

Missoula Trail Ambassadors

PILOT PROGRAM 2022





The need and goals

With increased recreation in Missoula comes more impact and congestion on the trails. The ambassador program is a way to educate our users...

- 1) By spreading important information about how to best minimize one's own impact while recreating
- 2) Educating users on appropriate behaviors while recreating on public lands
- 3) Reminding users that public lands are a shared resource that needs to be mutually respected and conserved for and by all users

Volunteers

1. Recruit willing and pre-vetted volunteers through partner groups
2. Training on public interactions and Authority of the Resource
3. Ask for two 3-hour shifts a month
4. Started with 9 interested volunteers, 7 were trained, and 5 volunteered for shifts



Setup

Table, chairs and a tent with visual aids and handouts

Brief shift reports

2 ambassadors for 3-hour shifts. Morning or afternoon shift Friday – Sunday

Set up at Lincoln Hills, Waterworks, Orange Street, Sousa and Blue Mountain trailheads

Focus on education NOT enforcement



The numbers

We had 9 total 3-hour shifts from July to September.

- 3 shifts at Lincoln Hills Trailhead
- 3 shifts at Sousa Trailhead
- 1 shift at new Waterworks Trailhead
- 1 shift at Orange Street Trailhead
- 1 shift at Blue Mountain Trailhead

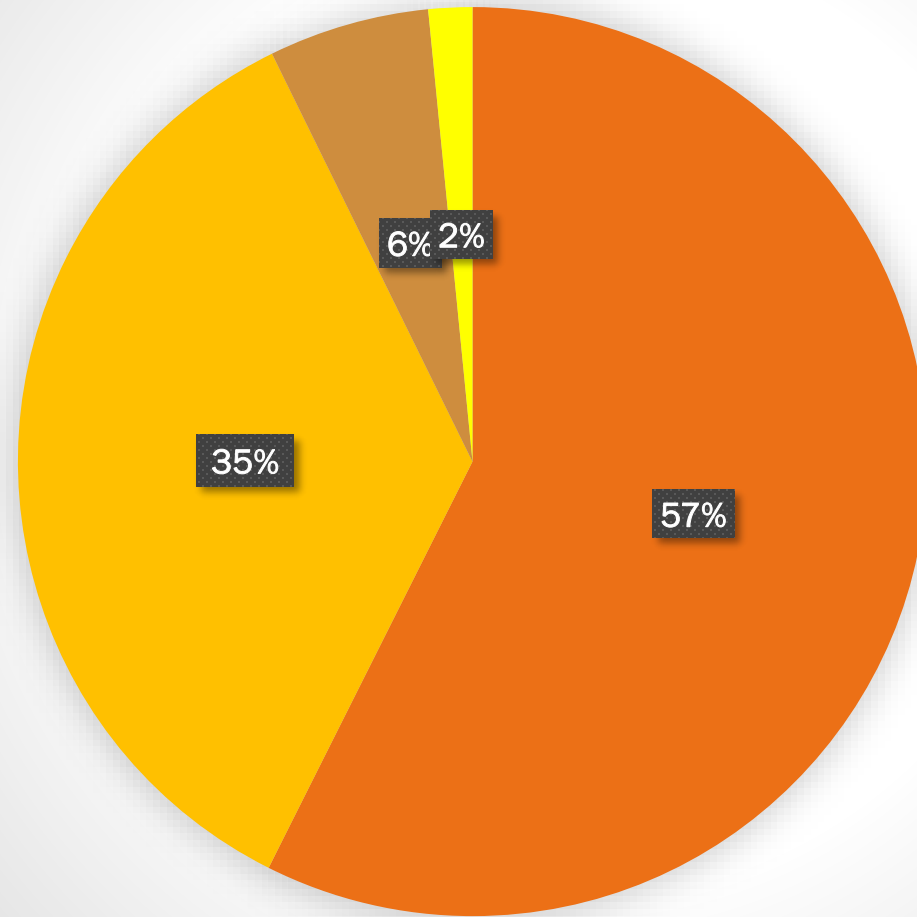
In total we contacted **385** trail users.



The numbers

PARTY TYPE	# INDIVIDUALS INTERACTED WITH (EVEN JUST A "HELLO")	# OF DOGS PER USER TYPE ON LEASH	# OF DOGS NOT IN LEASH COMPLIANCE	TOTAL # OF DOGS PER USER TYPE
Hike	221	94	18	112
Bike	136	2	2	4
Run	22	3	3	6
Horse	6			
TOTAL	385	99	23	122

User Breakdown



- Hikers
- Bikers
- Runners
- Equestrian



Number 1 opening question... “Whatcha doin’?”



Very positive and excited about the start of this program. Locals seemed thrilled to have more presence and education.



Lots of questions and comments about connecting trails and loops.



We invited users to give opinions and feedback...

E-bikes- good and bad
Dogs off leash causing conflict
Grateful for new trails and reroutes

Public feedback

Ambassador Feedback

Two 3-hour shifts a month is very doable.

Hanging out at the trailhead and chatting is fun!

Some challenging and engaging interactions

Impactful and fulfilling

The program has a lot of potential!



What we learned

1. An incredible avenue to reach users and have meaningful conversations.
2. Keep the tent as close to trail portal as possible.
3. Attract people to us! Dog water, stickers, water bottle refill, snacks
4. Different recreation areas have different conflict and concerns.
5. Visual aids spark conversation.



Going forward

1

Recruit
volunteers and
gain buy in from
partner groups

2

Bark Ranger
program!, dog
treats, fun
freebies

3

Add more
trailheads

4

Get started
sooner, go later

5

Off load
workload to
community-
based leaders



Thank you!

QUESTIONS