

March 10, 2020

Missoula Parks and Recreation
Open Space Advisory Committee
Attn: Grant Carlton, 600 Cregg Lane, Missoula, MT 59802



Climate Smart Missoula is a local non-profit whose mission is to engage our community in climate actions, catalyzing efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and build a resilient Missoula. We have led, along with Missoula County and the City of Missoula, the development of Climate Ready Missoula, a plan and effort to strengthen or initiate localized climate adaptation strategies. This plan is likely to be adopted as an amendment to the City and County's growth plans on April 6, 2020 and can be found here: climateredymissoula.org.

We write in support of the Mount Dean Stone Corridor (Corridor) which includes 350 acres of land that Five Valleys Land Trust proposes to transfer to the City of Missoula to enhance the Conservation Lands system. The Corridor lands would open over five miles of new trail route through mostly forested lands, which would offer a shady respite during our increasingly warm summers.

The Corridor proposal helps meet the goals and strategies in the Climate Ready Missoula. The Climate Ready plan recognizes the importance of protecting habitat and open space to balance competing land uses. It recommends restricting new development in high wildfire hazard areas, which include the Corridor lands, to reduce community vulnerabilities in the face of increasing wildfire. Eliminating residential development on 350 acres of high wildfire risk lands adjacent to Missoula reduces risks to humans and structures. Under City ownership land managers would also have the opportunity to further reduce wildfire risk on these lands through appropriate forest management.

The Corridor proposal further meets the Climate Ready goals of preserving water quality and water storage by minimizing impervious surfaces otherwise associated with residential development.

We support the requested \$925,000 in Open Space funding which Five Valleys will generously match with a \$1.4 million in-kind donation. The Mount Dean Stone Corridor helps meet Missoula's health, wellness, and social equity interests while proactively planning for the recreation and open space infrastructure needs of our growing community. The Mount Dean Stone project will help complete a 180-degree arc of publicly accessible conservation lands around the Missoula Valley to provide places for people to connect with each other and the natural world close to home.

Thank you for considering this proposal and the input of Climate Smart Missoula.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Amy Cilimburg".

Amy Cilimburg, Executive Director
Climate Smart Missoula
amy@climatesmartmissoula.org