



ENHANCED STREAM CHANNEL

ESSENTIAL

Currently, there is little buffer between parking areas and Marshall Creek in the base area. Redesigning parking areas and driveways would allow for the stream channel to be restored, site drainage to be routed away from the stream, and an improved riparian buffer.



NATIVE PLANT DEMONSTRATION AREA

FUTURE

The area between the proposed upper level parking area and building envelope is steeply sloped and not suitable for recreational facilities. Given the steep terrain and prominent location, this hillside is a suitable location for a native plant demonstration area as part of the site redevelopment. Revegetating this slope with native plants would promote slope stability and provide an educational resource for park users.



BASE AREA CONCEPT PLAN

The Base Area Concept Plan shows the facilities and infrastructure that would support recreational activities and programs at Marshall Mountain. The Concept Plan was developed through a careful design process that considered desired recreational experiences, facility and program needs, accessibility, resource conservation, and event management. The result is a plan that ensures the base area is accessible and enjoyable for a wide variety of users, while preventing the area from feeling “overdeveloped.” **More details on proposed base area facilities and activities are presented on pages 26-29, including options for a base area building within the identified building envelope.**

In addition to the facilities depicted on the map, there would need to be **upgraded site infrastructure and utilities** to support built facilities. This includes the following potential utility improvements: 1) relocating and burying electric utilities; 2) upgraded water treatment and storage; 3) upgraded septic systems and/or capacity; and 4) constructing and/or repurposing maintenance buildings, depending on the park operations and maintenance needs.

The Base Area Concept Plan presents a prioritized approach to park development, as described on page 25. The color-coded labels correspond to the different tiers of park development listed below.

IMMEDIATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS FOR SAFETY & PUBLIC ACCESS

These are investments in Marshall Mountain Park that are critical to establishing public access to the park (including acquisition of park land), promoting park safety and accessibility, expanding recreational facilities for a variety of users, and supporting current programming and events.

ESSENTIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

These are additional investments that restore park habitat, complete the initial buildout of the trail network (p. 41), and facilitate broader use of the park.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

These are park investments that are priorities for the public and park partners but are in need of additional future planning, evaluation, and/or fundraising before decisions can be made about implementation.

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

These are additional park investments that could add to the recreational experiences and amenities at Marshall Mountain that are dependent on adequate park facilities being developed and should be evaluated in the future to see if they are feasible and meet the needs of the community.

IMMEDIATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS FOR SAFETY & PUBLIC ACCESS

As Marshall Mountain transitions from a private property to a public park, there are several improvements that will focus on making the property safe for the public and providing better public access. Generally, these improvements include:

- ❖ Formalized trailhead (toilet, signage, trash, ADA access)
- ❖ Improved trail connections (Base Area Loop Trail, easier climbing trail, and adaptive mountain biking loop)
- ❖ Removal of Lodge Building, and restoration/expansion of the events lawn
- ❖ Removal of the ski lift towers & chairs
- ❖ Basic parking improvements
- ❖ General site clean up

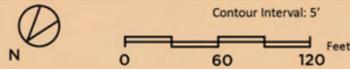




FULL BASE AREA CONCEPT PLAN

LEGEND

- Multi-Use Trail (Ped, Bike, Horse)
- Directional Mountain Bike Trail
- Adaptive Multi-Use Trail (Ped, Bike)
- Existing Access Road (Mult-Use)
- Adaptive Directional Mountain Bike Trail
- Base Area Loop Trail
- Marshall Creek



There are additional immediate park improvements that will be needed to secure the site and improve safety; see previous page for more detail.

BASE AREA FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- 1** Creekside Gathering Area
- 2** Potential Maintenance Buildings
Exact number of buildings, locations, and size to be determined based on future park facility development.
- 3** Limited Forest Regeneration on Primary Ski Run
A forest management plan will be needed to implement a property-wide approach to forest health and winter recreation access.
- 4** Restored Snowmaking Pond
Improving fish passage at this location is a priority; further explore options for restoring existing pond or removal of pond and restoring stream channel.
- 5** Shade Pavilion
The former lift terminal will be adaptively reused to provide a reservable shelter for public use. (retain character of former ski lift, reuse chairs)
- 6** Trailheads
Primary trailhead provides access to the trail system without conflicting with events in the base area.
- 7** Gates
Ability to open/close upper parking loop as needed.
- 8** Vault Toilets
- 9** Access Road
Upgraded gravel road provides access to events lawn, and the upper mountain for events, maintenance and emergency vehicles, and for future accessibility to upper mountain.
- 10** Drop Off Area
- 11** Accessible Parking
- 12** Restored Fish Passage through Base Area
Improved stream crossings to facilitate fish passage along with restored vegetation buffers.
- 13** Building Envelope
An indoor space to support current and future programming needs. Building design to be flexible in order to provide indoor space for a variety of programs and events. Could be a remodeled building with expansion, or all new building in a similar location.
- 14** Events Lawn
Removal of lodge building to create flexible outdoor space, potential for vendor hookups and gathering spaces.
- 15** Pump Track
- 16** Program Support Area
Includes storage for seasonal recreational equipment to support programming. Walk out basement and flat gathering terrace provides space for program participants to gather and receive equipment.
- 17** Native Plant Demonstration Area
Potential for interpretive education.
- 18** Base Area Loop Trail
Multi-use loop trail built to adaptive standards. Potential for winter use and environmental education.
- 19** Potential elevated ped-bike crossing or improved at-grade crossing
- 20** Potential Learn to Ski Area
This area will provide a low-angle learning zone for beginner ski skill development and programming. One or two magic carpet lifts will provide uphill access, with a graded landing area provided for each lift. Seasonal lighting for night skiing.
- 21** Potential Aerial Ropes Course
An aerial skills course will be accessible from the Learning Loop.
- 22** New Driveway and Access Sequence
This will involve the construction of paved driveways, sidewalks, and parking areas including new stream crossings over Marshall Creek.
- 23** Overflow Event Parking
This will include parking for oversized vehicles such as buses and horse trailers.

- Immediate Park Improvements for Safety & Public Access
- Essential Park Improvements
- Potential Future Programs and Facilities
- Potential Long Term Programs and Facilities



BASE AREA BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations will help guide the development of a base area building within the footprint identified on the Base Area Design Concept.

❖ UPPER LEVEL BUILDING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- o **Indoors:** Provide flexible multi-purpose space; provide accessible restrooms for use during events and indoor programming; consider including a warming kitchen for events.
- o **Exterior:** Provide accessible pedestrian connections from parking areas; provide an outdoor activity area; provide a multi-purpose, partially-covered patio gathering space.

❖ LOWER LEVEL BUILDING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- o **Indoors:** Provide flexible storage/office space; provide space for maintenance equipment and mechanical systems.
- o **Exterior:** Provide accessible connection from parking lot; provide a gathering space for the beginning of camps and programs.

❖ ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

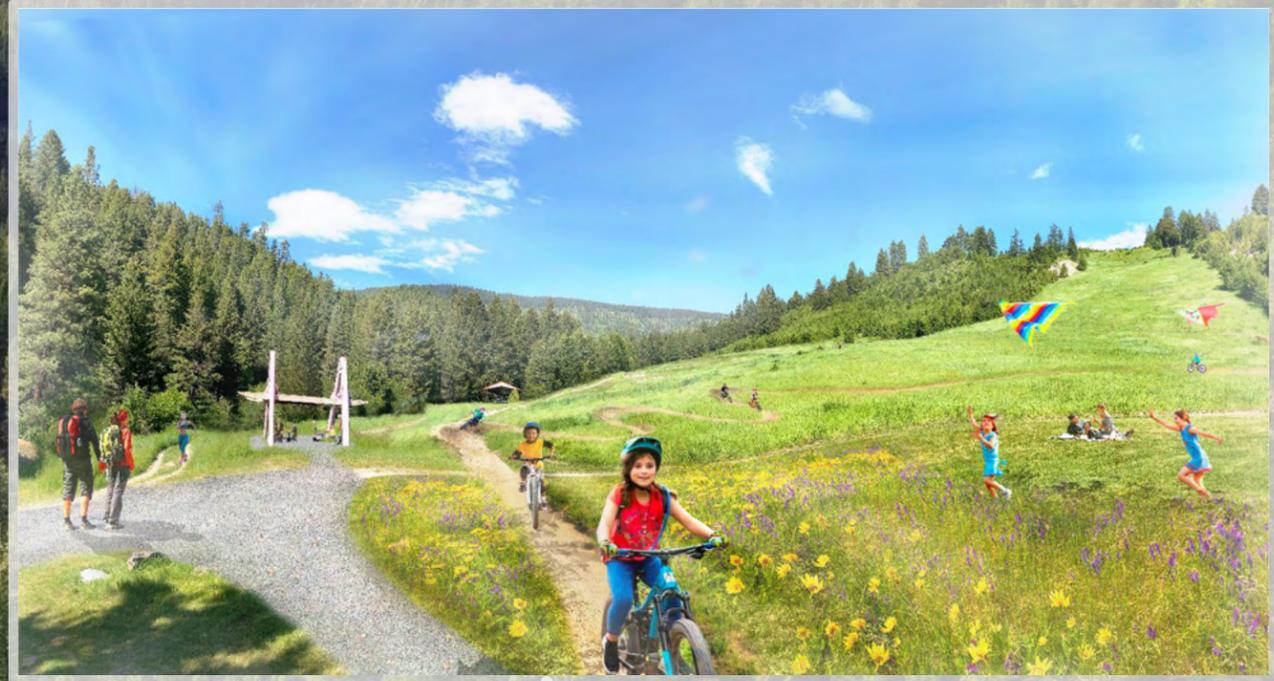
- o The building would be designed to meet the community's goals around climate and environmental sustainability.
- o **Energy Efficiency:** Modern building exterior and insulation; maximized daylighting; efficient mechanical and lighting systems.
- o **Materials:** Durable, low-maintenance building materials; potentially reuse/restoration of portion of existing base building.

❖ ADDITIONAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- o Snow management, including roof slope and design.
- o Views from inside the building to the event lawn and mountain.
- o Sense of arrival and intuitive wayfinding for different users.
- o Flexibility for different/evolving uses.
- o Appropriate aesthetics for natural mountain context.

Long-Term Base Area Vision

The base area of Marshall Mountain Park would be designed to support simultaneous recreational uses and events.



Main Trailhead

Site design ensures trailheads are accessible to general public during events.

Event Lawn

Flat space for public and private events.

Potential Base Area Building Location

Multiple potential approaches for creating a functional, reservable indoor and outdoor sheltered space.

Accessible Parking & Path

Pavilion

Repurposing the former chairlift terminal as a reservable shelter.

Skill Progression Trail

Beginner loop trail with features for mountain bike skill development.

Pump Track

Observable mountain bike skill development area.

EARLY PHASE TRAILS PLAN

The early phase trail design is the first phase of trail development at Marshall. Based on feedback from the Community Vision, the plan attempts to increase accessibility, preserve backcountry access, provide trails for various users and abilities, create multiple loop trail options, minimize user conflicts, and connect to the broader landscape. This is done through a hierarchy of trail types, as described below. In addition, the early phase trails plan provides essential connectivity and a base system upon which additional trails, with more options for advanced/expert level mountain biking and landscape connections can be built. **The highest priority trails for completion during this early phase are an easy-up climbing trail, the Base Area Loop Trail, and the beginner adaptive downhill trail.**

TRAIL TYPES & EXPERIENCES: EARLY PHASE

Base Area Loop Trail. This loop around the base of Marshall Mountain will be the most used and beginner-friendly trail in the park. It will form an essential connection between base area facilities and much of the trail system, and will be used by hikers, bikers, balance bikes, and program participants. The trail will also support environmental education opportunities. Trail grades and corners will be designed to allow for all levels of cyclists, including adaptive riders. Bike skill features such as drops, skinnies, jumps and rock gardens could be incorporated as optional features and designed to be progressive to accommodate a variety of skill levels. Due to moderate grades throughout, this trail could be used for winter recreation as well.

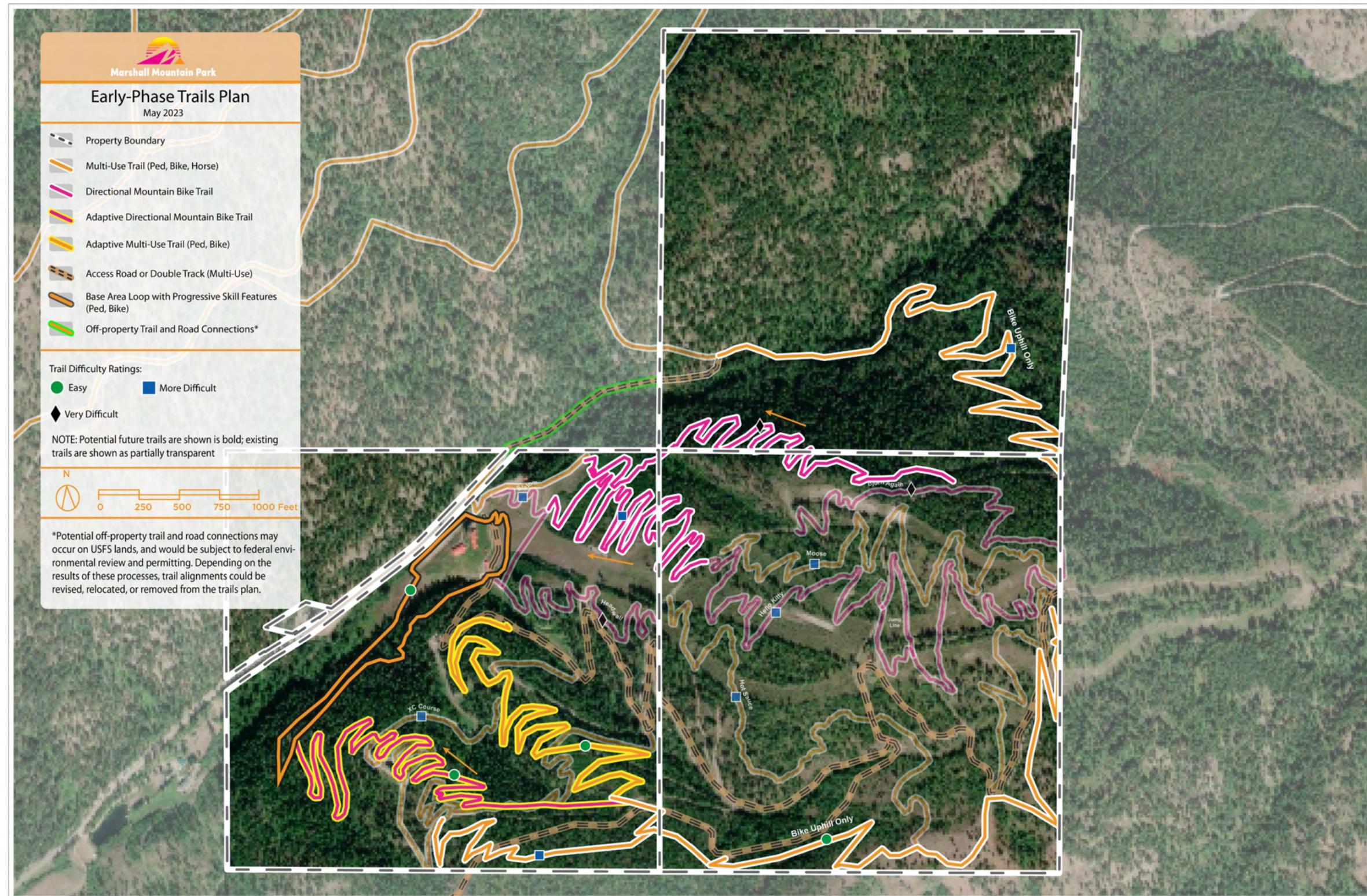
Multi-Use Trails. These non-motorized trails allow all users to recreate in both directions (uphill and downhill). They provide key connections around and through the site. The difficulty depends on the specific terrain encountered on the trail but would typically be considered intermediate for mountain bikers.

Adaptive Multi-Use Trail (Bike Uphill Only). This trail is designed with easy grades to provide most users with a route to the upper portion of the property. Although designated as multi-use (bikes, pedestrians, horse), wheeled users are limited to uphill travel only to reduce conflict by naturally limiting users' speed on the trails. This trail will be built to adaptive standards and will be the easiest route up the mountain.

Directional Mountain Bike Trails. These routes, designed for downhill mountain biking only, feature grades and elements consistent with difficulty ratings from easy to advanced.

Adaptive Directional Mountain Bike Trail. This downhill-only bike trail will be built and graded according to adaptive mountain bike guidelines. Grades and features will be designed to accommodate adaptive hand cycles, as well as typical mountain bikes and will be the "easiest way down" for most cyclists.

Access Road. The existing access road (currently portions of this road are called the "easy up" route) would remain to provide maintenance and emergency access. It will be open to recreation users (multi-use) and allow travel in both directions.



LONG-TERM TRAILS VISION

The long-term trails vision for Marshall Mountain depicts a full build-out of the trail system within Marshall Mountain Park. Building on the principles of the early phase trails plan, the long-term vision identifies how different areas of terrain within the park can support a full-spectrum of trail experiences, from beginner-friendly hiking and biking to expert-level downhill mountain biking. The long-term trails vision also examines opportunities for the trail network to expand beyond the boundaries of the park to create additional possibilities for different loops and experiences. Altogether, the long-term trails vision represents an opportunity to develop a world-class trail network just minutes away from many City and County residents.

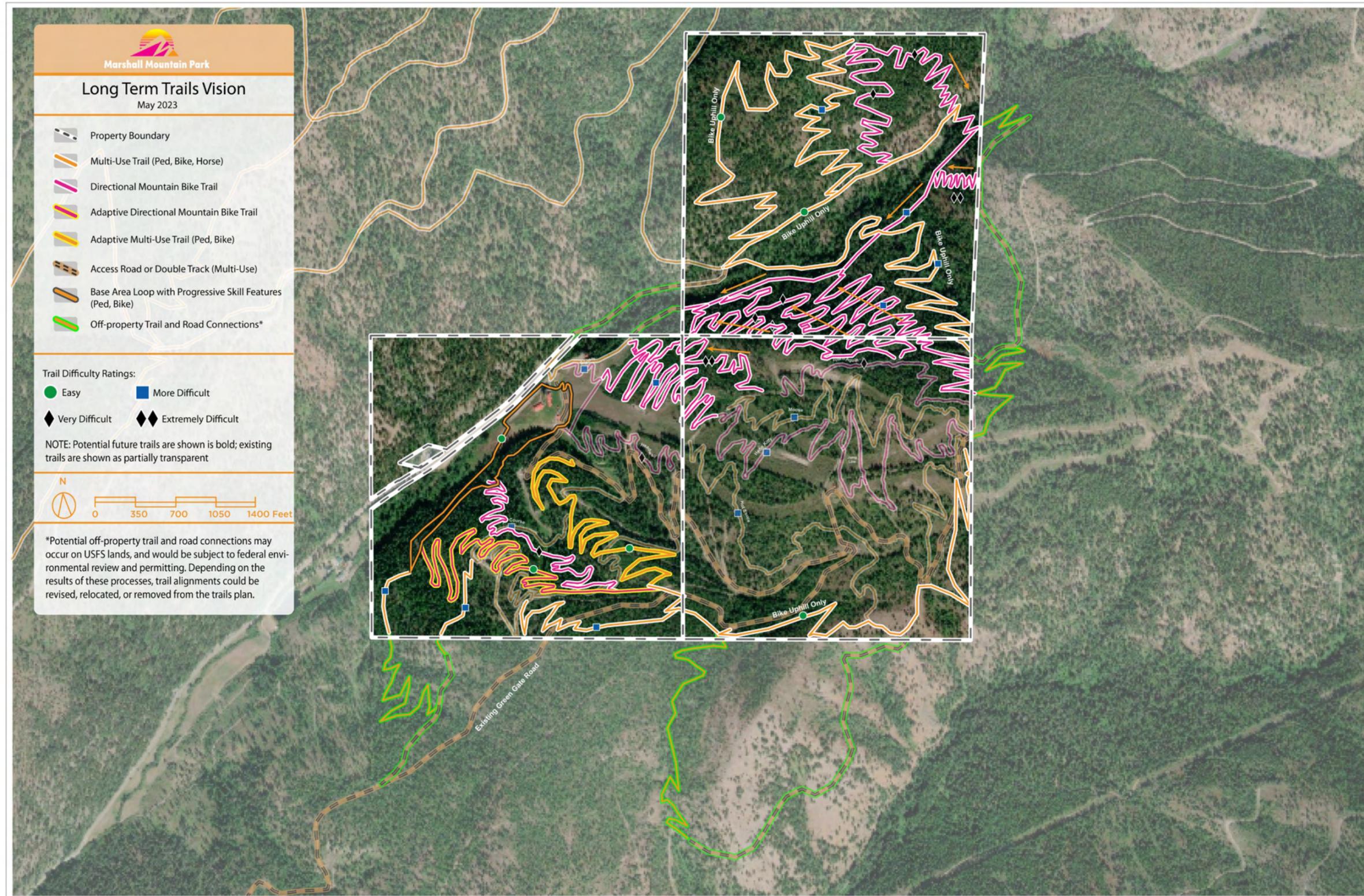
ADDITIONAL TRAIL TYPES & EXPERIENCES: LONG TERM

In addition to the variety of trail types and experiences presented on p. 41, the long-term trails vision incorporates potential off-property trail connections and downhill mountain bike trails to provide a full suite of potential trail experiences.

Off-Property Trail Connections. The long term trails vision shows potential “connection points” where future off-property trails could connect into Marshall Mountain Park. These connections will be critical to the final build out of the trail system to enhance circulation and provide landscape level trail connections, but will require additional planning with the USFS and other partners.

Additional Downhill Mountain Bike Trails. The long term trails vision includes additional downhill-only mountain bike trails. Including these trails will provide a complete spectrum of biking experiences at Marshall Mountain, from basic skill building to testing the upper limits of experienced riders. These trails could include technical trail features such as rollers, drops, gap jumps, as well as other trail elements.

Improved Trail System Circulation. The layout, user type, and directional restrictions of some trails will allow for the entire trail system to “flow”, and function in a way that reduces user conflicts, and congestion. With these details in mind, the overall user capacity of the trail system will be increased, while not feeling “overcrowded.”



POTENTIAL LONG-TERM REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

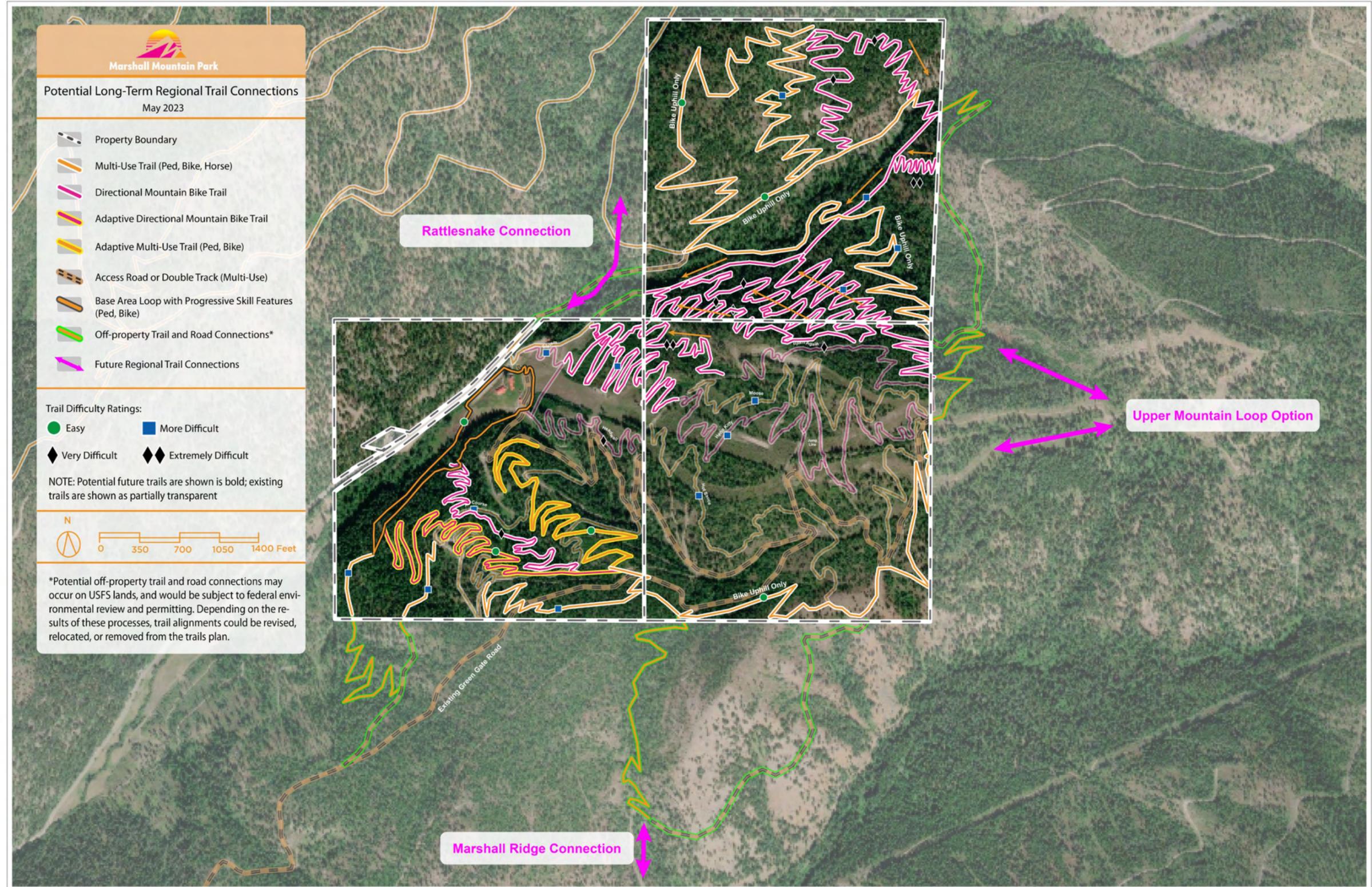
Marshall Mountain Park is a potential gateway location to a vast array of recreational opportunities on the Lolo National Forest. The full potential of the trail system at Marshall Mountain lies in the possibility of connecting the site into a larger regional network across the Lolo National Forest and beyond. While these trail connections have not yet been examined in detail, it became clear through the public process that planning for regional trail connections is an important component of the Marshall Mountain project and is strongly supported by the community. Potential trail connections will require further planning with USFS and other partners.

POTENTIAL TRAIL CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES

Upper Mountain Loop Option. The Marshall Mountain Park property does not reach the actual summit of Marshall Mountain. An upper mountain loop would allow for additional trail experiences in a scenic sub-alpine zone and would extend the overall vertical drop of the trail network.

Marshall Ridge Connection. To the south of the park, there are opportunities for scenic trail connections along the top of Marshall Ridge. Here there are many potential options for connecting trails to existing doubletrack roads and communities to the south of the park. A trail along Marshall Ridge connecting back to Marshall Canyon Road closer to Highway 200 could help reduce vehicular and bicycle traffic on Marshall Canyon Road, and could make a potential future one-way shuttle service to the base of Marshall Mountain a more desirable and feasible service.

Rattlesnake Connection. There are existing trails in the Rattlesnake area of the Lolo National Forest. There are opportunities to connect Marshall Mountain Park to these existing trails and better integrate the two networks.



WINTER RECREATION PLAN

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AREA FOR WINTER RECREATION (ESSENTIAL PARK IMPROVEMENT)

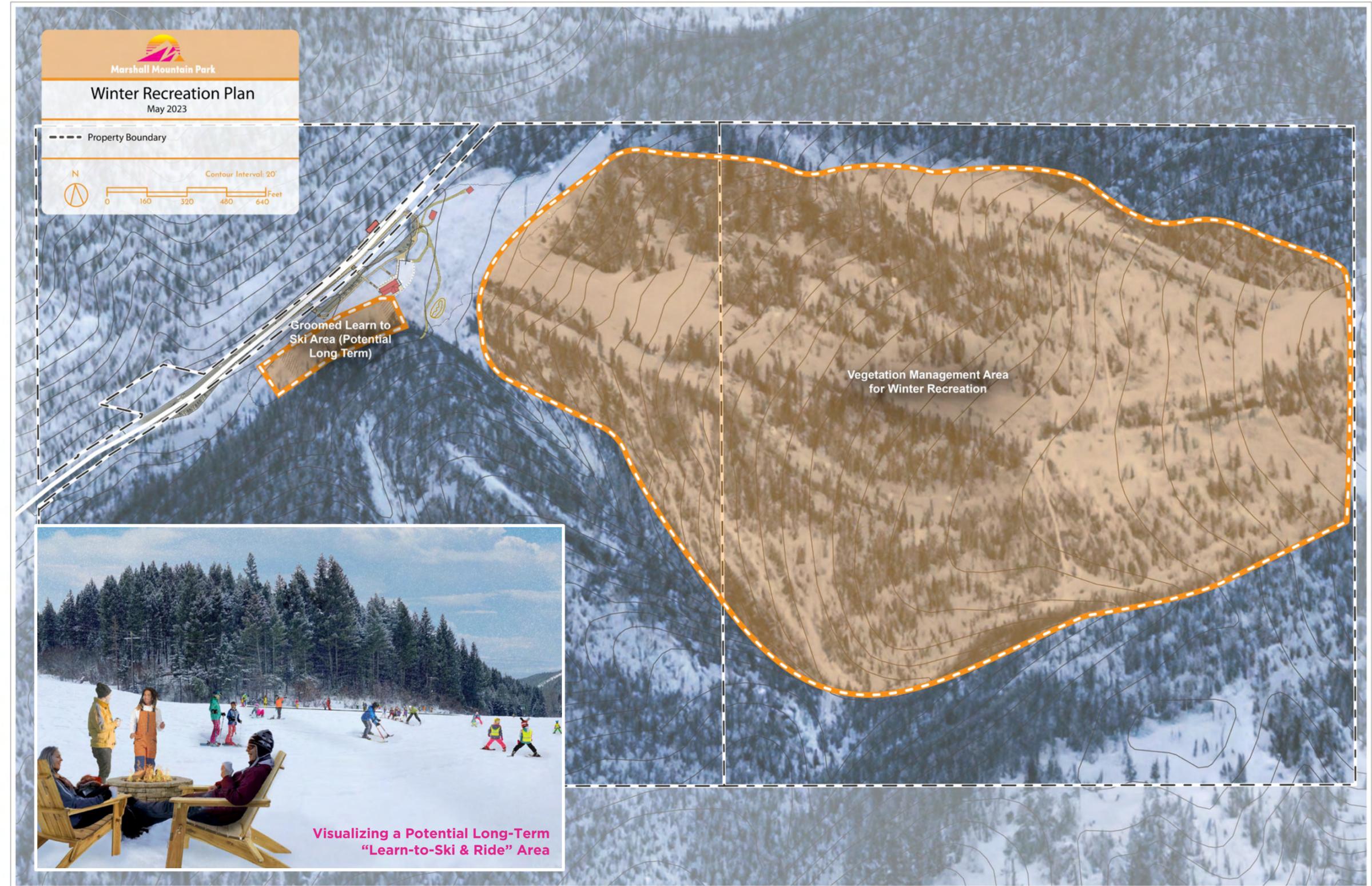
While Marshall Mountain will not be managed as a downhill ski area, it is important to ensure that land management activities and trail development are consistent with historic backcountry winter use of the site. Backcountry skiing/riding and snowshoeing have been popular winter activities at Marshall and will continue. While these activities typically do not require specialized trails or infrastructure, it is crucial to establish winter recreation zones to limit conflict and protect natural resources.

The Winter Recreation Plan highlights areas where vegetation management could include keeping select existing downhill ski runs relatively clear while encouraging forest regeneration in areas. Additionally, uphill routes have been identified to help direct backcountry traffic. Uphill routes and downhill runs would be chosen for vegetation management based on historic use trends, quality of skiing and riding experiences, topography, and habitat and natural resource considerations. Development of additional summer trails would be limited in areas designated for backcountry skiing, and areas off-limits to recreation may be designated for resource protection or safety reasons.

Backcountry skiing would use natural snow conditions (no snowmaking or grooming), be accessed via human powered means (skinning or hiking) and would be clearly advertised to users as being "at your own risk" with no regular ski patrols or avalanche management.

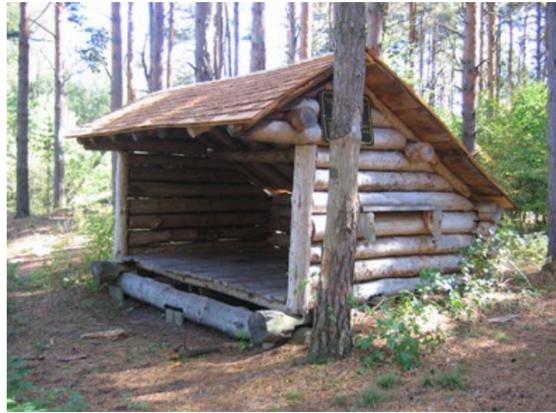
POTENTIAL "LEARN-TO-SKI & RIDE" AREA (POTENTIAL LONG-TERM PROGRAM/FACILITY)

If feasible, based on funding & public support, a "learn to ski & ride" area could be built at the base area utilizing the former beginner ski trail. Magic carpet surface lifts and lighting could be installed to provide uphill service and night skiing, and the new base building would provide an indoor warming area and base of operations. Future planning would include developing an operational schedule and financial plan, evaluating snowmaking needs and operations, and working with community partners to develop programs. The development of a new base area building would be a necessary prerequisite before a learn-to-ski facility could be considered.



MID-MOUNTAIN FACILITIES PLAN

Based on feedback from the community vision and feasibility studies, most development on the upper portions of the mountain will be limited to forest management to mitigate wildfire risk, enhance habitat and recreation, and new trail development. In addition, several locations have been identified as desirable to have a mid-mountain shelter, toilet, and potential area for reservable overnight camping. These facilities are considered **Potential Future Facilities** due to the need for additional planning and fundraising.





CHAPTER 4

Implementation & Operations Plan



Building & Operating the Park

This chapter provides necessary information to guide the implementation of Marshall Mountain Park.

The following information is provided to support near-term and long-term implementation efforts:

- ❖ Costs and considerations for completing capital projects.
- ❖ Needed planning, engineering, and/or design.
- ❖ Potential funding sources and partnerships.
- ❖ Costs and considerations for operating and stewarding the park, such as staffing and maintenance, as well as potential revenues to offset operating costs.

RECOVERING OPERATING COSTS

The operational framework for Marshall Mountain Park considers both **operating costs** (e.g., staffing, equipment) and opportunities for **cost recovery** – revenues generated by facilities, programs, and events that can help offset the costs of operating the park. Understanding operating costs and cost recovery also informs how much **subsidy** (i.e., additional funding) will be required to operate programs and maintain the park. This is a key factor for decision-making around future programs and facilities for the park.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS – CAPITAL PROJECTS & ESTIMATED COSTS

This section provides a breakdown of capital costs for the park development priorities presented on page 25. As discussed on page 25, many of these capital costs are **scalable** - meaning that there is some flexibility on the scale, cost, and timeline of capital projects depending on available funding, changes in project costs or community needs, and other potential constraints that could arise in the future. All presented costs are preliminary order-of-magnitude estimates based on 2023 dollars; costs will likely rise over time.

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS FOR SAFETY & PUBLIC ACCESS

PROPERTY ACQUISITION:

The estimated cost to acquire all three parcels, including due diligence, is approximately \$2.4 million, due to landowner generosity in selling well below market value.

Total Estimated Cost: \$2,400,000

INITIAL SITE CLEANUP AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT:

- ❖ Remove Lodge Building & Ski Lift; Site Cleanup
- ❖ Close Remaining Base Building & Make Suitable for Storage
- ❖ Basic Parking & ADA Access Improvements
- ❖ Construct Vault Toilet
- ❖ Improve Events Lawn
- ❖ Necessary Infrastructure Improvements for Health & Safety
- ❖ Trailhead Improvements
- ❖ Initial Priority Trail Construction: Base Area Loop Trail, Easier Climbing Trail (Adaptive Friendly), and Easier Downhill Trail to the Bottom (Adaptive Friendly)

Total Estimated Cost: \$600,000 - \$900,000*

ESSENTIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & ACTIONS:

- ❖ Parking and Pedestrian Circulation
- ❖ Removal of Accessory Buildings w/ Upgrade of Underground Utilities
- ❖ Marshall Creek Restoration
- ❖ Interpretive Resources
- ❖ Forest Management/Stewardship
- ❖ Construct Maintenance Building(s)
- ❖ Complete Remaining Trails from Early Phase Trails Plan (p. 41)
- ❖ New Shade Pavilion Using Former Chairlift Terminal
- ❖ Planning for Landscape-Level Trail Connections on US Forest Service Land
- ❖ Planning for Additional On-Site Trails
- ❖ Potential Vendor Hookups on Event Lawn

Total Estimated Cost: \$2.3 - \$3.4 Million*

POTENTIAL FUTURE FACILITIES

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & ACTIONS:

- ❖ Design and Construction of New Base Building with Basement Storage
- ❖ Create Native Plant Demonstration Area
- ❖ Construct Trails in Long-Term Trails Plan (p. 42)
- ❖ Construct Pump Track

Total Estimated Cost: \$2.9 - \$4.0 Million*

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM FACILITIES

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & ACTIONS:

- ❖ Potential “Learn-to-Ski & Ride” Area
- ❖ Potential Aerial Ropes Course
- ❖ Potential Regional Trails Connections
- ❖ Potential Upper Mountain Shelter

These facilities would require significant additional planning and evaluation to produce accurate cost estimates.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- ❖ Work with and support **Friends of Marshall Mountain** (a 501(c)3 non-profit) in their mission to raise funds for the acquisition of the park and completion of major capital projects.
- ❖ Partner with **MTB Missoula** for construction of trail system.
- ❖ Pursue **grant funds** to support forest management and stream restoration planning and activities.
- ❖ Engage **Lolo National Forest** in a NEPA permitting process for future off-property trail connections to National Forest system trails.
- ❖ Develop **engineering and architectural plans** for a new base building.

**Rough order-of-magnitude cost estimates using 2023 dollars; subject to further refinement and potential inflation. Costs are likely to rise over time.*

MARSHALL MOUNTAIN PARK OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This operating framework details costs and considerations for operating Marshall Mountain Park, as well as potential revenue streams to offset operations and maintenance costs. This framework is intended to be **adaptable** to different stages of park improvements.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

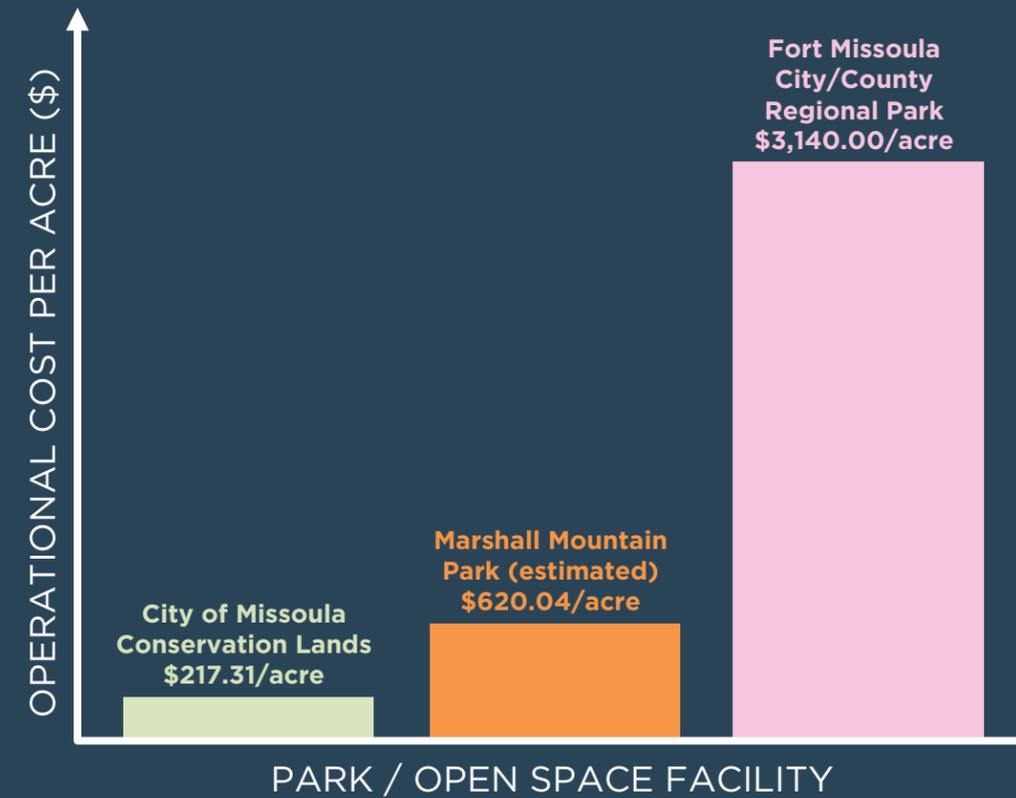
Operating Marshall Mountain Park will consist of a variety of maintenance, programmatic, and administrative tasks. Notable areas of focus for operations and maintenance (O&M) include:

- ❖ **Site maintenance:** mowing, snow removal, irrigation, turf management, asphalt and pavement maintenance, etc.
- ❖ **Building maintenance:** custodial, maintenance of utilities and mechanical systems, exterior maintenance, etc.
- ❖ **Utilities:** costs for electrical, fuel, water treatment, trash removal, etc.
- ❖ **Trail system maintenance:** regular maintenance of the multi-purpose trail system, including trail surface maintenance, drainage, basic vegetation management, etc.
- ❖ **Natural resource management:** forest management for ecological health, human safety, and backcountry winter recreation.
- ❖ **Event, program, and operational staffing:** dedicated staff roles and time for site maintenance, event permit coordination, and program support.
- ❖ **Cyclical maintenance costs:** replacement of parts, tools, and equipment, as well as maintenance tasks that occur on a multi-year cycle.



OPERATIONAL COST PER ACRE

Park operating costs include staffing (plus benefits), supplies, utilities, and other related expenses. Operational cost per acre is a useful metric that provides context for the relative costs of operating a park. Overall, Marshall Mountain Park is anticipated to have higher operational costs than City of Missoula conservation lands, but far lower costs than a developed park such as Fort Missoula Regional Park.



MARSHALL MOUNTAIN PARK OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This operating framework details costs and considerations for operating Marshall Mountain Park, as well as potential revenue streams to offset operations and maintenance costs. This framework is intended to be **adaptable** to different stages of park improvements.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE:

Estimated Annual Operating Costs:
\$365,000/yr

*Operational costs include those costs typically incurred through operating and maintaining a publicly accessible park. The cost of essential park operations could be supported through a combination of public resources, fees associated with specific uses, and other revenues generated from the site.

PROGRAM & EVENT MANAGEMENT:

Estimated Annual Costs:
\$100,000/yr

Percent Cost Recovery:
Out of school/resident-based programs: 80%
Special Events: 100%

*Program and event fees will be used to offset the cost of management of Marshall Mountain Park as an event and program venue. Scholarships can be made available to all programs/events that meet adopted criteria.

TRAIL SYSTEM MAINTENANCE:

Estimated Annual Costs:**
\$58,000/yr

Percent Cost Recovery:
80%

*The specialized nature of the trail system requires a higher level of maintenance from trails typically found on City/County lands in the Missoula area. Local organizations and residents who directly benefit from the trail system should be encouraged to share in the cost of operating and maintaining the system.
**Assumes 17 miles of directional, multi-use, and specialized trails.

O&M COST RECOVERY THROUGH PERMITTING

Permit fees produce revenues that help offset the costs of operations and maintenance. Accordingly, it is recommended that the City/County develop a special use permit for Marshall Mountain Park using a revised fee schedule.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT

- ❖ Permit fees will be "phased" in as development of the park progresses.
- ❖ Scholarships based on adopted criteria may be available for programs.
- ❖ Programs and event fees will be guided by park policies and best practices.
- ❖ There should be no entrance fee for the public to access general recreational opportunities at Marshall Mountain.
- ❖ Fees could be explored to help support specific uses of developed site improvements, highly-designed mountain biking trails, a learn-to-ski ski area, or ropes courses.
- ❖ 100% of the impact to Marshall Mountain from special events should be paid for by the event (maintenance, staffing, supplies etc.).
- ❖ 80% of the costs associated with resident and out of school programs (maintenance, staffing, supplies, etc.) should be covered by program permit fees.

ANTICIPATED SPECIAL USE PERMIT FEE REVENUES

Based on projected operational costs of the full build out of Marshall Mountain Park, the current special use permit fee structure would provide a 16% cost recovery for program and event management, assuming 2022 event/program participation levels.

As the park is developed over time, the permit fee should be re-evaluated to provide more cost recovery. Ultimately, the goal should be for the special use permit fee structure to provide 100% cost recovery for program and event management costs, with the option for scholarships to help reduce fees for qualifying events/programs.