

# **Whitefish Trail**

**Department of Natural Resources and Conservation**

## **Management and Operations Plan 2021-2022**

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Land Use Licenses	
Land Use Licenses #3053 193 and #3053 194 .....	2
Lupfer .....	2
Swift Creek .....	3
Roles and Responsibilities .....	4
Whitefish Trail Operations .....	5
DNRC's Reservations and Right of Entry .....	9
Complaint Procedure .....	10
To Report a Problem .....	11
Annual Public Comment .....	11
Annual Meeting between the City and DNRC .....	11
Annual Review of Whitefish Trail Management and Operations Plan .....	11
Visitor Management .....	12
Attachments	
Exhibit A – Contact Information .....	14
Exhibit B – Emergency Response Plan .....	15
Exhibit C – Wildlife Protocol .....	20
Exhibit D – Whitefish Trail Operations Plan Map .....	26

## **Introduction**

This Management and Operations Plan (Plan) provides the purpose, objectives, development, and management strategies for the City of Whitefish (City) in its administration of the Whitefish Trail and implementation of the mutual goals of the Whitefish Area Trust Lands Neighborhood Plan (Neighborhood Plan).

The goals of the Neighborhood Plan emphasize transactions that conserve Montana's plant, fish and wildlife habitat, protect clean water, minimize wildlife risk, enhance rural character, provide quality public recreational access, and generate long-term and full market economic return for Montana's trust beneficiaries; Beaver Lakes Area Deed of Public Recreation Use Easement, p. 2 (Easement).

The Neighborhood Plan covers 13,000 acres of State Trust Lands adjacent to the Whitefish area which have been used by past generations of community members and visitors for recreation. For hikers, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, and other outdoor enthusiasts, this forested land offers stunning views, premier wildlife habitat, and challenging terrain. Opportunities to enjoy nature just minutes from town are becoming increasingly rare, making the preservation of areas such as those occupied by the Recreation System of vital importance.

To ensure these opportunities will be available for future generations, many partners collaborated to establish the Whitefish Neighborhood Plan, a framework for decision-making regarding the active management and conservation of these trust lands. These partners included the Montana Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), the U.S. Forest Service, Flathead National Forest, Flathead County (County), the City of Whitefish (City), private landowners, and community groups and interested individuals. The Land Board approved the Neighborhood Plan in 2004.

In 2005, the City and Whitefish Legacy Partners (WLP) initiated the Whitefish Neighborhood Plan recommendation to establish a recreational trail system to connect various State Trust Land parcels and thereby create a Trail Corridor encircling the greater Whitefish area. The State of Montana, through the DNRC, the City, and other partners developed the Trail Runs Through It Master Plan (TRTI) in 2006 to guide the development and execution of the conservation, recreation and revenue-generation concepts in the Neighborhood Plan as the Whitefish Trail with the Whitefish community in an unprecedented partnership to plan a trail system across these lands.

The Whitefish Trail encompasses a variety of licensed activities, covered by two land use licenses (LUL), one special recreation use license (SRUL), and the City's purchased Easement for authorized use and management of the Recreation System within the Easement Area. The Whitefish Trail also includes easements authorizing public access to the Whitefish Trail and trail system by private landowners and a conservation easement held by Flathead Land Trust (FLT). As a result, this Plan is subject to the terms of the LULs and other easements which control the rights and responsibilities of the parties for the areas covered by the licenses and easements. The current planned Whitefish Trail is identified on the attached map.

This Plan provides the City's working operations manual to assist the City and its employees, volunteers, partners, and contractors while planning, constructing and maintaining the Whitefish Trail under Land Use Licenses #3053193 and #3053194 (licensed area) in cooperation with DNRC.

## I. Land Use Licenses

A. The City is licensed by the DNRC through LULs to occupy and use State Trust Lands for the purpose of constructing, maintaining and managing a recreational use trail (Land Use License #3053193) and to occupy and use lands for the construction of trail-related amenities, such as parking lots, trailheads and restrooms (Land Use License #3053194). The recreational use trail and trail-related amenities are referred to as the "licensed area".

### 1. LUL #3053193

The licensed area for planned trail construction under LUL #3053193 covers Phase II Lupfer and Phase III Swift Creek as follows:

a. Phase II Lupfer: The City is authorized to construct, maintain, and operate Phase II of the trail, identified on the attached Whitefish Trail map. Phase II Lupfer is a loop system of trails located in Sections 2 and 11 of Township 31 North, Range 23 West. It comprises approximately four miles (approximately 2.1± miles of trail and approximately 1.9± miles of road).

b. Phase III Swift Creek: The City is authorized to construct, maintain, and operate Phase III, Swift Creek of the trail, identified on the attached map. Phase III, Swift Creek is a system of trails located in the SW 1/4 Section 29, NE 1/4 Section 31, Section 32, Township 32 North, Range 22 West. It has approximately three and one-half miles of trail and provides access to Smith Lake.

### 2. LUL #3053194

The licensed area for planned trail improvements under LUL #3053194 covers the Lupfer Trailhead and Swift Creek Trailhead as follows:

a. Acreage for Lupfer Trailhead: Tract(s) of land situated in Section 2, Township 31 North, Range 23 West, in Flathead County, Montana, and being further described as follows:

A tract of land comprising the Lupfer Trailhead, parking lot, signage, brochure racks, and access road, comprising approximately .10± acres, more or less, as identified on the attached map.

b. Acreage for Swift Creek Trailhead: Tract(s) of land situated in Section 32, Township 32 North, Range 22 West, in Flathead County, Montana, and being further described as follows:

A tract of land comprising the Swift Creek Trailhead, parking lot, signage, brochure racks, garbage facilities, and vault toilet (approximately .53± acres, more or less), as identified on the attached map.

B. Development of the Whitefish Trail in Land Use License Areas.

### 1. Lupfer Trailhead and Trail

a. There is a trailhead and trail network located on State Trust Lands approximately eleven miles north of Whitefish. This trailhead is accessed via Lupfer Road, off Highway #93 North. The Lupfer trails may connect to the rest of the Whitefish Trail network but are now a separate section of the Whitefish

Trail system. This system totals approximately 4 miles of trails and consists of an outer loop trail and a spur trail to a viewpoint inside the loop. The trail system is a combination of pre-existing logging roads and new single-track trail. The logging road network crisscrosses the Lupfer parcel, however only a portion of the road network is included in the trail system. The trailhead provides parking for approximately 6-8 vehicles. Due to the more remote nature of this trailhead, amenities are limited to an informational kiosk only, with no garbage can, mutt mitts, or toilet facilities.

b. A special aspect of the Whitefish Trail at Lupfer includes a conservation easement on the property held by the Flathead Land Trust (FLT). Although this easement limits development and usage of the property, the non-motorized public access recreational trail system is an allowed use. Any group or commercial activities must be approved by FLT as well as DNRC. Reasonable prior notice will be necessary to facilitate these approvals. DNRC will assume responsibility for notifying FLT to secure approval for such proposals.

## 2. Swift Creek Trailhead and Trail

a. The existing trailhead off of Del Rey Road currently supports a variety of recreation uses on the State Trust Lands including walking, hiking, biking and access to hunting and snowmobiling. Target shooting is a historical use in the area that is being discouraged by DNRC for the first 1-1/2 miles along Lower Whitefish Road due to safety concerns over the proximity to the trail. It is expected that this trailhead will see increased use with the proposed future development of the Whitefish Trail connection to the Beaver Lakes complex and Big Mountain and the DNRC's redesign of the Smith Lake dam and the associated development of recreation at Smith Lake.

b. A special aspect of the Whitefish Trail at Swift Creek is the trailhead is managed as a dual trailhead for both the Whitefish Trail and snowmobile use. Flathead Snowmobile Association's (FSA) maintains a groomed trail system and the DNRC supports snowmobiling activities. Prior to every winter season, the City and FSA should agree upon trailhead plowing needs, parking issues, and restroom facilities management.

c. The DNRC continues to offer gravel pit mining permits at the north end of the parking area and the pit area is not part of the licensed trailhead acreage. The permits are open to bidders annually until the remaining gravel is removed and reclamation will not be completed until gravel removal is complete.

d. The Swift Creek trailhead is accessed via Del Rey Road from East Lakeshore Road. The Swift Creek trails are planned to connect to the entire Whitefish Trail network but are now a separate section of the Whitefish Trail system. This system totals approximately 3.5 miles of trails and consists of a 1/2mile handicapped accessible trail to a Swift Creek viewpoint, a loop trail and a trail segment that ends at the Smith Lake parking area. The trail system is a combination of pre-existing logging roads and new single-track trail. Signs are posted at the Swift Creek viewpoints to inform users to stay on the trail. Large boulders or some other type of barrier are in place to buffer the edge of the embankment. Substantial improvements to the existing trailhead and parking area include 12 pull-in parking spots, one handicap-accessible vault toilet, covered informational kiosk, a wildlife resistant garbage can, "mutt-mitt" pet waste bag dispenser, and a Whitefish Trail Monument.

## II. Roles and Responsibilities

A. The State of Montana, through the Land Board exercises general authority, direction, and control over the care, management, disposition of state lands. The State holds for the benefit of the public, the right of and duty to the public to access State Trust Lands for general recreation use. Under the direction of the Board, the DNRC is responsible for the leasing, management, sale or other disposition of the state lands.

B. The City, through the Parks and Recreation Department, is responsible for planning and managing the Whitefish Trail as identified on the attached map (Exhibit D). Duties include trail oversight, budgeting, attending meetings with various committees, reporting to the Whitefish City Council, acting as Liaison to the DNRC, administering contracts for construction, maintenance, conducting annual meetings, other services related to the trail, and communications with the general public.

1. The Legacy Lands Advisory Committee (LLAC) and Whitefish Trail Operations Committee (Operations Committee) are joint committees formed under an MOU between the City and WLP. Members include representatives appointed by the City Council, WLP, and ex-officio members. The purpose of the committees is to advise and assist the City and WLP in achieving the recreation, conservation, and revenue goals and objectives of the Neighborhood Plan.

a. LLAC assists the City in developing and implementing the annual work on the Whitefish Trail, provides input on the planning, design, construction, and management of the Whitefish Trail, and reviews proposed projects and proposals. LLAC will consult with DNRC and FWP to develop a structure to include DNRC and FWP as ex-officio members of the joint committees and include other key partners as technical advisors.

b. The Operations Committee provides advice and direction to the City on trail operations and the planning, design, construction, and management of the Whitefish Trail Recreation System. The Operations Committee recruits volunteers to support the Whitefish Trail.

2. Project Specialists are contracted by the City to provide planning, design, construction, maintenance, and ongoing management services to the Recreation System. The Project Specialists report directly to the City for project guidance and policy decisions. The Project Specialists are responsible for organizing professional contractors, when necessary for trail construction and maintenance.

C. WLP is responsible for facilitating transaction-related and recreation-related methodologies, fundraising, and supporting all activities associated with the advancement of the Whitefish Trail (events, education, volunteers, grant writing, etc.). Additionally, WLP supports the City in its duties of planning and managing the Whitefish Trail in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and WLP. WLP is devoted to creating a lasting legacy for the Whitefish community and is dedicated to acting as a catalyst to create innovative and unprecedented solutions to permanently protect Whitefish's important places.

1. Volunteers may assist with trail construction, maintenance, and sustainable trail construction techniques, noxious weed pulling, sign installation, and other areas. WLP will administer the volunteer program in cooperation with the City.

a. Whitefish Trail Ambassador Program: Trail Ambassadors will assist in maintaining the trail system, providing information to visitors, and reporting problems and vandalism. Trail Ambassadors will be a presence on the Whitefish Trail to answer trail user questions and to report to the City with

areas in need of maintenance or other problems seen on the trail. Trail ambassadors will pick up garbage and check restrooms for cleanliness and supplies. Trail Ambassadors may also provide the Whitefish Trail support at fundraising events and other general Whitefish Trail events.

b. Whitefish Trail Patrol: Trail Patrol volunteers ride authorized trails individually or in teams. The WLP Program Director will provide instruction and schedule the Trail Patrol volunteers to be visible on the Whitefish Trail. Trail Patrol volunteers will help gather visitor information data and assist other trail users.

c. Whitefish Trail Adopt-A-Trail Program: The Whitefish Trail's Adopt-A-Trail Program focuses on engaging members of the community to help maintain the growing trail system. Seventeen trail segments and trailheads have been identified for adoption. Individuals, businesses, and organizations can adopt a section of the Whitefish Trail as either financial sponsors or a volunteer trail crew.

d. Trail Construction/Maintenance: Volunteers who sign up for trail construction and maintenance will receive instruction in International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Guidelines and WT construction techniques. Through the efforts of trail volunteers, the City anticipates the construction and maintenance of the licensed trails may be completed more efficiently and requiring fewer public resources.

D. FWP provides requested technical assistance in the planning, development, and management of the Whitefish Trail and associated recreation amenities and the State's wildlife, fish, and use of the lands and water under its jurisdiction and control.

E. Flathead Area Mountain Bikers (FAMB) is a non-profit organization and partner of the City of Whitefish responsible for managing the Spencer Trails on behalf of the City as per an agreement between FAMB and the City. FAMB provides labor, materials, and equipment to construct, maintain, and decommission the trails and technical features as authorized by the Spencer SRUL. FAMB provides financial support and fundraising for the Spencer Trails. Additionally, FAMB encourages their members and volunteers to support Whitefish Trail events and to participate in the Whitefish Trail Patrol.

F. Montana Conservation Corp (MCC) is a community partner of the City. MCC is a nonprofit organization that empowers youth and young adults through hands-on conservation service and education. MCC young adult and youth crews assist with Whitefish Trail construction, maintenance, repair, improvements, community trail workday projects, and youth education programs on the Whitefish Trail.

### **III. Whitefish Trail Operations**

#### **A. Trail Planning and Management Activities**

1. The City, through its Parks and Recreation Department Director, or designee, is responsible for the ongoing planning and management of the Whitefish Trail. The City may contract with project specialists, volunteers, and other third parties when necessary to plan, design, construct, and maintain the Whitefish Trail.

2. Trail maintenance includes:

a. The trail corridor should be kept cleared of non-merchantable woody debris, brush and branches to a width of up to ten feet and a height of up to ten feet above the underlying ground and may occur

without DNRC's authorization. The City will notify DNRC of any merchantable timber across the trails (greater than seven inches in diameter, measured four and one-half feet from the ground on a standing green tree) prior to removing same and DNRC will promptly provide direction on removal of the timber. Compensation may be required from the City to the State upon removal of any green merchantable timber and would be determined by a DNRC forest officer.

- b. Drainage should be maintained at all times on the trails.
- c. Trail use should be limited during wet periods, as necessary.
- d. Posting and maintenance of approved signage.
- e. Any trail construction, reconstruction, relocation or abandonment would require the written consent of the DNRC unit manager from either Kalispell or Stillwater depending on activity location. This would include submitting design standards for trail width, grade, erosion control features and location for approval.
- f. Any activities that require power equipment (heavy equipment) for soil moving would require written consent of the DNRC unit manager from either Kalispell or Stillwater, depending on activity location.

**B. Fire and Forest Management Activities**

1. DNRC specifically reserves its administrative rights to access State Trust Lands for fire emergencies and forest management services, subject to the terms of the LULs. For licensed areas, DNRC may require the City to relocate portions of the trail system to minimize conflicts with land management activities subject to the following:

- a. A minimum of one-year's notice will be given to the City by DNRC of pending management activities affecting licensed activities.
- b. The City will be invited to participate in the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review to develop a solution that minimizes impacts to licensed activities while meeting Trust Land Management goals.

**C. New Construction - Trails**

1. The City will construct and maintain new trails in accordance with the land use license terms and conditions, MEPA stipulations/mitigations, this Plan, and IMBA Guidelines, as applicable.

2. Trail mitigations include:

- a. Clearing for new trails (tread) should occur in a narrow swath, not to exceed 39 inches for standard tread and 48 inches for handicap accessible tread.
- b. Back slopes (cut slopes) should be at a stable angle.
- c. Wasted material must be spread to a depth that would not inhibit existing vegetation. Additionally, waste material will not be placed in a draw or location that could facilitate erosion to a

draw.

d. Grass seed mix prescribed by the DNRC should be used for trail cut slopes and wasted material. Bare soil must be seeded within seven days to stabilize soils and reduce the risk of weed infestations.

e. Drainage must be maintained at all times on the trails.

f. Trail use will be limited during wet periods as determined by DNRC.

g. The City will avoid trail construction, relocation, and reconstruction activities that involve ground disturbance during wet conditions as determined by DNRC.

h. All tracked and wheeled equipment will be cleaned of noxious weeds prior to beginning trail construction. A DNRC representative will inspect equipment periodically during trail construction.

3. Motorized access for the purpose of constructing, maintaining and repairing the trail, including the transport of equipment and supplies necessary to support the above listed work, will be allowed only upon prior approval of the appropriate DNRC Unit Manager. Legal right of access to private, federal, or other lands must be secured by and is the sole responsibility of the City.

4. Unless authorized by the LUL, detailed plans and timing for proposed new trail construction in the licensed area must be submitted one (1) year in advance for review and prior approval by DNRC.

D. New Construction -Trailheads and Parking Areas

1. Trailheads always include parking, information kiosks, and may include a vault toilet, boat launch access, picnic tables, lake access, etc.

2. All trailheads will have consistent and clear signs approved by the DNRC that should include information on trail locations, multi-use trail etiquette, forest management rules, and current fire hazards.

3. Based on use, parking lots may be plowed of snow through the winter season.

4. Trailhead improvements will be maintained and checked for maintenance needs and supplies.

a. WT Adopt-A-Trail and WT Ambassadors will assist with picking up garbage, checking restrooms for cleanliness and supplies, providing information to visitors, and reporting vandalism.

b. WT Patrol and WT Ambassadors will assist with reporting trail use, supporting trail users, providing information to visitors, and reporting vandalism.

c. Trailheads will include wildlife resistant trash receptacles for garbage.

d. Trailheads will include mitt dispensers for pet waste. There will be postings at trailheads regarding rules on pet waste.

e. Trash will be removed to prevent accumulation and overflow.

f. Dumpsters and garbage cans will be constructed of metal and maintained free of major holes,

major dents, and graffiti. Garbage cans will be attached to the ground and will be wildlife resistant.

E. Guidelines

1. The Whitefish Trail corridor will be ten (10) feet in width.
2. The City may use an additional five feet in width with a length of ten feet, at intervals no more frequent than approximately 1000 (one thousand) feet for the installation of benches and trail passings, where minimal grade work and clearing are necessary. The City will maintain maps showing the location of new trail construction and the installation of new trail improvements.

F. Noxious Weeds

1. Noxious weeds are a serious issue in Montana that displace native plant habitat and threaten ecosystem health. The LULs require the City to help eradicate noxious weeds along the trail system. Some noxious weed species can be hand-pulled and bagged to eliminate spread by seed. Other species (such as Canada thistle) spread by rhizomes and typically cannot be hand-pulled. To minimize spraying of herbicide, the City will instruct its volunteers to identify and hand-pull noxious weeds to the greatest extent feasible. A certified applicator will complete minimum annual weed treatment each spring for the treatment of weeds during the rosette stage. Each spring the City will contact DNRC for its approval of the City's planned method of control for noxious weeds.

G. Wildlife

1. DNRC reserves the right to institute seasonal trail closures if deemed necessary and may institute temporary closures if conflicts occur.
2. Signs at the trailheads will inform users of recreating in an area with large carnivores and proper behavior around wildlife.
3. Refer to Exhibit C, Wildlife Protocol for coordinated guidelines for managing the Whitefish Trail in bear country.

H. Signage

1. Whitefish Trail signs will be designed and installed in a consistent fashion throughout the trail corridor, and all sign designs, content and plans will be reviewed and approved by DNRC prior to installation. Specific sign design, content, and plans are specified in the land use license and must be met and maintained. Appropriate signage will be installed to notify trail users to stay on the trail. Interpretive sign content may include education regarding Trust Lands, forest ecosystems, forest succession, plants (native, non-native, and medicinal), birds, geology, fire, and other topics as needed.

2. The City will install such approved signage at trailheads, parking lots and on all trails within the licensed area. Prior to the installation of any signage the City will review the sign's contents and location with the designated representative of DNRC:

DNRC – Kalispell Unit, 655 Timberwolf Parkway, Suite 2, Kalispell, MT 59901-12 15: Unit  
Manager: Dave Poukish 751-2263 [dpoukish@mt.gov](mailto:dpoukish@mt.gov)  
Land Use Planner: Anne Moran 751-2274 [asmoran@mt.gov](mailto:asmoran@mt.gov)  
Forester: Kara Neal 751-2265 [kara.neal@mt.gov](mailto:kara.neal@mt.gov)

DNRC – Stillwater Unit, PO Box 164, Olney, MT 59927-0164:

Unit Manager: David Ring 881-2663 [dring@mt.gov](mailto:dring@mt.gov)  
Spec. Uses Forester: Nicole Stickney 881-2666 [nstickney@mt.gov](mailto:nstickney@mt.gov)

3. The City will maintain a log identifying the signage and its installation and maintenance and a map showing the location of all signs located by the City in the licensed area.

I. Commercial and Special Events

1. Commercial Events: The DNRC may authorize commercial activities and events on the WT. The DNRC will notify the City in advance (preferably 30 days, when possible) of commercial activities and events to be held on the WT. Such commercial activities and events will be compatible with existing public recreation use. The DNRC shall mitigate the authorized use so as to not cause damage to existing developed trail-related improvements.

2. Special Events: The City may hold non-commercial events periodically to support the WT. The City will notify DNRC in advance (preferably 20-30 days when possible) of scheduled special events and will request approval from the DNRC prior to the event. State of Montana administrative policies and process for special events will apply and may require additional licensing.

3. If any such events and activities generate additional traffic, stipulation P of the LUL #3053193 (parking management) will be implemented.

J. Trespass

1. Although extreme care has been utilized to protect personal privacy, portions of the trail pass through private property on trail easements. In addition, segments of the trail pass in proximity to various private properties. While passing through private property, trail users will be required to stay on the trail. For those portions of the trail that are on State lands but come near private property, the City may install signage, in appropriate locations, that indicates nearby private property and encourages trail users to stay on the established WT corridor. The City may also provide "Private Property" signs for interested landowners to place along property boundaries. Through appropriate signage, trail users may be deterred from trespassing. All WT signage will be designed in a consistent fashion that meets approval of DNRC.

**IV. DNRC's Reservations and Right to Entry**

DNRC reserves all rights and interests to the land under the licenses other than those specifically granted by license.

A. DNRC's Access: Representatives of DNRC will have the right to enter into and upon the licensed area and all parts thereof for the purpose of responding to fire emergencies, managing the land and/or inspecting and examining uses thereof.

B. State Historical Society's Access: Representatives of the State Historical Society of the State of Montana will at all reasonable times, upon written notification to DNRC prior to entry, have the right to enter into and upon the licensed area for the purpose of carrying out the duties assigned the Historical Society by the State Antiquities Act, MCA §§22-3-421 through 22-3-442.

C. Cultural Resources: The City and/or its contractors will not disturb any cultural, archeological, historical or paleontological resources on these licensed lands. Should any of the above listed resources be found within the licensed area, all activities and uses surrounding the resources will stop and the City will contact the appropriate DNRC unit office. DNRC will contact DNRC's Archeologist to investigate the resources and to develop any stipulations required of the City if necessary to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to said resources.

## V. Complaint Procedure

A. All complaints should be directed to the City of Whitefish for resolution.

1. Individuals may raise complaints by contacting the City Parks and Recreation Department Director, or his/her designee, at 863-2471 or [parksadm@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:parksadm@cityofwhitefish.org), or by contacting Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant, at 863-2470.

Individuals may also choose to notify the City in writing addressed to Parks and Recreation Department Director, PO Box 158, Whitefish, MT 59937-0158, or by completing forms available online at the City's website, [www.cityofwhitefish.org](http://www.cityofwhitefish.org), under the Parks and Recreation Department.

2. If a complaint is not resolved to the individual's satisfaction, the individual may contact the City Manager, City Mayor, or the City Council through the City Clerk's office for resolution:

City of Whitefish, PO Box 158, Whitefish, MT 59937-0158:

City Manager:	Dana Smith	863-2406	<a href="mailto:dsmith@cityofwhitefish.org">dsmith@cityofwhitefish.org</a>
City Clerk:	Michelle Howke	863-2402	<a href="mailto:mhowke@cityofwhitefish.org">mhowke@cityofwhitefish.org</a>

If the complaint is elevated to an LLAC or City Council meeting agenda item, DNRC will be notified as much in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible.

B. For complaints which are directed to DNRC activity or which require a DNRC policy change, the complaints will be forwarded to DNRC for resolution.

DNRC – Kalispell Unit, 655 Timberwolf Parkway, Suite 2, Kalispell, MT 59901-1215: Unit

Manager:	Dave Poukish	751-2263	<a href="mailto:dpoukish@mt.gov">dpoukish@mt.gov</a>
Land Use Planner:	Anne Moran	751-2274	<a href="mailto:asmoran@mt.gov">asmoran@mt.gov</a>
Forester:	Kara Neal	751-2265	<a href="mailto:kara.neal@mt.gov">kara.neal@mt.gov</a>

DNRC – Stillwater Unit, PO Box 164, Olney, MT 59927-0164:

Unit Manager:	David Ring	881-2663	<a href="mailto:dring@mt.gov">dring@mt.gov</a>
Spec. Uses Forester:	Nicole Stickney	881-2666	<a href="mailto:nstickney@mt.gov">nstickney@mt.gov</a>

C. The City and DNRC will review citizen and agency complaints the City and DNRC received the previous year at its annually scheduled meeting.

D. Emergency Services:

1. To report an emergency, call 9-1-1. The 911 call center will dispatch the appropriate agency(ies) emergency response, which could include fire trucks, ambulance, law enforcement, and FWP wardens.

To report wild animal incidents and problems, refer to the Whitefish Trail Guidelines for Managing Recreational Trails to Minimize Hazardous Wildlife-Human Encounters, Exhibit C. To report other incidents, call the Flathead County Sheriff, 758-5585. The entire Whitefish Trail and Recreation System is located outside of Whitefish city limits, and as such, the Flathead County Sheriff is primarily responsible for law enforcement.

2. Additional law enforcement along the trail and on State Trust Lands will be provided by the FWP Wardens. The Trust Lands Warden is responsible for law enforcement on all State Trust Lands in the Whitefish area:

Kalispell Unit Trust Lands Game Warden:	Chuck Bartos	253-2934
Back-up Trust Lands Warden:	Nathan Reiner	890-9747
Whitefish/Stillwater Unit Trust Lands Game Warden:	Chris Crane	249-6231

## **VI. To Report a Problem**

Report problems concerning the Whitefish Trail, trailhead, bathrooms, parking lots, signage, and garbage containers to the City of Whitefish, Parks and Recreation Department, 863-2470. For information on how to address a deceased animal on the trail, please refer to Exhibit C.

## **VII. Annual Public Comment**

The City will annually collect public comment, input, and concerns in order to maintain good relations, minimize conflicts, maintain existing recreation opportunities and provide the best possible user experience. The City will send an annual request for comments to the DNRC, and to other licensees and lessees for which DNRC has provided the City names and addresses in advance. The City will make its best effort to send an annual request for comments to neighboring landowners and/or residents. Upon the City's request, DNRC will assist in providing what neighborhood contact information that it may have available to support that effort. The City will also provide published notice of the comment deadline. The public comment shall be scheduled in time to collect input and determine solutions to be incorporated into that year's updated Operation Plan, which must be submitted to DNRC no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **VIII. Annual Meeting between the City and DNRC**

The City and DNRC will conduct at least one meeting per year, which will include annual review of the Whitefish Trail Management and Operations Plan, at a mutually convenient date and time to promote clear communication and discuss any issues related to the licensed area and Easement area. DNRC may review the City's records of maintenance and construction work, which are available to DNRC at the City Parks and Recreation Department at any mutually agreeable time. DNRC may also schedule an annual meeting with the City and other licensees and authorized users to coordinate shared maintenance responsibilities where applicable and when necessary.

## **IX. Annual Review of Whitefish Trail Management and Operations Plan**

At the annual meeting between the City and DNRC, the parties will review and update the Whitefish Trail Management and Operations Plan as required per the land use license for submission to both the Kalispell and Stillwater Unit Managers for review and agreement. The review should include (but not be limited to) the following items:

- A. An assessment concerning the progress of licensed work and summary of trails and improvements installed to date.
- B. New proposals for construction of trail and trail improvements anticipated for the next year.
- C. A summary of current operation and management procedures.
- D. Proposed DNRC plans for timber management, timber harvest activities, commercial activities, and lease and license activities anticipated for the next year.
- E. A DNRC summary of current timber management, timber harvest, commercial use, and lease and license operations and management procedures.
- F. Identification of complaint resolution procedures.
- G. Identification of construction and operation procedures unique to specific phases of the project.
- H. Identification of MEPA mitigation procedures unique to specific phases of the project.
- I. Identification of Easement and right-of-way compliance management procedures unique to specific phases of the project.

This Whitefish Trail DNRC Management and Operations Plan is intended to be a "living" document that will grow and change to meet the needs of DNRC, the City, volunteers, surrounding landowners and trail users.

## **X. Visitor Management**

- A. **Permit and Fees:** A State of Montana general recreation use license is not required for areas and amenities within the Whitefish Trail. A general recreational use license is required for use outside of the developed Whitefish Trail in accordance with MCA §§77-1-203 and 77-1-804. The permit is available at State designated locations.
- B. The DNRC, City, WLP, and their partners will encourage locals and visitors to purchase general recreational use licenses. Signs will be posted at the trailheads informing users of recreational licensing requirements.
- C. Requirements for fishing and hunting licenses apply throughout the Whitefish Trail.

CITY OF WHITEFISH

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Smith, City Manager

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Poukish, Kalispell Unit Manager

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Ring, Stillwater Unit Manager

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Poncin, Area Manager

## Exhibit A Contact Information

### City of Whitefish

City Manager: Dana Smith	863-2406	<a href="mailto:dsmith@cityofwhitefish.org">dsmith@cityofwhitefish.org</a>
Parks and Rec. Director: Maria Butts	863-2471	<a href="mailto:parksadm@cityofwhitefish.org">parksadm@cityofwhitefish.org</a>
Parks and Rec. Admin Asst.: Jennie Bradford	863-2470	<a href="mailto:jbradford@cityofwhitefish.org">jbradford@cityofwhitefish.org</a>
Community Services Coordinator: Carla Belski	863-2470	<a href="mailto:cbelski@cityofwhitefish.org">cbelski@cityofwhitefish.org</a>
Fire Chief: Joe Page	863-2491	<a href="mailto:jpage@cityofwhitefish.org">jpage@cityofwhitefish.org</a>

### DNRC NW Land Office

Area Manager: Greg Poncin	751-2242	<a href="mailto:gponcin@mt.gov">gponcin@mt.gov</a>
---------------------------	----------	--

### DNRC Kalispell Unit

Unit Manager: Dave Poukish	751-2263	<a href="mailto:dpoukish@mt.gov">dpoukish@mt.gov</a>
Land Use Planner: Anne Moran	751-2274	<a href="mailto:asmoran@mt.gov">asmoran@mt.gov</a>
Kalispell Unit Forester: Kara Neal	751-2265	<a href="mailto:kara.neal@mt.gov">kara.neal@mt.gov</a>

### DNRC Stillwater Unit

Unit Manager: Dave Ring	881-2663	<a href="mailto:dring@mt.gov">dring@mt.gov</a>
Special Uses Forester: Nicole Stickney	881-2666	<a href="mailto:nstickney@mt.gov">nstickney@mt.gov</a>

### Emergency Services

Emergencies:	9-1-1	
Flathead County Sherriff's Office	758-5585	
Flathead County Office of Emer. Services	758-5562	
911 MSAG and Database Spec. Jason Singleton	270-3591	<a href="mailto:jason.singleton@flatheadoes.mt.gov">jason.singleton@flatheadoes.mt.gov</a>

### Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Region 1 Park Manager: Dave Landstrom	751-4574	<a href="mailto:dlandstrom@mt.gov">dlandstrom@mt.gov</a>
Whitefish/Stillwater Unit Trust Lands Game Warden: Chris Crane	249-6231	<a href="mailto:ccrane@mt.gov">ccrane@mt.gov</a>
Kalispell Trust Lands Game Warden: Chuck Bartos	253-2934	<a href="mailto:cbartos@mt.gov">cbartos@mt.gov</a>
Back-up Trust Lands Warden: Nathan Reiner	890-9747	<a href="mailto:nreiner@mt.gov">nreiner@mt.gov</a>
Grizzly Bear Biologist: Vacnant until filled		
Black Bear Biologist: Eric Wenum	250-0062	<a href="mailto:fwpwenum@centurytel.net">fwpwenum@centurytel.net</a>
Goshawk Biologist: Chris Hammond	249-1641	<a href="mailto:chammond@mt.gov">chammond@mt.gov</a>

### Whitefish Legacy Partners

Board/WT Ops/LLAC Member: Michael Meador	212-5024	<a href="mailto:biggermig68@gmail.com">biggermig68@gmail.com</a>
Executive Director: Heidi Van Everen	862-3880	<a href="mailto:heidi@whitefishlegacy.org">heidi@whitefishlegacy.org</a>
Program Manager: Jedd Sankar-Gorton	862-3880	<a href="mailto:jedd@whitefishlegacy.org">jedd@whitefishlegacy.org</a>

### WT Project Specialists

Forestation: Greg Gunderson	863-2470	<a href="mailto:greg@forestation.com">greg@forestation.com</a>
Forestation: David Noftsinger	863-2470	<a href="mailto:david@forestation.com">david@forestation.com</a>

## **Exhibit B**

### **Emergency Response Plan**

#### **Overview**

The Whitefish Trail (WT) is a multi-use trail system located on state, federal, and private lands surrounding the community of Whitefish, MT. Since 2010, natural surface trails have been constructed and are open to the public. The trail system will continue to grow over the next several years across varied terrain.

Although precautions have been taken to reduce trail incidents through appropriate design and construction, effective signage, regular maintenance, and the presence of a Trail Patrol, inherent risks still exist on the trail.

In order to respond to incidents, an Emergency Response Plan has been established. The Emergency Response Plan acts as an action plan for emergencies occurring along the trail. Trail access data has been provided to the emergency responders to offer increased dispatch support. This information has been integrated into the public safety response system.

The Whitefish Fire Department (WFD) serves as the primary responders and provides emergency medical services and support on the trail. They work closely with the Whitefish Trail Operations Committee, WT Patrol, WT Ambassador and other associated agencies.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of The Whitefish Trail Emergency Response Plan is to identify coordination and response to trail-related incidents and emergencies occurring along The Whitefish Trail.

#### **Background**

1. The Whitefish Trail is a non-motorized network of single-track, natural surface, recreation trails. The WT, which is open to the public during all seasons, is designed for hiker, mountain biker and equestrian use.
2. The Whitefish Trail currently consists of 43+ miles accessed from the Lion Mountain Trailhead, Skyles Connection, Beaver Lakes Trailhead, Beaver Lake, North Beaver Connection, Woods Lake Trailhead, Lupfer Trailhead, Swift Creek Trailhead, Smith Lake Connection, Dollar Lake Trailhead, Twin Bridges Trailhead, South Spencer Trailhead, Reservoir Trailhead, and Big Mountain Trailhead. The entire length of the Whitefish Trail is located outside the City of Whitefish limits.
3. The Whitefish Trail is located primarily on Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) State trust land. The DNRC authorizes the City

of Whitefish (through licenses and permanent easement) the right to construct, manage, and maintain a 10' corridor and sustainable trail. Portions of the trail are located on private lands.

4. The Whitefish Trail Operations Committee oversees operations of the trail and an Annual Trail Operations Plan is in effect regarding day-to-day management and oversight of the trail system.
5. The Whitefish Fire Department (WFD) is the primary response agency for incidents occurring along the Whitefish Trail. Whitefish Fire Department supplied Knox Boxes are installed at the Lion Mountain and Twin Bridges Trailhead gates to provide improved access for emergency response vehicles.
6. Flathead County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is the secondary response agency for incidents occurring along the Whitefish Trail.
7. The Flathead County Sheriff is primarily responsible for law enforcement at Whitefish Trail trailheads.
8. The following entities have been identified as Partners:
  - The City of Whitefish – Parks and Recreation Department
  - Whitefish Fire Department
  - Whitefish Legacy Partners
  - Whitefish Trail Patrol
  - Whitefish Trail Ambassadors
  - MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – Kalispell and Stillwater Units
  - USFS – Flathead National Forest, Tally Lake Ranger District
  - Private property owners who have granted trail easements – Two Bear Properties of Whitefish, the Deats Family, the O'Donnell Family, Iron Horse, F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Co, and Winter Sports Inc.
  - Private property owners in proximity to the trail – Wolf Tail Pines, Lion Mountain Loop Road, Elkhorn, Beaver Lake Road, Lupfer Road, and Del Rey Road.
  - Flathead Area Mountain Bikers
  - Glacier Nordic Club
  - Community groups and local businesses.
  - Flathead County
  - Flathead County Sherriff
  - Flathead County Office of Emergency Services

### **Assumptions**

1. While steps have been taken to mitigate potential incidents along the trail, risks may exist.
2. Trail users should act responsibly and use the trail at their own risk. Signs are available at all trailheads informing users of WT information.
3. Incidents occurring along the trail will most likely be associated with the following:
  - Accident-related trauma
  - Medical Emergencies
  - Wildland Fire Emergencies
4. The Whitefish Trail Patrol may be present to support FWD and OES in medical injuries and emergencies. Trail Patrollers are offered training in basic bike maintenance, basic first aid, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and all carry a first aid kit. The WT Patrol's primary responsibility is to educate trail users of proper etiquette, inform trail managers, land managers and trail users of trail conditions, offer volunteer services as available.
5. The WT Ambassadors are trained to report emergency situations in accordance with these procedures and are not expected to provide medical assistance. In addition, they educate trail users of proper etiquette, inform trail managers, land managers and trail users of trail conditions, offer volunteer services as available.

### **Concept of Operations**

1. Emergency Response Plan Trailhead Signs – Emergency Response Plan signs are located at all trailheads to inform users of the Emergency Response Plan in place on the Whitefish Trail. The trailhead sign informs users to always call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency on the Whitefish Trail, to be alert, and to remain aware of Emergency Location Numbers along the trail system. An example of an Emergency Location Number sign is also displayed. Additional contact information is also represented at each trailhead.



2. Emergency Location Number signs – An Emergency Location Number is a designated point along the Whitefish Trail used to help emergency responders locate injured trail users. Most sign posts on The Whitefish Trail have an Emergency Location Number sign. Trail users will be encouraged to remain aware of these numbers through informative signage at all trailheads.

Image of Emergency Location Number signs located throughout the trail system:



3. Emergency Location Database and Maps - Maps have been created that show the trail system, emergency sign post locations, proximal roads, access points, and gates. These maps have been circulated to WFD and all bike patrol volunteers.

4. Medical Incidents - When calls for medical assistance are received by 911, the Whitefish Fire Department is paged out and follows agency protocol. The Office of Emergency Services follows agency protocol. WFD will contact City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Department after each incident to provide an incident summary.

5. Fire Incidents - When calls related to fire are received by 911, the Whitefish Fire Department is paged out and follows agency protocol. The Office of Emergency Services follows agency protocol. WFD will contact City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Department after each incident to provide an incident summary.

\*Updated March 2020\*



### Swift Creek

King Creek  
Swift Creek  
Lower Whitefish Rd.  
Smith Lake  
Swift Creek Loop 1.3 miles  
Swift Creek Trailhead  
To Smith Lake 2.5 miles

### Lupfer

Lupfer Trailhead  
Lupfer Loop 2.9 mi.  
209, 208, 210, 201-202, 211, 203, 207, 206

### North Spencer

North Spencer Trailhead  
Spencer Lake  
500, 502, 504, 506, 540, 538, 536, 510, 512

#### FREERIDE

- Most Difficult
- Intermediate
- Singletrack Climb
- Spencer Summit

- Malice in Plunderland 0.7 mi.
- Spooky Pete's 0.9 mi.
- Otter Pop 1.3 mi.
- Flow Factory 0.8 mi.
- Maple Syrup 1.4 mi.
- Recess 0.9 mi.
- Lookout 0.7 mi.

### South Spencer

South Spencer Parking  
512, 514, 516, 534, 532, 543-545, 530-531, 528, 527, 526, 518, 519, 524, 520

### See Dollar Lake

#### Detail Map Woods Lake Trailhead

North Beaver Connection  
Woods Lake  
Dollar Lake  
Little Beaver Lake  
Beaver Lake

### DOLLAR LAKE

North Beaver Connection  
Woods Lake Trailhead  
Woods Lake  
Dollar Lake  
Little Beaver Lake  
Beaver Lake

#### Mileage Chart

Lion Mountain Trailhead	x	1.5	3.5	3.2	5.5	6.6	7.7	10.5	10.0
Skyles Lake Overlook	1.5	x	2.2	1.8	4.2	5.3	6.3	9.5	9.0
Skyles Connection	3.5	2.2	x	1.1	3.5	4.7	5.2	8.3	7.8
Two Bear Road	3.2	1.8	1.1	x	2.4	3.5	4.0	7.2	6.6
Beaver Lake Road	5.5	4.2	3.5	2.4	x	1.1	1.7	4.8	4.3
Beaver Lakes Trailhead	6.6	5.3	4.7	3.5	1.1	x	1.5	4.6	4.2
Woods Lake Road	7.7	6.3	5.2	4.0	1.7	1.5	x	3.1	2.7
North Beaver Connection	10.5	9.5	8.3	7.2	4.8	4.6	3.1	x	2.5
Woods Lakes Trailhead	10.0	9.0	7.8	6.6	4.3	4.2	2.7	2.5	x

### Skyles

Skyles Connection  
26, 27, 25, 23, 22, 21, 28, 24, 30, 29, 42, 41, 40, 50

### See Skyles and Lion Mountain Detail Maps

Skyles Connection  
Lion Mountain Trailhead

### Lion Mountain

Skyles Lake Overlook Loop 0.4 miles  
Lion Mountain Trailhead  
12, 19, 13, 11, 8, 7, 10, 6, 3-5, 2

#### 2013 Whitefish Trail Map

- Trailhead Locations
- Viewpoints
- Restrooms
- Information Kiosk
- Parking Lot
- Wheelchair Accessible Trail
- Trail Crosses Road
- Boat Access
- Fishing Access
- The Whitefish Trail
- Future Trails

### HASKILL

Whitefish Mountain Resort  
Big Mountain Trailhead  
Haskill Lake  
Haskill Lake Overlook  
Stoltze Conservation Easement  
Reservoir Trailhead  
Valley Overlook  
475, 460, 450, 440, 435, 430, 420, 415, 410, 405

Whitefish Trail Management and Operations Plan 2021-2022 Exhibit B

## Exhibit C - Wildlife Protocol

The City of Whitefish (City), Whitefish Legacy Partners (WLP), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservations (DNRC), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), and the United State Forest Service (USFS) have coordinated guidelines for managing the Whitefish Trail and wildlife encounters. Through a collaborative effort with all parties, the following protocols have been established. If during the term of this Operating Plan, the respective agencies determine that additional wildlife protocols are necessary to protect these or additional species, this Exhibit shall be unilaterally modified to address those concerns.

### Grizzly Bear Sighting

In the case of a report of a grizzly bear sighting on the Whitefish Trail...

- Obtain as much pertinent information about the encounter as possible by completing the Wildlife Reporting Information Form (below)
- Notify the City, WLP, the appropriate landowner (DNRC, USFS, private, etc.), and the FWP Grizzly Bear Biologist.
- Identification of the appropriate action will be a coordinated effort between all agencies.

### Carcass Sighting

In the case of a report of a carcass on the Whitefish Trail...

- Obtain as much pertinent information about the carcass as possible by completing the Wildlife Reporting Information Form (below)
- Notify the City, WLP, the appropriate landowner (DNRC, USFS, private, etc.), and the FWP Grizzly Bear Biologist.
- Identification of the appropriate action will be a coordinated effort between all agencies involved; however, carcasses on the Whitefish Trail may warrant an immediate trail closure until trained professionals are able to remove the carcass or enough time has passed that the carcass is no longer an attractant.
- To close a trail, follow Trail Closure Protocol (below)

### Black Bear/Mountain Lion Sighting

In the case of a report of a black bear or mountain lion sighting on the Whitefish Trail...

- Obtain as much pertinent information about the encounter as possible by completing the Wildlife Reporting Information Form (below)
  - If the animal was acting aggressively toward humans on the trail, contact the FWP Black Bear/Lion Biologist and appropriate action will be a coordinated effort between agencies.
  - If the animal was not acting aggressively, retain the information of data collection.
  - If five or more reports have been made within three consecutive days, contact the FWP Black Bear/Lion Biologist and appropriate action will be a coordinated effort between agencies.
- If action is warranted, notify the City, WLP, and the appropriate landowner (DNRC, USFS, private, etc.) of action being taken.

## Nesting Goshawk Sighting

In the case of a report of a sighting of a nesting goshawk along the Whitefish Trail...

- Obtain as much pertinent information about the encounter as possible by completing the Wildlife Reporting Information Form (below)
- Notify the City, WLP, the appropriate landowner (DNRC, USFS, private, etc.), and the FWP Biologist.
- Identification of the appropriate action will be a coordinated effort between all agencies.
- If action is warranted, notify the City, WLP, and the appropriate landowner (DNRC, USFS, private, etc.) of action being taken.

## Trail Closure and Sign Protocol

### Trail Closures

Trail closures on the Whitefish Trail are the prerogative of the appropriate land management agencies. However, since FWP staff possess expertise concerning human-wildlife conflicts and trail safety, they are typically asked to advise the other agencies who must then decide whether to open or close a trail to public use. In addition, FWP staff are usually the first responders to bear encounters, and therefore often assist those agencies by posting trail closure signs on their behalf. When closing trails, it is advisable to construct a temporary barricade, forcing trail users to slow down and notice the closure sign. Temporary warning signs must be posted in clear view and on both sides of hazardous areas at a distance that allows users to safely avoid the area, but close enough to minimize confusion over the exact location of the hazard (Figure 3). The appropriate land management agency should issue a press release within 24 hours of a trail closure to alert the public. Temporary closures are an immediate precaution designed to allow agencies time to coordinate and determine potential solutions while keeping trail users safe.

### Reopening Trails

Land management agencies should consult FWP staff regarding when to reopen a trail. It is critical that temporary signs are removed after a closure is lifted. If a closure persists beyond 10 days, a new date should be added to the sign to maintain its currency. Trail users have been shown to ignore the signs when they become accustomed to seeing them.

### Signs

Signs are the most efficient, direct method of warning trail users of recent and potential wildlife encounters. Signs should be standardized in terms of size, message and colors to avoid confusion and to phase out the use of informal, “recent bear sightings” signs.

**Permanent warning signs** - Trail users may encounter bears and lions in natural areas throughout the Whitefish Trail. Permanent warning signs are used at trailheads to remind users that they may encounter bears and lions and advise them how to minimize risk. Permanent warning signs are typically metal or rugged plastic (Figure 1).

**Temporary warning signs** - Although trail users should anticipate encountering a bear almost anywhere, actual encounters are rare and hazardous encounters even rarer. In situations where the possibility of encountering a bear is high, particularly those situations where the bear may be inclined to attack, temporary signs are used to warn users of unique, short-term risks. Temporary warning signs are a heavy stock of paper and are available in two vivid, Day-Glo colors (Figure 2). The

signs come in various sizes, large enough to be readily seen. A blank space is provided to record details of the specific reason for the warning sign. Temporary signs can be posted by any first responder; however, they must be coordinated as soon as practical.

- **Alert Signs - Yellow** signs, showing wildlife silhouettes and “Alert”, are used when the threat is higher than normal, but unlikely to escalate if people are forewarned and use caution. The trail is not closed and people are not expected to avoid the area. Examples include 1) a bear sow with cubs seen once on or near a trail, without threatening behavior, 2) a bear eating berries near the trail, 3) a single bear has bluff-charged someone, 4) repeated sightings of a bear, 5) a bear has acted brazenly or broken into a pack or other container, 6) a bear following or approaching trail users, or 7) goshawks are known to be nesting in the vicinity but have not displayed aggression toward trail users.
- **Closure Signs - Red** signs, showing a wildlife silhouettes and “Danger”, are used when the threat is high and may escalate if people continue to use the area. The sign advises that the trail is closed and people are expected to avoid the area or proceed at their own risk. Examples include 1) after a mauling or serious charge, especially if the bear is suspected to remain in the area; 2) a carcass of a large animal on or near the trail that is being defended by or likely to attract a bear; 3) a bear sow with cubs seen more than once within a day or two on or near the trail, 4) a bear sow with cub seen once with threatening behavior or agitation, or 5) repeated sightings of a bear following or approaching within a few feet of people 6) goshawks are known to be nesting in the vicinity and have displayed aggression toward trail users including diving or making physical contact.

## **Agencies Contact List**

### **Fish, Wildlife and Parks:**

For Violations: 1-800-TIP-MONT

Grizzly Bear Biologist: Vacant until filled.

Black Bear Biologist: Erik Wenum, 250-0062, [ewenum@mt.gov](mailto:ewenum@mt.gov)

Wildlife Biologist for Goshawks: Chris Hammond, (406) 249-1641, [chammond@mt.gov](mailto:chammond@mt.gov)

Whitefish Game Warden: Chris Crane, 249-6231, [ccrane@mt.gov](mailto:ccrane@mt.gov)

Trust Lands Game Warden: Chuck Bartos, 253-2934, [cbartos@mt.gov](mailto:cbartos@mt.gov)

Back-up Trust Lands Warden: Nathan Reiner, 890-9747, [nreiner@mt.gov](mailto:nreiner@mt.gov)

MT FWP R-1 Office: 752-5501

### **DNRC:**

Kalispell Unit Forester: Kara Neal, 751-2265, [kara.neal@mt.gov](mailto:kara.neal@mt.gov)

Stillwater Special Uses Forester: Nicole Stickney, 881-2666, [nstickney@mt.gov](mailto:nstickney@mt.gov)

**City of Whitefish:**

Community Services Coordinator: Carla Belski, 863-2473, [cbelski@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:cbelski@cityofwhitefish.org)

Parks and Recreation Director: Maria Butts, 863-2471, [mbutts@cityofwhitefish.org](mailto:mbutts@cityofwhitefish.org)

Parks and Recreation General Office: 863-2470

**Whitefish Legacy Partners:**

Program Manager: Jedd Sankor-Gorton, 862.3880, [info@whitefishlegacy.org](mailto:info@whitefishlegacy.org)

## Wildlife Reporting Information Form

The following questions must be asked of the reporting party to help agencies gauge the level of threat. Please gather as much detail as possible.

Name and phone number of the reporting party: \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed location of wildlife or carcass encounter: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of encounter: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of wildlife species encountered: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance from the animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Did a bear or lion act aggressively? \_\_\_\_\_ (If yes, call 911.) Did you see any cubs, kittens, or other young? \_\_\_\_\_

If a carcass was found, how far is it from the WT? \_\_\_\_\_ What type of carcass? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it visible from the WT? \_\_\_\_\_ Has the carcass been fed on? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the carcass partially covered or buried? \_\_\_\_\_

Please note any other influential environmental factors including nearby huckleberry patches, bear attractants, water sources, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Please include any photos taken of animal observation or carcasses with this report\*



**Date:**

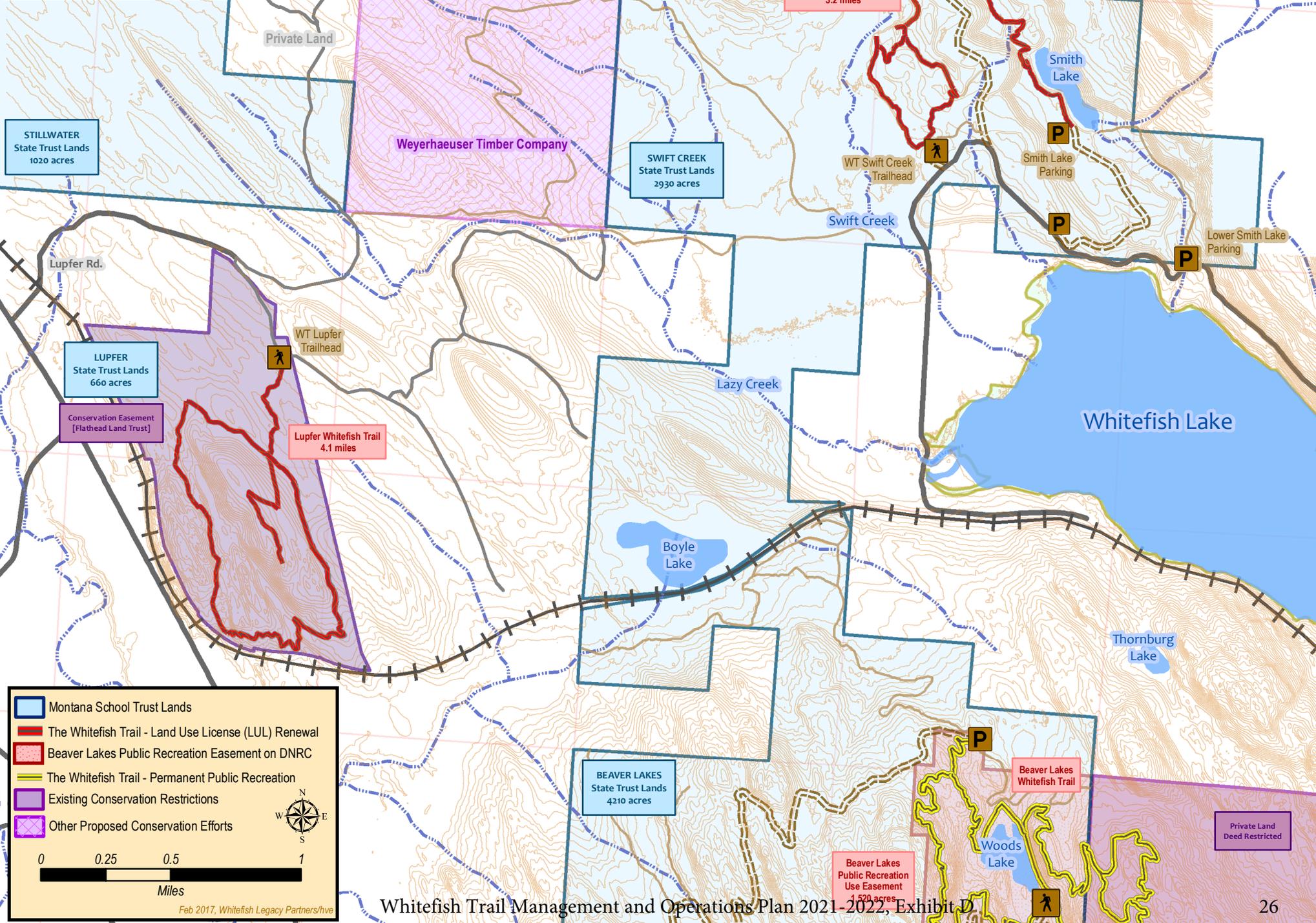
**Notice:**



**Date:**

**Notice:**

**The Whitefish Trail**  
 2017 - 2027 Land Use License Renewal  
 WT Swift Creek and WT Lupfer



Feb 2017, Whitefish Legacy Partners/Inve