



CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO PLACES WORTH PROTECTING

THE WHITEFISH TRAIL

A few months ago, we held a rather animated meeting with founding board member Lin Akey. I was discussing the complexity of our Close the Loop project when in mid-sentence, Lin rose out of his chair and interrupted, “Alan, do you know how to eat an elephant?” Humoring him, I answered, “With a huge knife and fork?” “Nope,” he said with his youthful grin, “one bite at a time.” He slowly eased back into his chair as I rolled my eyes and chuckled. It was actually the perfect analogy for our conservation work.

Fifteen years ago, our community forged a shared path forward and took a stand to protect and support local public lands. At times, the vision appeared lofty and ambitious. How would we permanently protect high-value land from development, support sustainable management of surrounding forests, keep local timber jobs alive, and connect the community to these important places with a 55-mile loop trail? With seemingly a million moving parts between public partners, landowner agreements,

creative funding strategies, environmental assessments, and complex field design, our conservation work slowly coalesced and is gaining momentum.

Acre by acre, our community has placed nearly 10 square miles of local lands into permanent conservation. It is an astounding accomplishment for our small mountain town and one that took a great deal of thoughtful, community-wide decision-making and support.

The final steps of our Close the Loop project can seem overwhelming. Protection of 480 acres at Smith Lake, creation of an adjacent 120-acre Community Forest, 15+ miles of new trail, bridge engineering and construction, and development of two remaining trailheads is a lot to chew, but together, we can make this happen. *One small bite at a time.*

Alan Myers-Davis
Director of Development





HASKILL TRAIL

The newest section of the Whitefish Trail in Haskill connects town to Whitefish Mountain Resort with 5.5 miles of new single-track, two new trailheads, groomed winter access, and countless connections to existing recreation on the Stoltze Conservation Easement and Flathead National Forest.



Great for both summer and winter use, the Big Mountain Trailhead accesses both the single-track Whitefish Trail and miles of roads groomed by Glacier Nordic Club and Iron Horse Golf Club in winter months.

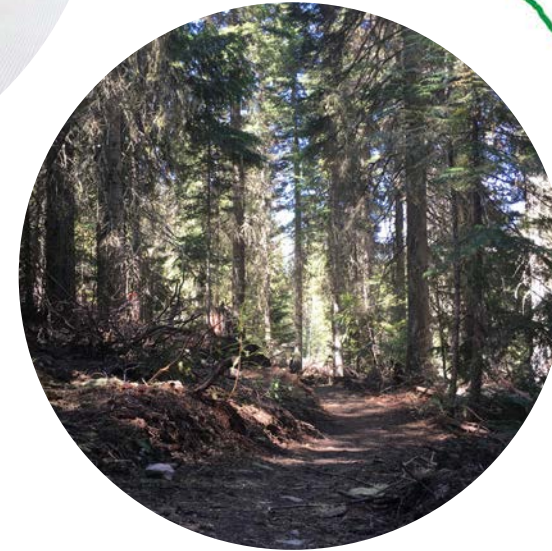


Reservoir Trailhead, with its park-like feel, features an ADA interpretive loop, picnic tables, and benches alongside Viking Creek. Bring a picnic and learn about the Baker Homestead, Whitefish's drinking water supply, and wildlife, or simply enjoy a relaxing afternoon.



Reservoir Trailhead

Big Mountain Trailhead



As the Whitefish Trail climbs through Haskill and skirts along the western edge of the conservation easement, it winds through cool and lush groves of Western Redcedar filled with bear-grass and wildflowers.



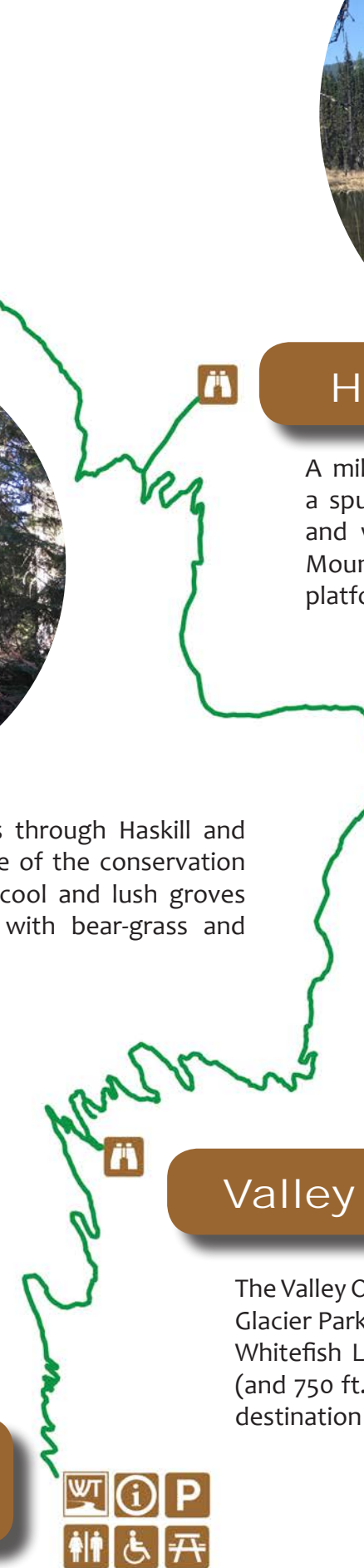
Haskill Lake

A mile and a half from the Big Mountain Trailhead, a spur trail leads to Haskill Lake. This seasonal lake and wetland offers picturesque views of Whitefish Mountain Resort. A short boardwalk and viewing platform is planned for construction in Summer 2018.



Valley Overlook

The Valley Overlook offers panoramic views stretching from Glacier Park and the Swan Range to Blacktail Mountain and Whitefish Lake. 1.5 miles up from the Reservoir Trailhead (and 750 ft. in elevation), the overlook makes a wonderful destination to watch the sun rise and set.





PROTECTING SMITH LAKE FOREVER

Over the past decade, our community's conservation lands have grown to surround Whitefish Lake. As we look north, the head of the lake also deserves a permanent solution. Smith Lake and the adjacent private lands have important community value offering incredible views, easy access, and critical conservation and recreation connectivity. The highly prized area is at risk for future development or loss.

Right now, Smith Lake is not forever. The City of Whitefish holds a 10-year license for the existing trails on State Trust Land, and the public's right to access those trails is only temporary. Private homes or subdivisions would fragment prime wildlife habitat and negatively impact the water quality of Whitefish Lake.

Conservation surrounding Smith Lake and the creation of an adjacent Community Forest would set aside important lands for wildlife and resource protection and provide a critical link for the Whitefish Trail. The lands would be maintained as a working forest, supporting local timber jobs.



Whitefish Legacy Partners, the City of Whitefish, Flathead Land Trust, Montana DNRC, Flathead National Forest, and multiple private landowners are working hard to make our community's dream a reality. It's a win – win for our community and we need your help. Let's secure our legacy and protect Smith Lake forever.

2018 Whitefish Trail

KIDS PROGRAMS AT THE WT LEARNING PAVILION

Meet at Lion Mountain Trailhead. Two hour programs.
No registration required - ages 5 to 12.

FOREST CRITTERS - Thursday June 14, 10:00 am
Discover the critters of the Whitefish Trail, great and small
on a nature walk

CLAY DAY - Tuesday June 19, 10:00 am
Play with squishy clay and create imprints of nature to take home

FAIRY HOUSES - Thursday June 28, 10:00 am
Use your imagination as you explore the fairly land of Lion Mountain
and build homes for its inhabitants

PAINTING FROM NATURE - Wednesday July 11, 10:00 am
Be inspired by nature around you as you paint a masterpiece

FORT BUILDING - Tuesday July 17, 10:00 am
Get a little dirty and use your imagination as you add to the fort
village and play-scape at Lion Mountain

EXPEDITION WILD - Thursday July 26, 10:00 am
Join this expedition of make believe as it explores the wilds of
Lion Mountain. Come in your best expedition costume!



FOREST EXPLORERS CAMP on the Whitefish Trail

Wrap up summer on the Whitefish Trail with a fun day camp for kids ages 6-10
at the WT Learning Pavilion. Sign up for one week or both!

WEEK 1: August 6-9, Monday-Thursday

WEEK 2: August 13-16, Monday-Thursday

Morning session: 9am to 12pm

Afternoon session: 1pm to 4pm

Pre-registration required. Cost: \$40/week for WT Friends and Families or \$160/week.

Registration forms available at www.whitefishlegacy.org/youth-programs

NATURE IN FOCUS YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Wednesday June 20 6-8pm: Lion Mountain Trailhead

Learn the basics of photography including composition, lighting, and
focus, and how to get the best photos with your mobile phone or camera

Saturday October 20 2-4pm: Reservoir Trailhead

Learn how to capture landscapes and portraits using your mobile phone
or camera

Nature in Focus is geared toward kids ages 11 to 18.
Cameras are available upon request. Workshops are free.
Sign up at www.whitefishlegacy.org/youth-programs

Community Programs

Explore the Whitefish Trail with Guided Learning Hikes and Community Hikes and Bikes!
All events are free and do not require registration. They are suitable for all fitness levels and are family friendly.

Guided Learning Hikes

- **WINTER WILDLIFE TRACKS** --- Saturday February 17, 10am --- Lion Mountain Trailhead
Learn how to identify wildlife tracks in the snow on this easy 2 mile hike
- **BEAR AWARE PRESENTATION** --- Wednesday April 18, 5:30pm --- Lodge at Whitefish Lake
Brush up on your bear aware education with this interactive presentation
- **MUSHROOM HUNT** --- Sunday May 6, 2pm --- Swift Creek Trailhead
With spring rains come mushrooms! Hunt for wild mushrooms and learn to identify them
- **BEAR AWARE HIKE** --- Wednesday May 16, 6 pm --- Lion Mountain Trailhead
Learn about bear behavior and safety on an easy 2 mile hike
- **WILDFLOWER WALK** --- Wednesday June 13, 6 pm --- Lion Mountain Trailhead
Learn how to identify the wildflowers of the Whitefish Trail with an easy 2-3 mile hike
- **NOXIOUS WEEDS HIKE** --- Wednesday June 27, 6 pm --- Reservoir Trailhead
Learn about a variety of noxious weeds and how to treat them on this moderate 2-3 mile hike
- **BEAR AWARE HIKE** --- Saturday September 15, 10 am --- Lion Mountain Trailhead
Just in time for hunting season, learn what you need to know to be safe in bear country during the fall on this
easy 2 mile hike
- **MUSHROOM HUNT** --- Sunday September 30, 2pm --- Woods Lake Trailhead
Cooler fall weather means mushrooms are back! Come hunt for wild mushrooms and learn to identify them

Community Hikes & Bikes

- **SNOWSHOE WITH CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY** --- Friday February 16, 1pm --- Big Mountain Trailhead
Whether you're a cancer patient, survivor, or have a loved one who's been affected, join us for this easy to
moderate 2 hour snowshoe outing.
- **MOTHERS DAY HIKE** --- Sunday May 13, 10am --- Reservoir Trailhead
Celebrate Mothers Day with a family friendly hike
- **GROUP MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE** --- Wednesday May 23, 6pm --- Beaver Lakes Trailhead
Join us for a beginners ride with an instructor or intermediate group ride. Free rentals available from Glacier Cyclery.
- **HIKE WITH KALISPELL VETERANS CENTER** --- Wednesday May 30, 6pm --- Swift Creek Trailhead
Celebrate our Veterans past and present for Memorial Day with an easy 2-3 mile hike suitable for all ages
- **HIKE WITH CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY** --- Tuesday June 5, 6pm --- Lion Mountain Trailhead
Whether you're a cancer patient, survivor, or have a loved one who's been affected, join us for this easy 3 mile hike
- **HIKE WITH KRCM JOURNEY TO WELLNESS** --- Thursday June 21, 9am --- Lion Mountain Trailhead
Looking to get in shape or recovering from a medical issue? Explore the trail for your health
- **COMMUNITY HIKE** --- Wednesday September 12, 6 pm --- Big Mountain Trailhead
Enjoy the changing fall colors and views with a 3 mile easy to moderate hike to Haskill Lake

2017 EDUCATION PROGRAMS



Last year WLP education programs engaged 16% more adults, families, and school kids on the Whitefish Trail to learn about the natural world. Participants learned from local experts about being bear aware, noxious weeds, wild mushrooms and more. Local youth were inspired by nature through painting and photography programs. This upcoming year we are expanding our adult and family programs to include community hikes and bikes. Partnering with organizations throughout the Flathead Valley, these events will introduce new groups to the Whitefish Trail and build community. Our kids' programs will also see a change, with more opportunities for play and exploration along with our continued favorite family programs.



WLP is pleased to welcome Christiane Hinterman Prew as our new Education Coordinator. Christiane will be leading our kids' programs and Forest Explorers camps, bringing over 20 years of interpretive and environmental education experience, along with a great love for the outdoors.



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Wheelie Creative Design
Whitefish Bike Retreat
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Flathead Area Mountain Bikers
Jamie Moore
Montana Conservation Corps
Ridge Mountain Academy
Whitefish Independent High School
Whitefish Middle School

2017 VOLUNTEERS



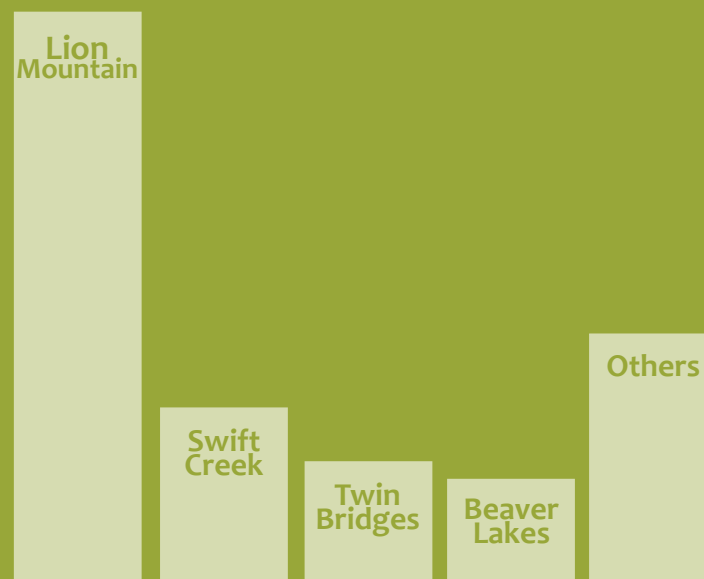
\$1  **\$30**
 invested in the **Whitefish Trail** generated in local businesses

Every year the **Whitefish Trail** contributes

\$6.4 million
 in annual consumer spending in Whitefish

68 jobs
 in Whitefish

visitors who come for outdoor recreation spend **\$670 more** during their visit



OVER **91,000***
 TRAIL USES PER YEAR

*Estimated from 2018 Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation and the Whitefish Trail report

“Our rental bike operation has more than doubled...we are also seeing an increasing number of people in our store requesting maps and information on the Whitefish Trail; they are asking for camping, lodging and restaurant information as well. The trail is generating an economic boost not only to Glacier Cyclery but to the entire Whitefish community”



Ron Brunk
 Owner
 Glacier Cyclery

WHITEFISH TRAIL USERS



Outdoor recreation generates serious dollars for our community. As our Close the Loop project moves into the final stages of conservation planning and trail development, the economic impact of the Whitefish Trail is a crucial piece of the puzzle.

Whitefish Legacy Partners joined forces with Headwaters Economics and the Whitefish Convention and Visitor's Bureau to complete a two-year study measuring trail usage, local spending, and visitation. During 2016 - 2017, we installed four infrared trail counters at Lion Mountain, Swift Creek, Twin Bridges, and Beaver Lakes and completed 1,794 in-person surveys both on the trail and in town. Along with expenditure questions, we asked trail users a myriad of questions including why and how they enjoy the Whitefish Trail. We also asked visitors where they live and how much they have spent in Whitefish and on outdoor recreation during their trip.

The results reveal a BIG value for our community. The Whitefish Trail contributes to \$6.4 million in consumer spending every year and contributes significantly to our health and quality of life. The #1 reason why locals use the trail is to improve their health and wellness, and the #1 reason why people move here is to enjoy our outdoor recreation opportunities. Our local trail system brings far-reaching value to our community and to our lives.

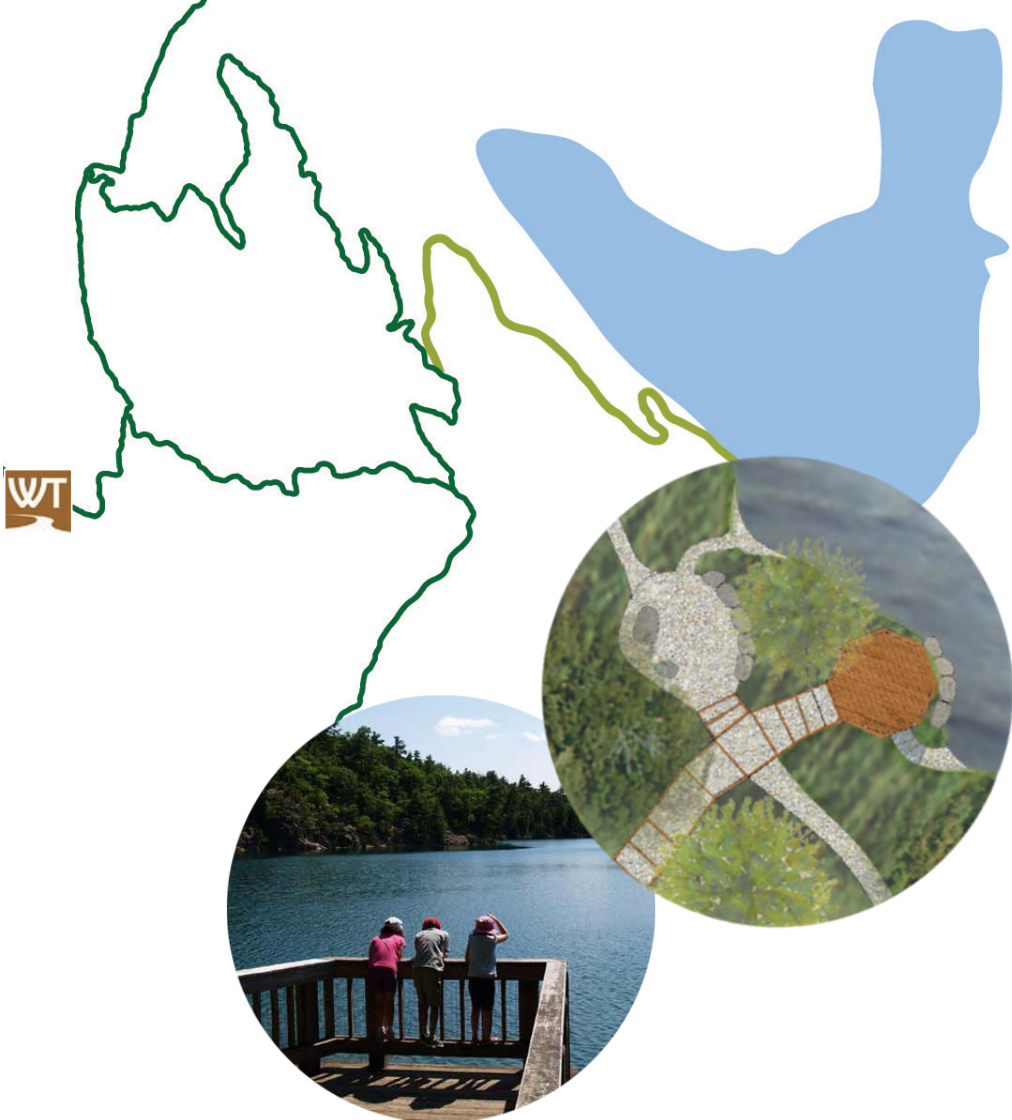
Whitefish Trail

2009-2017 EXPENSES

\$1.89 MILLION



Bringing the trail to Beaver Lake



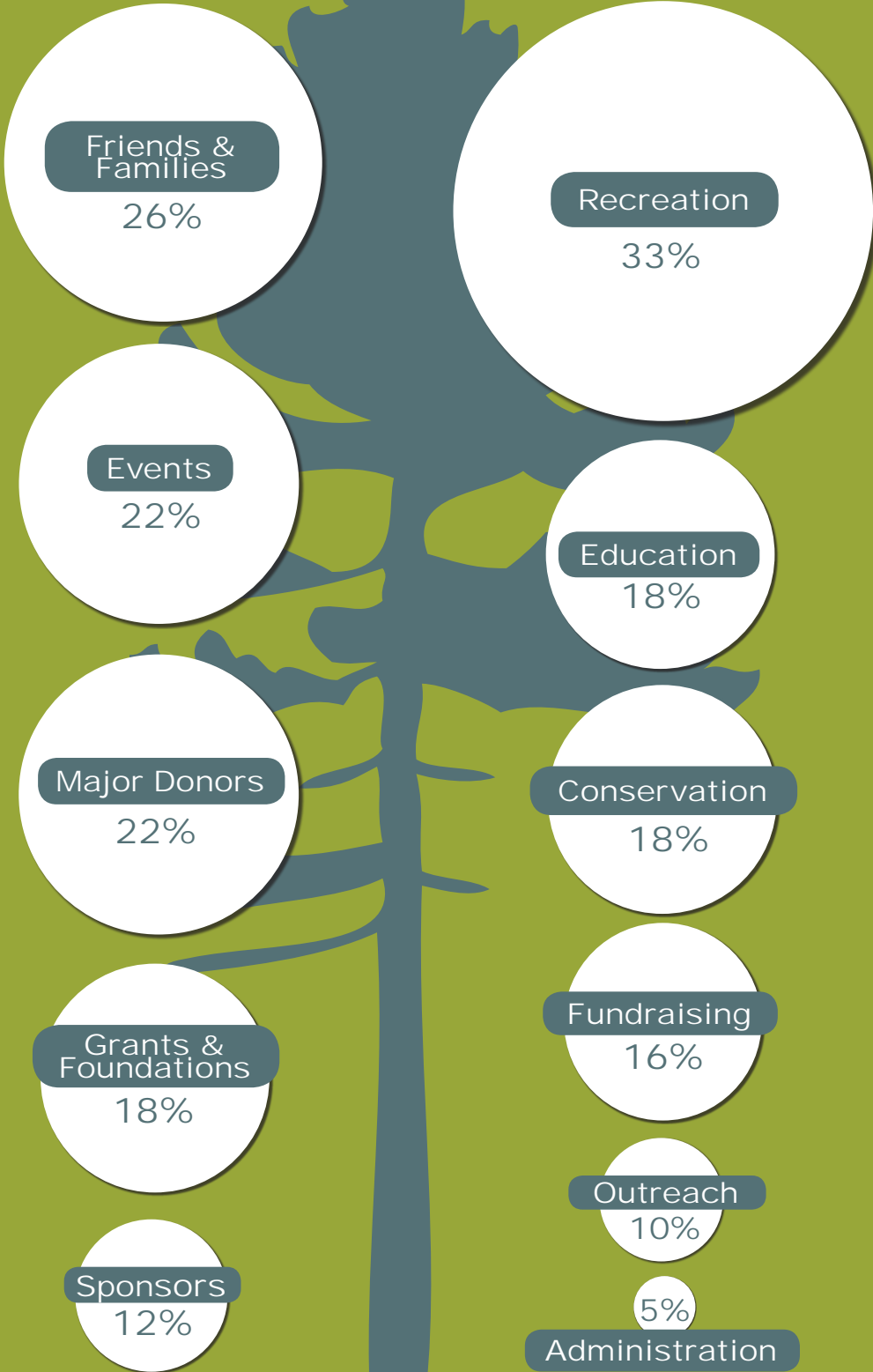
WLP has received federal funding from Montana’s Recreational Trails Program to build a new section of trail to bring users to the south shore of Beaver Lake in the summer of 2018.

One new mile of new trail will connect existing trail to Beaver Lake and lakeshore improvements will be added to the fishing access site. A picnic area, lakeshore deck, and paths to the water’s edge will make it easier for users to access the water and enjoy the views across Beaver Lake and the Whitefish Range.

Whether you’re hiking there for a picnic, jumping in to cool off mid-ride, or spending the afternoon fishing or paddling, these improvements will add a beautiful destination to the trail and make Beaver Lake more accessible to the community.

REVENUE
\$250,425

EXPENSES
\$230,004



Interested in our Close the Loop video?
Watch it at www.whitefishlegacy.org

The greatest way to sell conservation is to get people out on the landscape. Once people see an environment like this, and once they experience walking on these trails, you get conservation thinking.



Growing the WT Endowment

The Whitefish Trail Endowment guarantees a bright future for our community trail by funding long-term operating and maintenance costs of the project. In 2017 WLP and the community set aside \$25,000 of the Haskill Match Campaign for future trail maintenance. In addition, WLP contributed \$21,798 and the community donated \$8,276 to the WT Endowment Fund bringing the total value over \$1 million.

As we complete the community’s vision to protect more lands and develop more trails, we will continue to cultivate growth in the WT Endowment Fund to sustain long-term funding for the trail.

Help us ensure future generations will have the same conservation, education, and recreation opportunities that we enjoy today: consider the WT Endowment Fund in your estate planning or make a donation and take advantage of the Montana Endowment Tax Credit.



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Please support these businesses that are committed to conservation, education and recreation in our community:

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Glacier Bank
Glacier Cyclery
Nelson's Ace Hardware
River Design Group
Sportsman & Ski Haus
Third Street Market

ADOPT-A-TRAIL SPONSORS

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Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Clinic
Sweetgrass Psychological Services
The Castor Family

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Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Clinic

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Get A Grip
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Jersey Boys Pizza
Montana Coffee Traders
Morley Canoes
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Sportsman and Ski Haus
Super One Foods

Sweet Peaks Ice Cream
The Lodge at Whitefish Lake
The Toggery
Three Forks Grille
Wheelie Creative Design
Whitefish Army Navy
Whitefish Bike Retreat
Whitefish Credit Union

IN-KIND TRAIL SPONSORS

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Grassroots Lawn Service
Montana Rock Works
Thompson Design and Management
River Design Group
Wheelie Creative Design

GRANTS

Applied Materials Foundation
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High Stakes Foundation
MT Noxious Weed Trust Fund
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Whitefish Community Foundation - Great Fish Challenge



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