Since the last update to the Burke Park Master plan in 2003, the city of Bozeman has grown in population from approximately 31,000 to over 54,000 in 2022, according to the US Census Bureau. With this population growth, along with the purchase of 13 additional acres for the expansion of Burke Park in early 2022, this is an ideal opportunity to update the existing Master Plan for the Peet’s Hill/Burke Park natural park area. In recognition of the community input that drove the initial Master Plan in 2001, Gallatin Valley Land Trust conducted an online survey that was available to the public from mid-September through October 31st, 2022 to evaluate the current usage of the park, what improvements the community desires in the new acquired parcels, and to direct this master plan update. A total of 546 responses to survey were recorded. The results of this survey are attached to this document.

As was reflected in the original plan, the survey found that a majority of people are accessing Burke Park for the: 1) Views of the surrounding lands; 2) Native plants/wildflowers and; 3) Connectivity to other trails. In addition, three areas of primary concern were identified: 1) Park Access; 2) Land & Native Species Preservation and; 3) Trails & Amenities.
**Park Access**

Since the last update to the Master Plan, parking has been established at the north end of Peet’s Hill in a dedicated trailhead parking lot and additional parking is now available a short distant to the north at the Bozeman Public Library, which is now connected to Peet’s Hill via both Lindley Park and the Gallagator Trail. A limited amount of additional parking is also now available at the south end of Burke Park at a small parking lot located on the Harrison Street Right of Way, which includes restroom facilities, four (4) parking spaces and one (1) handicapped parking space. Two (2) additional handicapped parking spaces are available at Aspen Pointe, providing access to the mid-section of Burke Park.

Responses to the survey showed that nearly 40% of respondents used the park either daily (74) or more than once a week (148). Another 22% (122) use the park weekly. When accessing the park, 40% access the park using an automobile, 20% by bicycle and nearly 40% by foot. In a follow up question, only 11% of respondents rated improved/expanded parking as a very important improvement for the park. 37% rated improved/expanded parking as moderately important and over 50% did not view improved/expanded parking as important. These results suggest that parking for Burke Park remains sufficient for the community overall and is NOT seen as a priority. Based on the desire for adding trails built for people with limited mobility within the park (highlighted in the Trails & Amenities section below), it is recommended to consider adding additional accessible spaces at the Harrison St parking lot to better serve those with limited mobility. With the addition of these parking spaces, the trails leading from the Harrison St parking lot to the gathering/overlook intersection should be realigned and/or upgraded. Currently the grades are steep and/or the surface is not up to all abilities/UA standards.

**Land & Native Species Preservation**

Respondents to the survey placed a high value on the natural environment of the park, including the large amount of native vegetation and the viewshed over a majority of the Gallatin Valley. Any improvements that occur within or adjacent to the park should consider these highly valued features of the park. Improvements should strive to retain as much native vegetation as possible and any vertical development should be low profile so as to not obstruct the viewshed. With the increased numbers of users, it is recommended that a weed management plan be implemented across the park as an additional method of protecting native vegetation. While it is acknowledged that the increase in users means a correlating increase in dogs, the survey responses were evenly distributed between keeping the park as off leash vs. instituting an on-leash policy. It is recommended that Burke Park remain as an off-leash property, however, it is recommended that the newly acquired parcels to the south retain their on-leash designation in an effort to better protect the natural setting, vegetation, and wildlife that still inhabit these acres. Additionally, Respondents, by only a small margin, prefer to have some delineation between leash free and on-leash areas of the park. The delineation between on leash/off lease areas should be clearly marked. To accomplish a clear delineation, it is recommended shifting the current leash boundary slightly north of its current location at the property line by approximately 150ft so that it includes the proposed range finder (outlined in Amenities) and the Harrison Street parking lot.
Trails and Amenities

Overall, respondents to the survey were in strong support of better maintenance on the existing trails, expanded trails in the park, and the addition of two overlooks and an overlook with range finder/seating area. As connectivity to other trails is an important use of Burke Park, these new trails would help alleviate the pressure on the existing trails while also providing additional connections outside of Burke Park. Additional trail connections and location of amenities are included in the maps below.

Amenities proposed during the campaign to purchase the additional parcels in fall of 2021 included two overlooks and a range finder at the top of Burke Park (labeled as 1 on the above map) and two overlooks (labeled as 2 and 3). A proposed shift of off-leash/on-leash delineation is also recommended (labeled 4).

The proposed range finder would be a site from which users can use visual aids to assist in identifying the surrounding mountain ranges, while also providing seating to take in the views. As previously mentioned in Park Access, the trails leading from the Harrison St parking lot to the gathering/overlook intersection should be realigned and/or upgraded. Currently the grades are steep and/or the surface is not up to all abilities/UA standards.

Survey respondents were in strong support of overlook #2, as labeled on the map above, and were on slightly less supportive of overlook #3. Overlook #2 would be a fully accessible location to allow for community members with limited mobility to access it via the Harrison Street trailhead and parking area. The trail to overlook #2 should be a Class IIA trail, per City of Bozeman PROST trail specifications. Topography of the area does not lend to making overlook #3 fully accessible, but efforts will be made to create the most accessible trail possible such as a Class IIB trail.

A shift of off-leash/on-leash delineation will shift the current delineation that is located on the boundary between the existing Peets Hill parcels and the expansion parcels, marked by jackleg fencing. The boundary would shift approximately 150 feet to the north, marked by the numeral 4 on the map.
This shift would place the proposed range finder as well as the Harrison parking within the on-leash area, where a combination of moving vehicles and a substantial trail intersection creates multiple hazards for off-leash dogs. As this shift would cut of a section of trail that makes a loop, it is recommended that a new trail connection be made within the off leash area to reconnect the loop for those walking off-leash dogs. The section of the loop that will be within the on-leash area should be revegetated and returned to a natural state.

Maintenance of the natural surface single track trail that parallels the main gravel path on the ridge top was strongly supported. While this trail has been used for decades, it is not an officially recognized trail in the master plan. As it helps alleviate pressure and conflict between users on the main trail, it is recommended that the trail be officially recognized in this update as a Class III natural surface trail, allowing for official maintenance by the City Parks department. The survey did also ask if the community was in support of upgrading this trail to 5-foot-wide gravel path, however only moderate support of this proposal was received. Upgrading to a gravel trail should be kept open as an option if it is determined that a natural surface trail cannot be successfully maintained. The new expansion also hosts the existing Simkins Spur trail, which was located within a City trail easement as it crossed private property. Now that the City is the owner of the property, the trail can be more frequently maintained with improvements to drainage and trail tread as part of a more robust City trail maintenance program.

Two trail additions were proposed in the survey, one connecting across the newly acquired parcels while connecting two overlooks and a second trail across the mid slope between Church Street and the ridge top.

Survey results are strongly supportive of the proposed trail on newly acquired parcels, which would run from the top of the Simkins Spur, connecting two overlooks and then descending to the Church Street right of way. This trail is depicted as the green trail on the map. This trail would be within the proposed on-leash area of the park to protect the surrounding native vegetation and wildlife. The trail would provide a secondary connection from the proposed Rangefinder/seating down to Chruch Street, helping relieve pressure from the existing Simkins Spur of the park. As outlined in the description of the overlooks, this trail would be a Class IIA trail to overlook #2 and would be a Class IIB or Class III to reach overlook #3 and down to the connection with the Simpkins Spur.

The survey also strongly supports the addition of a Class III trail that runs mid-slope above Church Street and below the ridge, providing the opportunity to create a loop system within Burke Park. This trail connection would also provide opportunities for additional community connections highlighted in the master plan, such as the Lincoln Street right-of-way, Ice Pond Road, Martel site, and to future Church Street improvements. This connection would also provide the opportunity for future parking or public transit stops along Church Street as part of future improvements to the corridor. These potential connections will join Burke Park to Langhor, the Gallagator, MSU via trails, and city designated bike routes and quiet streets. Through the addition of more connections, pressure can be relieved from the Chris Boyd Trail and provide direct access to the park without the need for a vehicle, and reduce the need for future vehicle parking.

**Future Considerations**

In addition to the above improvements, Burke Park may require future investment in both the natural and the human-built resources in the park. Several problematic trail design elements have
caused excessive erosion over time and with increased use. Social trails like the one that has formed on the “sledding hill” are increasing in width and are unsustainable. In addition, the primary entrance to Burke Park, where the parking lot is located, has some significant opportunities for improvement to both the natural and human built environment. With increased use, especially by off-leash dogs, the native plants are being trampled. Implementing a management plan for Burke Park, including rotating “recovery zones,” could aid in the protection and re-establishment of the incredible plant biodiversity documented at the park when the original Master Plan was written over twenty years ago.

**Donor Recognition Plan**

All donors to the GVLT 2010 Save Peets Hill fundraising campaign who gave $10,000 and above will be acknowledged with a group recognition feature within the planned improvements. Specific features will recognize two donations of $50,000, one donation of $100,000 and one donation of $150,000.
BURKE PARK EXPANSION

PLAN KEY NOTES:
1. GATHERING AREA & LOOKOUT
2. LOOKOUT
3. MAIN PARK SIGN
4. RECLAMATION AREA
5. BOULDER SEATING
6. PARKING
7. CHRIS BOYD TRAIL
8. MOUNTAIN RANGE VIEW FINDER & BOULDER BENCH
9. MEDICINE WHEEL
10. ENLARGED RENDERING EXTENTS
11. PROTECTED FOX DEN

- PARKING
- CHAISE LOUNGE
- GATHERING AREA
- LOOKOUT
- MAIN PARK SIGN
- RECLAMATION AREA
- BOULDER SEATING
- TEE BOX
- MOUNTAIN RANGE VIEW FINDER
- BOULDER BENCH
- MEDICINE WHEEL
- ENLARGED RENDERING EXTENTS
- PROTECTED FOX DEN

S. CHURCH AVE.

Bursa Designs
Parks & Recreation
BURKE PARK
MASTER PLAN
BOZEMAN, MONTANA

PREPARED FOR:
BOZEMAN RECREATION AND PARK ADVISORY BOARD

BY:
DICK POHL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

February, 2001

amended: February 19, 2001

Revised and amended by
Recreation and Park Advisory Board Subcommittee
Weed maintenance section (p. 19) prepared in consultation with
Dr. Bruce Maxwell, MSU Weed Ecologist

April, 2003
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Burke Park

History

The Highland Ridge area of Bozeman was first platted as Electric Heights Addition in 1892 in an attempt to make the City of Bozeman look considerably larger on paper than it was in reality. The addition included 614 lots of about 300 square feet each with streets and alleys. It was hoped that the “large” city of Bozeman would attract a major state institution such as the state capital building or a state prison. To the disappointment of the city leaders, Bozeman was instead given the institution of Montana State College. Although no actual construction took place on the ridge, the mapping and platting of the addition created many streets, lots and alleys which could never be built due to the extremely steep terrain. This street system is still part of the platted public lands today, and Burke Park is criss-crossed with many dedicated streets and rights-of-way.

The ridge and surrounding area have been used for many different purposes over the years. The cemetery began as a five acre donation to the city by William Blackmore in 1872 when he and his wife were vacationing in the area from England. His wife, Mary, died suddenly and was the first to be buried in what is now Sunset Hills Cemetery. The site of Lindley Park was once the city garbage dump, later to become Bozeman’s premier park. Near the cemetery lands was Bozeman’s first golf course and country club. Today the log clubhouse is the Lindley Center, and the street running past it is still named Golf Way. In 1938, a couple of boys were digging in the hillside when they uncovered some human bones which were thought to be those of an Indian woman. There was a lighted ski jump along the west flank of the ridge near Lindley park from which many of Bozeman’s Nordic skiers learned to jump. In the 1950s a local man whose home was built up against the hillside ran a small steam engine train on tracks which he retrieved from an old mining camp. It went along the abandoned drainage ditch on the hillside where he gave the neighborhood children rides.

The site of Burke Park was once owned by Earl Peet, whose family lived on the hill where they operated a dairy. The cow barn was uphill from some of the Bozeman water supply, and though a connection was never proven, a local outbreak of typhoid fever ended the dairy operation. Earl Peet offered this parcel of land to the city free of charge in 1946, but the city turned him down. The north end of the tract is still known locally as Peet’s Hill and has been a popular sledding hill for decades. The Burke family bought the tract in 1947 and used it as horse pasture, but eventually, despite its private ownership, the land was used for hiking, running, mountain biking and dog exercising.

- 1 -
This forty acre parcel along the west flank of Highland Ridge became a city park in 1993 after several years of planning and negotiating. Many individuals and groups were involved as early as 1990 in negotiations for this property including U.S. Senator Conrad Burns, U.S. Representative Pat Williams, Gallatin National Forest, City Manager Jim Wysocki, Bozeman mayors Tim Swanson and Bob Hawks, and the Burke family. The city brought the Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLT) into the negotiations after the talks broke down over disagreements about price and eventual land use. It was primarily due to the perseverance of GVLT’s director Chris Boyd that the negotiations were successful in April, 1993. Since private developers had been offering several times the appraised value for the land, the Burkes are to be commended for putting the community’s well-being before this significant financial incentive. Burke Park was dedicated as a Bozeman city park on August 8, 1993.

The property was purchased by the city from the Burke family for the top appraisal price of $235,000. The state allocated $50,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the city matched that from the park land trust fund and the remaining $135,000 came from the general fund. Under the agreement, the Burkes retained two one-acre parcels at the ridge crest as future home-sites, but building permits will not be issued until city streets and utilities become available to the lots. In the meantime, the city is leasing them.

Edmund Burke Sr. came to Montana with his family in 1878 and settled near Salesville, known today as Gallatin Gateway. He attended Montana State College (MSC) where he ultimately taught and became head of the Chemistry Department. He was elected mayor of Bozeman from 1924 to 1927. Edmund Burke Jr., born in Bozeman in 1909, attended both Montana State College and the University of Montana, then opened his law practice in Bozeman. He was Gallatin County Attorney for two years, served in the Office of Naval Intelligence during WWII, and served a term in the State Legislature after the war. When he retired from the Navy in 1963, he left Bozeman for Oahu, Hawaii. Edmund Burke III, also an attorney in Oahu, and his brother Tom are the current owners of the two one-acre lots on the top of the ridge.

Since its dedication as a park in 1993, numerous trails have been improved, primarily through the efforts of Gallatin Valley Land Trust. Also heavily involved in trail construction and revegetation were the City of Bozeman, Montana Conservation Corps, the Bozeman Rotary Club, volunteers from local grade schools and Bozeman Senior High School, MSU college students, and community residents who formed the volunteer group “Friends of Peet’s Hill Trail”. The main ridge-top trail was improved through the mid-nineties. Wortman Spur Trail, which connects the ridge to South Church Street, was added in the late nineties. The Highland Ridge Trail and the Simkins Spur Trail which branch off the south end of the Boyd Trail were added later.

The popular main ridge-top trail was named in remembrance of Chris Boyd after his death in 1998. Benches, plaques and additional plantings were also installed in his memory. A strong proponent of trails, Boyd was the catalyst for GVLT’s trail network, raising funds, securing easements, and helping to build more than fourteen miles of local trails.

Burke Park is key to the trail system “Main Street to the Mountains” and is a treasured wildland within the city from which spectacular views are enjoyed. Since the dedication of Burke Park in August 1993, the public has come to use it heavily throughout all seasons. It is almost
impossible to visit the site without seeing other people enjoying the paths and views.

The north end of the park, referred to as Peet's Hill, is now an even more popular sledding hill with recent safety improvements by the City Parks Division such as a berm at the base to prevent sleds from running out into South Church Street or into the Mill Ditch. The old shack at the bottom has been repaired, painted, and improved as a warming hut.

Peet's Hill, the existing parking lot, and the trail network north of it are on land previously owned by CMC Heartland Partners (CMC), which took over the Milwaukee R.R after it declared bankruptcy. This land was purchased by the City on October 1, 2001, for $2,150,000 as a future site for the Bozeman Public Library.

In November of 1997 Burke Park was established as a leash-free zone making it exempt from the newly adopted leash law which would fine owners of unleashed dogs a minimum of $50. Considerable debate was aired regarding the leash-free zone and emotions are still strong on each side of the issue.

Another controversial issue was the fencing of the adjacent Sunset Hills Cemetery land. For years, the Cemetery Board had been upset with the public access for dog walkers, runners and others through the cemetery lands. In May, 1997, the Cemetery Board adopted a resolution to surround the entire cemetery with a six-foot fence, replacing portions of a four-foot fence and limiting access to just two entry ways: one at Buttonwood Avenue to the north and a new entrance on Ellis Street to the south. After considerable debate, the fence was improved. Later it was planted with a lilac hedge for screening and a visual separation of the two land uses. Today there is a pedestrian gate connecting the cemetery to the north end of Burke Park which is actually an access gate for a fiber-optics line.

In November, 1999, plans for the construction of the new Hillcrest Retirement Center east of the park caused controversy because of the proximity of the buildings to the park. The City Commission denied a variance request that would have allowed a height variation for the closest building. This resulted in some minor building re-design for emergency exit and baseline measurements.

Perhaps the most heated controversy has been over the establishment of parking facilities for Burke Park. Plans for a parking lot were part of a compromise between the Sunset Hills Cemetery, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, and city representatives back in 1996. The plans called for a "small parking lot" in the old Ida Street right-of-way to replace parking in the cemetery, which had provided seniors and the handicapped access to Burke Park. The lot would have been accessed from the newly constructed gravel road on the Harrison Street right-of-way which comes in from the rear parking area of Bozeman Deaconess Hospital. It was recommended by the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board and the Cemetery Board that the road be locked at night as well as during the winter and that the parking lot be designated for handicapped use only. Proponents wanted ridge-top vehicular access for elderly and disabled park users. Others argued that an Ida Street parking lot would open the area up to too many people who would destroy the essence of the wildland park and would interfere with already established cross-county ski trails. The issue was deadlocked in a City Commission vote in July 1999. Some progress has been made since (see Existing Conditions, p.6), but the issue remains controversial.
Burke Park

Existing Conditions
(map on page 7)

Burke Park is a 40 acre irregular tract bounded on the long west side by South Church Avenue and private residential lots. The Sunset Hills Cemetery and Bozeman Deaconess Health Services property which includes Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest Retirement Community is on the long east side. The east boundary of the park includes the 60’ wide Ida Street right-of-way which is now abandoned and is included as park land. There is a twelve-foot-wide recreational easement on the east side of the Ida Street right-of-way along the Bozeman Deaconess Health Services property. To the north is undeveloped property owned by the city, and to the south is a residential subdivision. A spur gravel road accesses the site from the east between the cemetery and the Bozeman Deaconess Health Services land on the 60’ wide Harrison Street right-of-way.

The boundary between the Park and the Hospital lands on the east is unfenced, as is much of the steep west boundary. The north, the south, and part of the west are variously fenced with wooden rails or barbed wire, while the cemetery land has a 6’ tall chain link fence planted with a common lilac hedge on the park side.

Burke Park has widely varying terrain. The ridge top slopes down from south to north at between 2 and 6%, but along the west-facing slope most of the land is steeper than 25% with some greater than 50%. The Peet’s Hill sledding runs are 15-30%, while there is one segment above Church Street which is cliff-like and approaches 100%. There are faint remnants of an old irrigation ditch running the length of the property near the base of the west-facing slope.

A very short segment of Sourdough Creek enters, then quickly exits, the property at the steep west boundary along Church Street. Mill Ditch, a seasonal diversion irrigation ditch off Sourdough Creek, crosses the northwest corner of the property.

Since the 40 acre tract has been used as pasture but never tilled or developed, it is largely naturalized with native grasses, forbs and woody plants. Trees and shrubs occur occasionally in protected areas and where snowdrifts provide adequate moisture. They include limber pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, Douglas fir, common juniper, common chokecherry, western serviceberry, red-twig dogwood, common snowberry, and woods rose. Big sagebrush and silver sage are commonly found on the ridge top and on the drier west-facing slope along with grasses such as needle-and-thread grass, tall fescue, crested wheatgrass and several other wheatgrasses. There is an excellent distribution and diversity of native wildflowers on the site. A species list of 217 vascular plants was inventoried by MSU biologist Matt Lavin in 1996. (See pp.26 & 27.) GVLT has produced a pamphlet which lists the wildflowers common to the site. It is available from a distribution box located at the northwest corner of the park just off the parking lot. Introduced woody plant species abound, such as common caragana which is rife near the cemetery and common lilac which was planted in a hedge around the cemetery. Undesirable weed species such as spotted knapweed (Centaurea maculosa), Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense), whitetop I (Cardaria draba), and common tansy (Tanacetum vulgare) occur in certain
locations.

Views are outstanding from the ridge. The west view displays the distant Tobacco Root Mountains and the Spanish Peaks with the Montana State University campus in the foreground. To the north, one looks over Bozeman’s downtown and the Story Hills to the ‘M’ and the Bridger Mountains. To the east, the Bozeman Pass along the Bridger Range is prominent, while Mount Ellis and the Hyalite Peaks stand boldly to the south. Views to the older parts of the cemetery and Lindley Park to the northeast offer a forest effect with dense mature trees. Many residents enjoy the park for its spectacular mountain views, its welcome quiet, and its sunset vistas.

Several things detract from these views: the City of Bozeman water storage tank on the ridge to the southeast, the overhead power transmission lines which follow the south boundary, and the new Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest Retirement Facility near the east property line. The northwest four-story Hillcrest building at its closest point is about 170 feet from the park property line. A parking lot and driveway located southwest of the complex have been landscaped and screened with plantings. The proximity of newer houses to the south also detracts from the natural qualities of the site.

A well-established network of trails is heavily used by recreationists and commuters. The main trail, which runs the length of the ridge, is a five-foot wide bed of compacted gravel and fines. It is periodically marked with bollards indicating Chris Boyd Trail, built by Gallatin Valley Land Trust and Montana Conservation Corps, maintained by Bozeman Senior High School Student Council in honor of Sean Miles and Katie Easton. A developed spur trail located about halfway along the Boyd Trail takes you from the ridge down to South Church Avenue. It has one sharp switchback on its descent. Named the Wortman Spur Trail, it was built by MSU Student Volunteers and Montana Conservation Corps and adopted by Barrel Mountaineering. At the south end of the Boyd Trail you have a choice of heading farther south on the Simkins Spur Trail which also angles down to South Church Avenue, or going east on the Highland Ridge Trail which connects with several of the other trails in the Main Street to Mountains system. Both of these trails were built by Gallatin Valley Land Trust. There are many other undeveloped trails criss-crossing the ridge top and leading to favorite view destinations. None of these are constructed trails and several are deeply rutted into the soil.

Several improvements have been made along the trails. Distributed at favorite overlooks are eight benches made of wooden slats, eight feet in length on pedestal mounts. Most are dedicated in memory of Chris Boyd, but several memorialize other Bozeman citizens. Three garbage receptacles are located near the north end of the park. Wooden bollards about four feet tall and ten inches square indicate the various trail connections. At the base of Peet’s Hill, an old coal shed has been converted into a warming hut for sledders. A decorative rail fence defines the north property line.

To the north lies a largely undeveloped property previously owned by CMC Heartland and recently purchased by the City. This 14.3 acre parcel, some of it contaminated with asbestos, runs north from Burke Park to Main Street and borders the west edge of Lindley Park. It includes the abandoned depot building, other sheds and out-buildings, and the Mill Ditch diversion creek. Public ownership of this parcel of land will allow the Gallagator Trail and the Chris Boyd Trail to connect to Main Street, thus making “Mainstreet to the Mountains” a reality.
It will also clarify the now vague western edge of Lindley Park, and should solve some of the critical parking issues for both Burke Park and Bogert Park. (See Parking and Handicapped Access, p.16.)

Many people drive to Burke Park, but currently, the only parking area that can accommodate more than three or four cars is at the north boundary of the park at the intersection of South Church Avenue and East Story Street, on what is now City property. It is an unimproved cinder lot approximately 25’ x 120’ partially located on the Story Street right-of-way but mostly on the newly acquired City property to the north. Pedestrian access to the park leads across the Mill Ditch, a seasonal diversion from Sourdough Creek, which is now tubed with a culvert for the pathway crossing into the park.

People also park at unofficial, unpaved pull-outs on private land along South Church, at the stub end of Kenyon Avenue at the South end of the park, and at the stub end of the Harrison Street right-of-way (ROW). A 15-foot wide gravel road on the 60’ wide Harrison Street ROW approaches the ridge top from the east just off the Bozeman Deaconess Hospital’s western-most parking lot. A proposed parking lot at the west end of this road adjacent to Burke Park stimulated considerable debate and resulted in a stalemate. Currently the road dead-ends here but provides cemetery service access. In past years, the open Harrison St. gate has also provided unofficial handicapped access to the Park during the summer.

Due largely to the efforts of Gary Vodehnal of the GVLT, Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest has agreed to devote two handicapped parking spots in its main lot for Park users, on a trial basis. These are located south of Hillcrest’s main building, near a newly built spur trail which winds westward through a small grove to the main Burke Park trail. The new trail is about 150 yards long and quite level; with no slope greater than 5%, it meets federal ADA guidelines. There is a bench along an access trail perhaps another 50 yards northwest of the trail junction.

Appropriate signs and striping now mark the new parking spots, which are designated for Burke Park users. Hillcrest agreed to try this arrangement through the summer of 2002, after which it will review how well the plan is working. If satisfied, they plan to designate the spots in perpetuity.
Burke Park

Community Input

Several meetings have been held to gather public input for the Burke Park Master Plan. The most comprehensive was on September 27, 2000 at the Lindley Center. Thirty-four people signed in on the attendance sheets which were circulated and thirty-five filled out comment cards. To open the meeting, consultant Dick Pohl reviewed the history of the park as well as particulars of the existing conditions. Participants then were asked to respond on the comment cards with three things that make them feel good about the park and three issues of concern about the park. When this was completed, the participants were divided into five discussion groups and were asked to share their dreams, goals and issues within their group. Issues of concern from each group were then shared with all participants and listed on newsprint. Finally a show of hands resulted in the following prioritized groupings (there was no prioritization established within each grouping):

Categories in which all of the participants felt the issue was very important:
  • viewseshed encroachment (minimize nearby development)
  • de facto trails on private land (secure adjacent land for future)
  • undeveloped, open land (protect this)
  • full access for all groups with minimal regulations (non-motorized uses)
  • trail proliferation (develop a trail master plan)
  • purchase of CMC and other private land
  • vehicle encroachment (minimize visibility; restrict access)

Categories in which 3/4 of the participants felt the issue was very important:
  • control of noxious weeds
  • maintenance of wildlife corridors
  • park hours after dark

Categories in which 1/2 of the participants felt the issue was very important:
  • too many unauthorized trails
  • potential overuse without additional new trail connections
  • vehicular parking (official lot(s) needed)
  • winter skiing (maintain access and routes)

Categories in which 1/4 of the participants felt the issue was very important:
  • control of dog waste

Categories in which 1/4 of the participants felt the issue was very important:
  • bike speed control
  • increased use due to increased development

Categories in which a small number or no participants felt the issue was very important:
  • public safety and need for patrol/enforcement
- sledding conflict with trail users
- conflicts with adjacent cemetery lands and potential of law suits
- providing waste receptacles for pet owners

Tabulations from the individual comment cards follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Frequency</th>
<th>Items of Concern</th>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>trail management / maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>over-development / view loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>building encroachment</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>dog enforcement (feces problem)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>parking location</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>dog restrictions</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>adjacent private land purchase</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>natural features loss</td>
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<tr>
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<td>bicycle conflicts</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>policing</td>
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<td>weed control</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>rules and regulations</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ski trail loss</td>
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<td>cemetery issues</td>
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<td>organized activities</td>
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<td>sledding dangers</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>dogs off leash</td>
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<td>winter use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>diversity of uses and users</td>
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A few written comments were received after the public meeting. Responses included concerns about the safety of runners and the frequency of dog conflicts, parking lot location and size, handicapped and elderly access, short-cut trails proliferation, and natural quality protection.
Also received were verifications of two petitions which had been previously circulated. One with over 500 signatures supported a five-car lot at the end of the Harrison (ROW) road. The other, which had 486 signatures, promoted building setbacks and requested that the Hillcrest Retirement Community project move their buildings farther back from the park property. This second petition was submitted too late to influence the planning process.

In a private meeting, Gary Vodehnaal from the Gallatin Valley Land Trust outlined ideas about acquiring land for trail connections and park expansion. Issues of concern included purchase of private land, with highest priority going to the two Burke lots on the ridge at the south end of the park. Additionally, the open, private property south of the park would provide ideal connections to better complete the trail network. Connections to the east could be facilitated by the Harrison ROW trail which could have the potential of connecting to a proposed Deaconess Gulch trail to the east of the hospital, across Highland. These possibilities are explored in greater detail in the next section.

In the winter of 2002, a subcommittee of the Recreation and Parks Advisor Board was formed to revise and update the tabled master plan. (In particular, changes needed to be made to the many references to CMC land, which had been acquired by the City after the first draft of the plan was written.) Because so much time had passed, the Board held another public meeting, on July 15, 2002, to ensure that the revised plan was responsive to public opinions. Twenty-nine people signed in at this meeting. To provide a working context, Anne Banks reviewed background information about the park itself, and Kate Gardner provided an overview of the changes made by the sub-committee and the issues still outstanding.

Terry Baldus, who facilitated the public part of the meeting, started by asking participants to propose topics for discussion, which were taken up in turn. Focus remained on soliciting ideas, though Board members answered a number of questions and volunteered information. Comments fell into several main categories: trails, dogs, aesthetics, and parking.

**Trails:** Several people expressed interest in a north/south trail along the South Church right-of-way, especially between Peet's Hill and the Wortman Spur Trail, but most did not endorse the major work that would be necessary to improve the unofficial, user-created lower loop path. (This loop is discussed on p.15. Unfortunately, the South Church ROW is probably too narrow to accommodate a trail.) The problem with braided trails and with rutted trails paralleling the Chris Boyd trail was addressed. A number of people said that there are increasing conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians; the Simkins and Wortman spur trails, in particular, were felt to be too rutted and narrow to accommodate both high-speed cyclists and pedestrians. Bicycles on these two trails also cause erosion and deep ruts. Various solutions were proposed, including banning bicycles from these trails (would this be enforceable?), putting up "SLOW" signs at the ridge-top (would these be stolen?), eliminating the ruts (would this just encourage use?).

**Dogs:** This discussion focused almost exclusively on dog feces. While some contended that there is a real problem (for noses as well as shoes), others disagreed. Again, a number of solutions were proposed: composting bins for dog waste, more or different parks where dogs can run free, money from an annual licensing fee to help solve problem, research on how other communities have handled this problem (one Colorado city has a one-acre fenced area for dogs, with owners responsible for clean-up, though bags and cans are supplied.) The GVLT representatives said they would help with education (signs) for both bicycle and dog issues.
Aesthetics: Participants expressed appreciation for Burke Park’s flowers, benches, quiet, darkness (absence of light pollution), and bird habitat. Many stressed the importance of maintaining and protecting these qualities as areas near the park are developed. The topic that received most time and attention was weeds, and a number of people stressed that weed infestations threaten native plants and detract from the park’s environment.

Parking: Once it was ascertained that the new master plan calls for an improved parking lot on the former CMC land at the base of Peet’s Hill, the discussion was confined to the issue of handicapped parking. The key question here was whether to build a small lot at the end of the Harrison Street ROW for disabled users, or to close Harrison now that handicapped parking is available at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest and informally at the end of Kenyon Drive, at the south end of the park. (This issue is discussed in detail on pp.17-19.) When one participant asked what Harrison Street access provided that Hillcrest did not, the answer was first, that Harrison gives access to the most level part of the park, while even the gentle slope at Hillcrest is too great for some; and second, that many people with disabilities have dogs, which they can let run from Harrison, but not elsewhere. Others pointed out that a person in a car probably cannot effectively keep dogs under voice command. Some were concerned about the aesthetic impact of a lot at the end of Harrison Street; others countered that berms and plantings would effectively screen any cars from sight. The discussion was wide-ranging and extensive; while no formal conclusions were reached, the majority of participants spoke against establishing another parking lot.
Burke Park

Future Concerns for Neighboring Land

The use of land in the Burke Park neighborhood will have a significant impact on views, trails, parking, and general ambience in the park itself. A fair amount of land to the east and south of the Park is currently regarded and used almost as if it were actually part of the park, and its future use will certainly affect the park. Certain plots are of particular concern. These include several plots to the south (the Burke family lots at the south end of the park, the variously owned land at the stub end of Kenyon Drive, and the undeveloped parcel beyond the south boundary), private holdings on the west side of Church Street, the Cupola land to the north (just across Main Street from Lindley Park), and the undeveloped cemetery and Deaconess lands to the east of the Park. These will be discussed in turn.

The Burke lots lie within the park boundaries, and as they occupy the highest point in the park, they are a favorite site for viewing the city below, sunsets beyond, and mountains in the distance. Development there would be visible from practically every point within the park, and would seriously damage the experience of nature that the park now offers.

Purchasing the undeveloped plots at the end of Kenyon Drive may well be beyond the means of the city, but were it possible to acquire them, they would provide a valuable buffer between the park and nearby houses.

Acquiring portions of the undeveloped property to the south would provide land for both open space and trails. Currently, the Simkins spur trail winds southwest across some of this land, down the hill to Church Street (which it parallels for about a quarter of a mile) to Kagy. Along the half mile between where the Simkins and the Worman spur trails meet Church, at least two spots on private land are used as informal parking lots. If it were possible to develop the northern lot and to acquire the necessary land, a trail could perhaps be built connecting it to the Simkins spur trail farther south. (See map, p. 24.) This trail might also serve as a connector for new trails along Bozeman Creek or through as yet undeveloped land west of Church Street.

As this land west of Church is developed, opportunities will arise to negotiate trail easements and perhaps to construct a trail that might eventually connect Langohr Gardens and the Gallagator Linear Park with the Burke Park trail system. Such a trail would ideally end across from the informal parking lot on South Church, mentioned above. Owners of some of this land have expressed interest in such a trail. Another trail providing access to the park for residents to its west could perhaps be built along the north side of the Martel property, if it were possible to acquire an easement there. This business generously allows bicyclists and pedestrians to use its private bridge over Bozeman Creek and the private road which connects to the east stub end of Garfield Street. However, people using this route must pass through the Martel business area (the lay-down yard) and then go either north or south along Church, a winding street with very narrow shoulders, to reach a path into the park itself. A trail north of the Garfield connection might be preferable to both its users and the business. All planning for new trails will need to be sensitive to the needs and wishes of a number of land owners in the area, who are currently in the
process of working with the City to plan future development along South Church.

The largely undeveloped thirteen-acre plot of land north of Main known as the Cupola land, together with the state land east of it, could provide a natural extension of Lindley and Burke parks. Appropriate and timely agreements about trail easements with the owner could make possible the extension of trails from Burke and Lindley Parks north of Main towards Story Hill and the Bridger Mountains beyond, thus helping to attain the goal of a trail network reaching from Main Street to the Mountains. An underpass below Main Street connecting the Cupola land to Burke and Lindley park would eliminate otherwise inevitable conflicts between pedestrians and cars.

The fields on Deaconess land between the park’s eastern boundary and Highland Boulevard serve a number of important functions for the park proper. During the winter, they provide the space for an extensive set of groomed cross-country ski trails. All year round, they serve as an important buffer between the quiet, peace, and nature of Burke Park, and the more urban world beyond its borders. As long as those fields are undeveloped, the views of the Bridger Mountains to the northwest are largely unobstructed. Any development of these lands would have a profound impact on the park.

At the public meeting on September 27, 2000 which was the basis of much community input for this master plan (see p. 8), Connie Staudohar of the Sunset Hills Cemetery Advisory Board shared the Board’s long-term goals. A twenty-five foot buffer zone was proposed for the perimeter of the cemetery, with fencing and lilac hedging. The fence and hedge have been put in, but along the Harrison Street ROW, there is no buffer. The cemetery board does not favor even a small lot off the Harrison ROW unless no alternative is found and does not want this road to provide access to the cemetery. They support a trail along the Harrison ROW. Current plans call for relocating the main entrance to the cemetery from Main Street to Highland, slightly north of Ellis Street where the southernmost developed road in the cemetery off Golf Drive currently exists. This new entrance would cut the established ski loop from the Highland Boulevard area between the lower cemetery fields near Highland and Lindley Center and the upper fields adjacent to Burke Park. This intersection would create conflicts between skiers crossing the road and equipment and cars using it, and might effectively limit the land available to skiing.

Deaconess Hospital has begun constructing a new building directly north of its current ones, but it has not made firm plans for the land which lies both north and south of Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest. The land to the south may be used for a full-care nursing home, while the area directly to the east, where the original buildings lay, may allow for expansion of the current facility. Parking, cottages for independent living, and expansion of the current facility have all been mentioned as possible uses for the meadow to the northeast. Since the ground slopes away from the Burke Park trail itself, low buildings will interfere only minimally with views of the mountains, but they will alter and degrade the otherwise green and natural vista. The City, recognizing the importance of Burke Park and its matchless views, has taken steps to preserve them. As of December, 2002, the commissioners voted to allow the Hospital to construct its new building as planned, but decreed that it may not occupy the fourth or fifth floors until it has negotiated with both City and citizen groups to formulate and implement a plan for its lands which enhances rather than degrades Burke Park.
Burke Park

Master Plan Recommendations
(map on page 24)

The primary goal of this plan is to perpetuate and protect the natural qualities of this unique parcel of park land, while working to accommodate the recreational needs of its many diverse visitors. To this end, little development is recommended; however, management of the land and its trails becomes a major objective. It is clear that Burke Park is prized as a wild-land natural resource within the developed city of Bozeman. It allows people to escape from the confines of city life and to connect quickly with the splendors of the natural world and the spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. It allows residents to take pleasure from non-motorized recreational activities, commune with nature, and relish solitude. Future management should maintain, protect, and enhance these basic values and experiences.

The biggest threat to Burke Park is overuse. It is clear that the burgeoning population of Bozeman is putting increasing pressure on the park. Braided trails, vegetation damaged by bicycles, pedestrians, and dogs all demonstrate the problems caused by overuse. Burke Park cannot be adequately protected in isolation; only the establishment of other, similar parks will take the pressure off this one.

Trail System

Increased and heavy use of the trails threatens the natural qualities of the site. The trail system must flow and connect with other nearby trails and parks so that dispersal of the users is easily accomplished. A larger master plan showing all the future trail connections would be of great help in long-range planning. Trail connections between Burke Park and the following areas should be facilitated: Lindley Park, Bogert Park, Josephine Park, Gallagator Linear Park, the former CMC property, Hyalite View Park and trail, Lindley Center, Ball Field Complex off Highland Blvd., Sunset Hills Cemetery buffer trail, Hillcrest Retirement Complex, and the potential Deaconess Gulch trail system.

Certain trails within Burke Park need attention and improvement. Numerous tributary and braided trails are destroying plant life and creating erosion problems. The narrow ridge-crest trail along the north part of the park receives very heavy use and should be improved to a five-foot-wide gravel fines trail similar to the developed Chris Boyd Trail. Similar improvements have been made in the south part of the park along the ridge crest on the privately owned Burke parcels, giving mobile but disabled users better access to this area. This new trail could become designated as a full access trail for moderately disabled users since it is quite level and provides the highest vantage point in the park for views of the valley. These developments will provide alternative loop opportunities for users and will minimize the erosion and trampling problems so prevalent in these areas. Other lesser-used trails should be rehabilitated and restored to natural vegetation. The combination of a single track trail and the five foot fines trail running parallel is desirable in certain places. However, rehabilitation should be implemented on all trails which seem to serve no purpose and are merely “braided” from other trails. The compacted soils should
be tilled or loosened, and native plants seeded or transplanted in early spring or late fall. We recommend a three-stage process for alerting the public to such changes: First, signs indicating "the healing of old wounds" should be unobtrusively placed along the routes. Second, if these signs are removed or ignored, trails designated for restoration should be blocked with substantial brush, logs, boulders, or wooden rail fences, where these do not endanger cyclists or other users. Finally, when restoration is complete, these obstructions should be removed, as they do not blend in with the natural features of the area.

The CMC property acquired in fall 2001 will allow the Gallagator trail to be extended north to Main St., providing a short but crucial link in the Main Street to the Mountains trail system. Trails on this crucial piece of property will also provide links between Bogert Park, Lindley, Burke, and the new library. The trail extension which would connect to Main Street and Bogert Park should parallel the Mill Ditch to take advantage of the riparian zone, but the natural landscape east of the parking lot would be best left unaltered. This trail should be a five-foot-wide compacted fines mix surface for full access.

An unofficial but well-established trail exists on the park’s western edge, and the city Recreation and Park Advisory Board considered a proposal to widen and improve it as part of a lower loop trail. However, this land is fragile, native plant species abound, and some fairly uncommon birds have been sighted there in recent years. In places, extensive grade work would be required to edge the trail back from a barbed wire fence or from steep and unsafe slopes, and the hillside itself would need a buttressing wall. Such work would have a significant impact on the land, the vegetation, and whatever wildlife remains; soil disturbance, for example, would allow invasive weeds, which already have a foothold here, to spread. We do not recommend improving this social trail at this time.

The second part of the proposed lower loop trail would have run south from the Wortman Spur Trail to the proposed parking lot on South Church. (See map, p.24) At some time in the future, this may make sense—but only after appropriate studies of the land, vegetation, and animal habitat. We do not currently recommend construction of a lower loop trail.

In general, benches in the park should be placed adjacent to authorized trails. Off-trail bench locations encourage off-trail exploration, trampling of vegetation, and erosion. At least two of the existing benches need to be relocated to align with trail access. New benches would be best placed along authorized trails. Only a few benches should be located at any distance from established trails, to allow for private seating, conversation, and viewing. These sites should be carefully evaluated and selected to ensure minimum impact on surrounding vegetation.

Trails on nearby land help provide access to Burke Park and extend the city’s trail network. As mentioned in the section on Future Concerns for Neighboring Land (p.12), it is possible that new connecting trails extending west from the park could be built in the near future. Ideally, they would eventually connect to the Gallagator, providing more variety for walkers and other users. The city would be well advised to pursue negotiations with local landowners to ensure that these trails get built.

Burke Park is well known in Bozeman for its wild flowers, for good reason: the park supports a greater variety, per acre, than Yellowstone, Centennial Valley, the Black Hills, or several other parks. (See graph, p. 26.) Every effort should be made to ensure that any future development,
including trail-building, makes a minimal impact on wildflowers. Consultation with a known expert about location of perennials, for instance, would be a reasonable step. Clearly, the wealth of wildflowers in the park is one of its treasures, which needs to be preserved and protected.

Acquisition of Adjacent Lands
As mentioned in the section on Future Concerns (p.12), several parcels of adjacent land are critical to the future of Burke Park. The most important is the privately held Burke parcel in the south part of the park. These two lots of one acre each occupy the highest vantage point in the park and have become one of the most common destinations for park users. Most people are not aware that this land is not public and that it was set aside for future private homesites. The continuity of the park is dependent on making these out-parcels public. Work on the access trails in the fall of 2001 has made this area more accessible for those who can walk 200 yards but for whom slope is a problem.

The privately owned land at the southwest end of Burke Park (where the Simkins Spur Trail winds) should be considered for purchase or for recreational easement. Parts of this steep and easily eroded land are infested with knapweed and other invasive weeds; public ownership would help protect and restore it. This land is also a prime connection for wildlife habitat along the Bozeman Creek drainage. Near the south boundary of Burke Park are a couple of pull-outs along South Church Street, one of which could perhaps be developed as small parking areas for park and trail access. Acquisition of each of these private holdings would depend on a willing seller and adequate funding.

Purchase of any of the privately owned, undeveloped lots at the end of Kenyon would help create a buffer between the park and housing. Lots on the east would provide a connection to Josephine Park, near the watertower; those on the west would provide direct extension of the park.

Lastly, feelers should be put out to Bozeman Deaconess Foundation as to whether their north meadow could be purchased by the city in order to increase the useable area of Burke Park. This may be an auspicious time for such overtures, as the hospital is currently expanding to the north and has already requested one variance. (See p.13.)

Parking and Handicapped Access
Burke Park is a popular destination for many area residents, many of whom drive to it. Since there is currently no developed parking lot to serve the park, people often park their vehicles in unauthorized and sometimes dangerous locations. The heavily used parking area near the base of Peet’s Hill is poorly organized, as it is on undeveloped land only recently acquired by the city. Until the spring of 2002, there has been no parking facility to accommodate disabled users or elderly people who can’t scale the steep path system from the base of the ridge. The stub end of Kenyon Drive is occasionally used as access for wheelchair-bound park-goers who wish to enjoy the amenities of the ridge top. Another access for the handicapped is Harrison Street, which brings users to within a few feet of the park boundaries at one of the most level places in the park.

Now that the CMC property has been acquired, a parking lot should be developed in the triangular parcel along the old railroad bed, with a single access drive that aligns with Story
Street. The lot could grow with need and could accommodate parking for users of Burke, Bogert, and Lindley Parks. Complete build-out would require removal of the two old coal sheds and installation of fencing along the north where the land is adjacent to residential lots. Since this area is quite flat, minimal grading would be required. This parking facility would provide needed parking for the sledders, runners, and dog owners of Burke Park as well as overflow parking for Bogert Park activities such as band concerts. It would also provide additional parking for events at Lindley such as Sweet Pea Festival. The lot and the rest of this property should be properly landscaped to be compatible with Bogert Park and the residential surroundings.

Safe crossing zones on South Church need to be installed at intersections on both Story Street to connect to the Galligator Trail and on Bogert Lane to connect to Bogert Park. The mid-block pathway crossing south of Story Street is well-established and clearly visible, so we do not recommend closing it at this time. Rather, pedestrian signs on Church Street, both north and south of these intersections, will help alert motorists and protect those crossing these streets.

If the land can be acquired, another parking lot could be developed south of Burke Park along South Church where there are currently two or three level areas with pull-outs. This would provide a dispersal of parking spaces for the area, thereby diluting the impacts of heavy use. The northernmost one would allow for a trail connection to the lower loop trail to the north (if and when this is built) as well as a connector to the Simkins Spur Trail to the south.

A parking facility has long been needed at the ridge top to accommodate handicapped users and elderly. Any such facility should be kept small and should be signed for handicapped and senior citizen use. As already mentioned (p.6), two spaces have been designated for handicapped park users in the new parking lot at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest, and a natural fines trail has been constructed by the GVLT through a newly planted grove to the Chris Boyd Trail. Another possible location for handicapped access would be at the north end of Kenyon Drive where there is a temporary cul-de-sac. As platted, this 60' wide right-of-way extends to the south boundary of the Bozeman Deaconess Health Services property. The final cul-de-sac would be located farther to the north and would provide access to the last two lots on Kenyon Drive, which are currently undeveloped. The end of the cul-de-sac could be designed to accommodate a parking lot for five cars including two van-accessible handicapped stalls. The north and west sides of the lot could be surrounded with berms covered with native plants including a visual barrier of big sage (Artemesia tridentata). From here, the trail would connect to the Highland Ridge Trail and Chris Boyd Trail. Development of this parking lot would allow full access to the highest and most scenic part of the park. If funds are available, the purchase of lot one, block one, Graf's 1st Subdivision (the northwest lot—see map, p.25) would facilitate a much better plan for the end-of-the-road parking lot and would create a much better trail alignment.

There has been much debate over whether the narrow gravel road on the Harrison Street right-of-way should be closed to vehicles. It is currently used by some handicapped persons as access to Burke Park. Proponents of closure argue that a parking lot at the end of this road would be difficult to police, it would be costly for the city to maintain, it brings weeds and vehicular intrusion to the quiet part of the park, and it is so obscure that new users would have a hard time finding it. Furthermore, such a lot either wouldn't provide winter access, or would require plowing, which would both add to maintenance costs and interfere with winter skiing. Since the Sunset Hills Cemetery Board does not project a cemetery need for this road (their plans call for
developing a new entrance off Ellis Road), proponents feel that the Harrison right-of-way is better maintained as a non-motorized trail linkage for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and skiers and should be abandoned for vehicular use.

Opponents to the closure maintain that only Harrison Street adequately serves the needs of some handicapped park-goers. They argue that the two new handicapped parking spaces at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest will be insufficient, that their being on private land makes them unsuitable for public use, that these lots are too far from the park boundary to serve some park users, and that closing Harrison street makes the park inaccessible to these people. Furthermore, while the slopes from the Hillcrest lot and from its connecting trail to other points in the park do meet ADA guidelines, they are still too great for some users, while Harrison Street, in contrast, leads directly to the most level part of the park. Parking at Kenyon does not solve these problems, they argue, as the cul-de-sac is more obscure than the Harrison Street road and is too steep to feel safe in winter to some elderly and handicapped drivers. Closing Harrison Street, opponents feel, places an undue burden on people with handicaps.

Undergirding these disagreements about parking lots are some fundamental issues about values, which is why the parking question has dragged on for over five years. Resolution requires weighing the specialized needs of a minority against the real but intangible value of open space.

After extensive discussion and a second open hearing, the Recreation and Park Board voted on August 8, 2002 on the following four options:

A) Close Harrison permanently.
B) Close Harrison for a season and then re-evaluate.
C) Leave Harrison open for several years and then re-evaluate.
D) Leave Harrison open permanently.

Options A and D received no votes; in an unusually close vote, option B passed with 6 votes over 4 votes for option C.

Here are the details of these two options:

Option B:

1. Keep Harrison access as is (open summer, closed winter) until the Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest lots are established as a permanent easement. (If they aren’t, see #5 below.) In the meantime, a sign should be posted at the east entrance to Harrison, indicating that properly marked parking spaces for disabled users are available at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest.
2. If and when the easement is made permanent, Harrison would be closed to motor vehicles for an evaluative period of one summer season. Signs should be posted to the effect that:
   - the road is still open to bicycles and to pedestrians;
   - handicapped parking is available at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest;
   - the road has been closed for a single season to test the adequacy of those lots in serving the handicapped community;
   - public hearings will be held at the end of the trial season;
   - comments would be welcome at a designated city office.
At the end of the trial season, appropriately publicized public hearings should be held to solicit comment on the closing of Harrison Street to vehicles and the adequacy of the lots at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest, and a decision should be reached either to make that arrangement
permanent, or to build a small lot at the west end of Harrison Street.

4) If it is decided to build a lot, the following stipulations should apply:
   a) It is for use only by people with disabilities.
   b) It is seasonal; it will not be plowed.
   c) It must be small, no more than 2-4 spaces.
   d) To reduce light pollution and interference with skiing, it should not be paved or lighted.
   d) It should be screened with native plantings and perhaps with a berm.
   e) If possible, the east entrance to the road could be fitted with a keyed gate, with a code or
      passes available at City Hall or a designated city office.
   f) A sign to this effect would be posted on the gate.

5) If and when the easement at Aspen Pointe at Hillcrest is not made permanent, the
   Recreation and Park Advisory Board will need to decide on the next step: whether to hold
   public hearings about building a small lot, as in #4 above, or not.

Management and Maintenance: Weeds
Protection and preservation of the distinct and diverse plant community is crucial, but while
eradication of invasive and non-native species may seem ideal, it is in fact impossible. A
realistic plan for weed control must take into account both human and monetary resources as
well as a wide range of issues such as how non-native seeds reach the park, which weeds are the
highest priority to remove, when management may be better than control, and so on. The first
step, therefore, is to draw up a comprehensive, integrative weed-control plan in consultation with
Bozeman’s area experts. Such a plan, which should be based on a city-wide policy, would
include insect, biological, mechanical, and chemical approaches to weed control. The following
section is meant to inform, not to replace, such a document.

Protection and preservation must begin with public awareness of where the unique plant
communities occur within the park, what kinds of disturbance are likely to disrupt them, and
when they are most vulnerable to disruptive activities. In addition, an awareness of non-native
plants and their potential threats to the native plant communities should be developed. This
awareness can be promoted through plant walks led by naturalists and information pamphlets
made available at trailheads.

Maintaining the native plant communities will be most challenged by disturbance from trail
building (authorized and unauthorized), other forms of construction (fences, signs, roads, parking
lots, etc.), human and dog trampling, and invasion by non-native plants. Management of the
non-native plants must be realistic and adaptive. Burke Park is thoroughly invaded by several
good species (Kentucky bluegrass, timothy, crested wheatgrass, smooth brome and to a lesser
extent orchard grass) that probably represent the greatest threat to the native plant communities,
dominated by Idaho fescue, big sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass. However, it would be
unrealistic and perhaps harmful to attempt eradication or even temporary removal of the non-
native grass species in any general way. Similarly, eradication of any of the broadleaf weeds
will be highly unlikely; therefore, it is more realistic to reduce the non-natives than to attempt
total eradication of them. Thus, an adaptive management approach that integrates a range of
practices to manage the invasive non-native plants offers the most promising outcomes.

The first line of defense should be to prevent the spread of already present non-native species
and the introduction of any new ones. Such prevention would entail the following: minimize
further intentional soil disturbance (new trails, roads, parking lots); decrease accidental soil disturbance by eliminating human and dog disturbance using temporary fencing around specified areas at times when identified portions of plant communities are most sensitive; carefully monitor for weed seeds in materials (gravel, wood chips, etc.) brought in to resurface the trails; monitor for weed seeds in native plant seed mixes used to reclaim trails; and remove seed from existing non-natives by mowing and clipping and then removing all collected material from the park. Plant identification experts should be asked to lead citizen groups in performing these preventative practices. To reduce the spread of seeds from non-natives and to provide visual continuity, adjacent land owners can be encouraged to plant native species and to arrange them in a naturalized pattern. In addition, a hedge along the east border of the park adjacent to the small grain fields would decrease herbicide drift from the cultivated area, as this drift may be selecting for non-native grass communities.

Removal of non-native plants is a precarious practice because the “cure” can be worse than the “disease”: the disturbance from removal practices like the digging of plants or killing the plants with herbicides can actually encourage weed invasion. These practices must therefore be invoked with caution and in small areas to test their effectiveness through at least two years of monitoring. An integrated approach, instead, draws on a variety of approaches. In addition, several different practices should be invoked at the same time, so that response to the practices can be compared and the best selected for further use. This is adaptive management. Another key component of adaptive management is the understanding that at least two alternative practices will always be invoked for comparison allowing for variation in response from year-to-year and from site-to-site within the Park. Botanists at MSU may be interested in having students participate in such studies; at least one has already done so.

Specific weed removal projects may include organizing citizen groups to pull weeds like spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, saintjohn’s wort, whitetop, houndstongue and Canada thistle. The county or city weed control personnel or MSU weed science group could be asked to create directed herbicide treatments on the same weeds for comparison with the hand pulling approach. Since the broadleaf selective herbicides that are generally used for control of the common weeds found in Burke Park will also kill many of the native forbs, it will be important to use directed spray, stump treatment, or wick application methods rather than broadcast spray. Repeated cutting of some weed species (e.g. common tansy, common caragana) to the ground level several times during the growing season will reduce their vigor and limit further invasion. Again, citizen groups could be organized for cutting crews as long as they are led by someone who can properly identify the plants.

In areas where plants are removed by digging or pulling, or areas where other disturbance leaves open bare soil, native seed or plants should be immediately planted and monitored for emergence and survival and replanted if necessary. These areas will be very susceptible to weed invasion if not reestablished with natives.

The north corner near the cemetery contains many seedlings and mature plants of the non-native common caragana, Caragana arborescens. Indeed, the entire north end of the park is infested with exotics such as Kentucky bluegrass, smooth brome, crested wheatgrass, timothy, and others. One of the highest priorities, however, is the caragana, which has the potential to encroach on trails and to rapidly displace other species. These should be cut back and as comparison treatment some stumps could be treated with an appropriate herbicide. The lilac perimeter hedge,
although not native, should be retained because it provides an appropriate visual screen from the adjacent highly maintained cemetery property.

It is crucial that the public be informed and involved in all of the activities mentioned above. Plant walks and hikes led by naturalists can help the community learn about the diversity of plant species and wildlife habitat in the park. Organizing volunteers to eradicate the weed pests will generate pride and ownership in the park. A “Friends of Burke Park” volunteer organization, established under the auspices of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, could use a phone tree to contact workers for planned work events. Recruitment of workers and leaders for such a group could be accomplished simply by posting notices in the park.

Management and Maintenance: Other
Approved activities within the park should consist of recreation which does not diminish its scenic and wildland qualities. Preservation of the natural plant and animal community is paramount. Passive forms of recreation such as nature walks, open space enjoyment, and finding solitude should dictate. Other recreational activities such as running, biking, and skiing should also be encouraged but should not intrude on the more passive forms. These more active aspects are only appropriate on the wider developed trails. Formalized picnicking, involving tables and grills, is not suited to this park, nor is any form of children’s playground. No motorized activities should be permitted anywhere within the park boundaries. Authorized uses can be communicated in a positive way through appropriate and unobtrusive signs. Occasional police presence in the park by the Bozeman Bicycle Police would be helpful in enforcing compliance.

As Burke Park has become a favorite spot for mountain biking, conflicts and the potential for injury to cyclists, pedestrians, or dogs has increased. Trailhead information about bicycle etiquette may help to reduce excessive speed and damaging off-trail use. Other approaches to reduce conflicts could also be tried, such as having bike shops supply bike bells at low or no cost with repair or purchase of a bike. The GVLT is seeking funds for an educational program which would include an information packet on every bicycle sold in the city, trailhead signs, a sign at the top of Simkins spur trail asking cyclists to yield to pedestrians, and a slide show to be shown in the schools and at appropriate community events. One of the most original ideas under discussion is that of having middle school students help prepare a video on dog control or bike use. Such a project would involve the very population it targets, and would thus increase awareness and investment in the parks and their maintenance amongst young people.

Group activities should be allowed on a permit basis only, as is current policy. The fragile and natural character of this park does not lend itself to large group gatherings such as weddings, sporting events, or social gatherings. Specific policy should be established for the special conditions group permit such as: 1) all activities shall take place on designated trails only; 2) if inclement weather creates muddy conditions the event is canceled; 3) the repair to any damage which is done to the park is solely the responsibility of the permit holder.

All pets must have owner identification tags with current phone numbers. Since owners shall have the responsibility for removal of pet feces, bag dispensers and litter cans for feces disposal should be available at trail head locations. Dogs are currently allowed to run off-leash in the park but must be under owner control at all times. While common courtesy and responsible pet ownership still dictate and resolve most problems, complaints, conflicts, and plant damage are
increasing, and it is possible that the off-leash law will need to be revised or revoked in the future. It is to be hoped that notice of such a possibility will induce dog owners to better control their animals.

Rehabilitation of unauthorized trails should be conducted with community volunteers to build a stronger sense of responsibility. As suggested in the Trails section (p.15), newly-rehabilitated areas should be protected first with temporary informational signs, and then if necessary with natural materials such as large branches, logs, boulders, and wooden fences.

Interpretive signs could be incorporated throughout the park providing information about the visible mountain ranges, visual landmarks, plant species, and positive reasons for staying on the trails. Interpretive walks on National Trails Day and at other times can help educate the public about both the diversity and the fragility of Burke Park.

Directional and identification signs should be installed and maintained at all trail heads. The current bollards with trail information are an excellent example of well designed unobtrusive signage. Any additional signs should follow the same theme, utilizing natural materials and simple graphics. A regional map/directory should be installed at the north trail head near the bottom of Peet’s Hill and at the south end where three trails merge. This map should show the trail system within the park as well as beyond the park to better disperse the intense use. It could also be a place where trail etiquette and educational information would be posted along with area notices, lost and found, etc. The design of this map and information sign should conform to the overall guidelines of minimizing disturbance to views and blending in with the natural setting.

Litter receptacles with lids should be maintained at park entrances, but none should be included within the confines of the park. This policy places the responsibility on the user and simplifies maintenance. The existing rail fence along the north boundary should probably be removed now that the CMC land has become public. It could be relocated elsewhere on the site near the newly developed parking lot, or segments of it could be temporarily used to close off existing unauthorized trails.

New plantings should be introduced only for rehabilitation purposes and must be native to the area. Plant species should be verified against the extensive list of indigenous plants already inventoried on the site.
Burke Park

Conclusions

It is clear that Bozeman citizens value their parks, particularly the open space, trails, and views of Burke Park. The City needs to make a commensurate commitment to upkeep by increasing funding for trail maintenance to cover responsibilities such as trail-side mowing, garbage pick-up, weed control, periodic grade improvements, educational signing, elimination of user-made or social trails, and other maintenance projects. An important part of maintenance can be volunteer activities coordinated with the Park maintenance division. Such co-operative effort can help to promote and maintain the beauty and integrity of this park.
Mary,

Enclosed are the figures you requested on the flora of the Burke Parke Area. I compared this area with five nearby Rocky Mountain floras: the Pryor Mountains, The Centennial Valley region, Yellowstone Park (actually the Southern Absorokas in Yellowstone Park), the flora of the western slope of the Windriver Mountains, and the Black Hills flora. The data are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>SPECIES #</th>
<th>AREA KM²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pryor Mountains</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>1,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial Region</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>1,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowstone (southern)</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>3,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windrivers (west slope)</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>4,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>6,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Burke Park, I figured 3 km² covered a homogeneous flora in around the Sourdough ridge area, from just south of the southwest corner of Lindley Park, south to the Kangy Hill, and from Church Street over to Highland. Thus, 217 species were found in this 3 km² area.

For a rough comparison of the diversity of floras that differ in area, one can use the following formula derived from ecological literature:

number of species in an area divided by the log₁₀ of the area of that flora is equal to an unknown number of species divided by the log₁₀ of 1000 km². This standardizes floras of various sizes all to 1000 km². Thus, the flora of Burke Park is as follows:

\[
\frac{217}{\log 3} = \frac{X}{\log 1000} \\
217/0.477 = X/3 \\
454.8 = X/3 \\
1364 = X
\]

or Burke Park could have 1,364 species if its size were 1000 km².

Likewise, for the Pryor Mountains:

\[
\frac{981}{\log 1278} = \frac{X}{\log 1000} \\
981/3.107 = X/3 \\
315.8 = X/3 \\
947 = X
\]

or the Pryor Mountains would have 947 species if its size were reduced to 1000 km².

Though approximate, I think this should give you a good impression of how diverse the flora of the Burke Park area really is.

Yours,

Matt Lavin
Diversity of Burke Park Flora
(standardized species #'s to 1000 km²)

217 species of vascular plants -- 5 peak flowering periods in 1996 -- 45 out of the 217 (21%) are human introduced Eur-Adian species. Burke Park is a treasure.
COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 4179

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BOZEMAN, MONTANA, REGARDING A TRACT OF LAND COMMONLY KNOWN AS BURKE PARK, BEING 41.9155 ACRES AS DEPICTED ON CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 1778, DECLARING SAID TRACT OF LAND TO BE PUBLIC PARK LAND.

WHEREAS, The subject property is owned by the City of Bozeman; and

WHEREAS, Section 7-16-4101 Montana code Annotated authorizes municipalities to establish, alter, and maintain parks; and

WHEREAS, The subject property has been developed and maintained by the City of Bozeman as public parkland; and

WHEREAS, The subject property is utilized by the public extensively and exclusively for park purposes; and

WHEREAS, The subject property was not formally dedicated as parkland through a subdivision and platting process; and

WHEREAS, The Commission finds that formally declaring Burke Park public parkland would be in the community’s best interest, to help ensure that the property continues to be owned by the public and managed as public parkland; and

WHEREAS, Formally declaring Centennial Park public parkland would advance the goals and objectives of the adopted Parks, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Plan, which states the City’s parks, recreation programs, and facilities, open spaces and trails play a vital role in defining Bozeman as “the most livable place;”
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Commission of the City of Bozeman, Montana:

Section 1:
That pursuant to Section 7-16-4101 MCA, Burke Park, as described above and as shown on Certificate of Survey 1778 is hereby established as public parkland to be utilized by the citizens of the City of Bozeman, Montana pursuant to and consistent with various ordinances of the City of Bozeman.

Section 2:
That City of Bozeman staff shall take such steps as necessary to ensure a public record of this action is recorded with the Clerk and Recorder’s office of Gallatin County, Montana, so that this Declaration of Parkland is known to all men and women as the will of the City Commission of the City of Bozeman, Montana.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE City Commission of the City of Bozeman, Montana, at a regular session thereof held on the 6th day of July, 2009.

KAAREN JACOBSON
Mayor

STACY ULMEN, CMC
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

GREG SULLIVAN
City Attorney
APPROVED AS TO FORM:

GREG SULLIVAN
City Attorney
COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 4171


WHEREAS, Chris Boyd was a valued member of the Bozeman community whose leadership motivated and inspired many others to work together to improve our community;

WHEREAS, Chris Boyd's passion to expand and improve Bozeman's "Main Street to the Mountains" trail system greatly enhanced the quality of life for visitors and residents alike;

WHEREAS, as founder of the Gallatin Valley Land Trust, Chris Boyd created an ongoing legacy of collaborative community projects, adding many miles of new public trails that connect us with nature and with each other; 

WHEREAS, Chris Boyd was instrumental in the purchase from the Burke Family of the private property now dedicated as Burke Park; and

WHEREAS, the Burke Park ridge trail was informally named for Chris Boyd in 1998.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED by the Bozeman City Commission that the trail constructed atop the Burk Park ridge, stretching from the
southwest corner of Lindley Park to the south end of Burke Park, hereafter be known as the Chris Boyd Memorial Trail.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Bozeman, Montana, at a regular session thereof held on July 27, 2009.

KAAREN JACOBSON
Mayor

STACY ULMEN, CMC
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

GREG SULLIVAN
City Attorney