

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LONG RANGE BUILDING
March 20, 1981

The meeting was called to order by JACK K. MOORE, Chairman at 1:35 p.m. in Room 108. All Committee members were present except Sen. Etchart (Excused) and Sen. Hims1. Also in attendance was Bob Robinson, Fiscal Analyst.

Testimony was given for the LES MASON PROPOSAL by Martin Gilman; Betty Snyder, Shirley Jacobson, Barbara King, Les Mason owners; Randall Pugh, Whitefish Chamber of Commerce; Arnold Jacobsen, Flathead County Park Board President; Charles Abell, and Van Gilchrist. Testimony for the SPRING MEADOW LAKE was given by Bob Murdo, Lewis and County Parks Board; Al Dougherty, Realtor; Pat Nichols, Last Chance Audubon Society; Al Kington, resident of Helena; Sen. Joe Mazurek, Helena District 16; John Wilkinson, Bob Decker, County Commissioners; Alan Shumate, Helena resident. Testimony for KOOTENAI LODGE was given by Blanche Garrett, broker.

THE CHAIRMAN stated the Committee would discuss Les Mason, Spring Meadow Lake, Kootenai Lodge and Marias Pass in that order.

REP. JOHN HARP, District 19, stated he is from the area of this particular proposal, and he introduced the proponents for this proposal. He explained the proposed park is 7.8 acres and 586 feet from Whitefish Lake frontage, and also fronts Montana Highway 47. This area would take the conjection from the south end of the lake. The only public access is at City Beach and at State Park. This proposal is half way up the lake. There is no zoning change needed to make that a park, and use as a park land would be the least disruptive use of that property. The land is presently undeveloped, the slope of the property is about 6% grade along a 600 foot depth. The only opposition generated is from the neighbors who feel they would rather have a park in another area of the lake. He noted there was a large number of letters in support of this proposal from the Recreation Department, the Flathead County Commissioners, the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce, and the Whitefish Rotary Club. He stated in regard to the question of appraised value, this listed land is 50% less than it has been listed in the past. He referred to a letter from a professional appraiser justifying the acquisition cost to the state. He noted the sellers are willing to sell this property at whatever the appraisal price would be.

MR. PUGH stated they are faced with an irony, because they are living in one of the most beautiful areas in the state, but private ownership has all but locked up the potential for recreation and enjoyment of the Whitefish Lake area. There is a large percentage of tourism coming into the state and on Whitefish Lake there is about one-half mile of public access to the lake with 26 miles total of lake frontage.

MR JACOBSON stated the state now has State Park and City Beach and in the middle of August it is impossible to launch a boat. He noted 99% of the people who live in Whitefish are unable to use their lake because of the large crowds. Flathead County owns three pieces of land on the lake; one is a cliff, one is a swamp and the other is dump. He stated due to the high price for land, the land around Whitefish Lake is one of the highest priced in the state, and he would like to have this additional land for the State of Montana.

MR. ABELL, Whitefish Planning Board, testified in regard to the opposition whose main concern is water quality. He noted there were several studies done on Whitefish Lake and it is on a par with Lake McDonald. If there is a danger of pollution on this lake it rests with the people who have decided to put their houses on the shoreline without public sewer systems. He feels this park area will not pollute the lake in any way. He noted these people may also be concerned about their privacy and he stated he owns land next to City Beach and built a fence which seems to eliminate the problem. He feels this project will provide an opportunity to the other residents of Montana to enjoy one of the nicest assets.

MR. GILCHRIST, the seller's realtor, stated when he lived for a few years in California around Arrowhead Lake it was used almost exclusively by the rich. He would hate to see this happen to Whitefish Lake. He feels now is the time to purchase the property of this size and the right location. He noted the people of Whitefish in the past used this area as a park, even though it was privately owned. It soon came to a point of the owners having to carry such heavy liability that they could not make it available to the state. Everyone feels in that area that this should be put back to the use of the public.

REP. BARDANOUE asked in order to make the money go further, it would be nice if the people in the area would put up matching money. He asked if anyone in that area had looked into that.

SEN. BROWN stated at this time they have not attempted to raise funds locally, but he feels it would indicate they could raise some funds, but he cannot say how much at this time. He noted the owners are willing to accept terms. He stated that all of this land is useable. There is 568 feet of lake frontage.

REP. BARDANOUE asked if it would be possible to ask for a proposal for the type of local support that would be available for this project.

MARIAS PASS

MR. HOLLIDAY stated he did have Exhibit D, regarding the letter for the proposal of Marias Pass to the Park Proposals. He also read Exhibit H to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN stated since there was neither proponents or opponents in regard to this proposal he would continue on to Spring Meadow Lake.

SPRING MEADOW LAKE

PROPONENTS:

MR. MURDO, read Exhibit E to the Subcommittee. He stated the Parks Board and the members of the organization would attempt to do everything in their power to assist the developing of this park for recreational use. As far as the Parks Board itself, they would be able to coordinate activities for volunteer of labor and seek donations from various groups for improvements on the property.

MR. VAN DER VERE stated he does have a lease with the Reber Corporation for fishing rights which he would be glad to relinquish. He stated this pond is spring fed and there is no winter kill there. He noted there is 14-16 pound trout, plus eastern brook around five pounds, etc. He stated what keeps the fish alive is the large amount of crayfish and freshwater shrimp. He felt the Fish and Game Department could take these fish out for planting, etc.

PHIL DUNHAM, Secretary of the Missouri Chapter, stated they are in full agreement with this lake because of the people on limited incomes and children who are not able to travel long distances. He noted his chapter would be happy to help put in any culverts, picnic benches, etc.

MR. DECKER stated the county is willing to assist with road construction, bridge drainage and culvert work. They would like to include this in the County Parks Plan. He noted the Audubon Society has pledged support in regard to maintenance items in the area. He stated they would be happy to supply the Committee with a concrete list of what they could do and have agreements.

JOHN WILKINSON, Chairman of the Board for the County Commissioners, stated he agreed with Mr. Decker in regard to support for this project. He stated there is a large amount of pressure on the

fairgrounds and he feels this would help relieve some of the problems that the overcrowding causes.

PAT NICHOLS gave Exhibit F to the Subcommittee in support of the project.

PETE TESS, representative of the Prickly Pear Association and also of the Trout Unlimited Association stated they are heartily in favor of this project and would like to see it made available.

OPPONENTS:

ALAN SHUMATE, resident of Helena, stated he feels the idea of buying land with the coal tax money is a good idea. He stated he has testified on establishing a legislative watchdog committee to monitor the grants made by the Department of Natural Resources for research on coal tax money. His research showed the money has been used on questionable grants in the past. He stated the state is uncertain at this time how the Supreme Court is going to rule on this tax, but he feels the 30% coal tax is in trouble. He noted in the purchase of Spring Meadow Lake he finds no provision for building and maintaining the park, the money being asked for is only acquisition. He opposes buying this lake and he feels we have made too many mistakes with this money which would give the easterners more reason to take the coal tax severance from us.

MR. PINKTON, Helena resident, feels the information already presented is quite accurate, however, he does have reservations regarding this area being purchased by the Fish & Game. He studied the park proposals criteria and one of them is that they attract others on a state, regional and national basis. He feels those people who would be attracted to the lake would be primarily from Lewis and Clark County. He stated there is a BN railroad track within 1/2 mile from this area, and an Interstate within 1/2 mile, and he feels this would not be attractive to those people from out of state. He noted some of the proposals range within \$220 an acre, and this one ranges over \$9,000 an acre, he feels this is too much.

MR. MURDO stated this land is all useable, and at this time is all locked up and used for horse grazing.

MR. DOUGHERTY, realtor, stated he represents the Reber Company on this and he doubts that he would sell just a portion of this because of the possibilities of subdividing this. He stated he would be happy to check into this.

MR. SCHUMATE stated in regard to the question of his concerns against the purchase of the lake, he feels due to the research he has done on Joint Resolution 8, regarding some of the grants the Department of Natural Resources have made, he would not like the opponents back east to get a hold of that information because some of those grants are very questionable.

KOOTENAI LODGE

REP. ANDERSON, District 16, gave background of Kootenai Lodge and its original owner Cornelius Kelley, former legislator and Copper King. The proposal includes 40 acres on the shore of Swan Lake, includes 12 lodges plus a large main lodge, plus a large barn and 2,500 feet of shoreline. He asked that Blanche Garrett, broker, explain the property plus present a small slide show.

MRS. GARRETT explained Exhibit G. There is 18 acres where the barn and lodges exist, and many of the trees around the lodge are eastern trees not Montana native trees. She explained that the lodge contains many antiques and these will go with the property. She noted there is an etching by Charlie Russell and the owner will not sell the royalties to this because it will go with the property. She stressed the good quality and condition the lodges were in, the linens are still left in the buffet and will remain there. The price of the property is \$1,250,000 and the owner would be willing to donate \$250,000. There is 40 acres of land plus all of the buildings. There is an airport near the site so people from around the state could use it. She stressed all the antiques, vases, grand piano would stay with the lodge.

SEN. THOMAS asked Rep. Anderson what would the state do with this and what were the plans.

REP. ANDERSON stated he was not certain at this time what could take place there and there is a tremendous amount of recreational property.

MR. HOLLIDAY stated they have not looked at this in detail as far as an operational plan, but he feels many things could be done with this property. He noted he could get together a list if desired.

MRS. GARRETT stated the main lodge is 40' x 80', the property was never used commercially. It was first Con Kelley's private estate, and then sold to the Stolz Lumber Company. Stolz had

no use for this 40 acres, since they wanted the timber of the remaining acres. She stated the asking price has been reduced to \$1,000,000 and it is not necessary to have the amount at one time. The interest would be at 9%. She felt everyone in Montana should be able to view this. She stated there have been many requests to purchase, but the owner, Mr. Brekkeflat, prefers to sell it on his terms which is to have it paid off in two years. She stated there was an offer written up last year for \$1,250,000 and it was a party from Reno, Nevada who wanted it opened up as a gambling house.

REP. ANDERSON stated the buildings were covered with copper and shingled over that, so this made the lodges extremely air tight.

REP. BARDANOUE asked the owners of LES MASON if they would be willing to make a donation of a portion of their land.

The OWNERS stated the CPA did advise them that they might want to make a donation. The original asking price was \$1.5 million and it has been reduced to a bottom line figure of \$700,000 based on the value of the property. He stated they would allow to contract for deed, and would be open on terms and would take 25% down. They stressed they would like to see this as a state park, and it is far below what they could get on a commercial level. Their appraiser had stated it was difficult to appraise this property because it is one of the richest pieces of property in the area, and nothing else has been sold that has so much accessible land.

There being no further discussion or comment, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.



JACK K. MOORE, CHAIRMAN

VISITORS' REGISTER

HOUSE LONG RANGE BUILDING COMMITTEE

BILL PARK PROPOSALS

Date 3/20/81-

SPONSOR _____

NAME	RESIDENCE	REPRESENTING	SUPPORT	OPPO
W.H. Dunham	742 Clark, Helena	Traut Unlimited - Missouri River Chapter	Spring M. Lake	
Martin Gilman	707 Park Ave. Whitefish	Project Sponsor	Los Mason Memorial Park	
Charles R. Abrizl	5 Woodland Pl "	Wood Plains Board	LES MASON	
Arnold Jacobson	437 Dakota "	Flathead County PARK BOARD-PRESIDENT	LES MASON	
Merv Finstad	1150 Vallejo Dr, Helena	Lewis & Clark County Park Board	SPRING MEADOW	
RANDALL K BUGH	121 MILL AVE. WHITEFISH	WHITEFISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	LES MASON MEM-PARK	
Shirley Quachson	RT 3 Coalinga Idaho	Owner	Los Mason Memorial	
Marvin Cassin	Whitefish Mont	Post Owner	Los Mason Memorial	
Barbara King	Whitefish Mont	Owner	Los Mason Memorial	
Patty Suggs	Whitefish MT	Owner	Los Mason Memorial	
Tom H. Gilchrist	67-Sunbury Valley Pl	Hoff Real Estate	LES MASON Memorial Park	
PETE TEST	344 CHANCY ST. HELENA	MONTANA LUNAR T.U.	SPRING MEADOWS	
JIM RICHARD	HELENA	PRICKLY PEAR SPOTS ASSN	SPRING MEADOWS	
Shirley Scott	416-10th E. Kalispell	Montreal Lodge	Los Mason Memorial	
Allen Shuman	Helena	Self	Los Mason Memorial	
Robert Van Der Kerk	Helena	Self	Spring meadow	
Bob Murdo	Helena	L.C. County Parks Bd	Spring meadow lake	
Cl Mougharty	Helena	Joe Reber	Spring meadow lake	
Pat Nichols	217 8th Helena	Last Chance Audubon Society	Spring meadow lake	
Al King ten	6412 Greenmeadow Ct	Self	Spring meadow lake	
John Wilkinson	717 N. WARDEN	LEWIS & CLARK CO. COMMISSION	SPRING MEADOW LAKE	
Joe Maguire	Helena	Sen Dist 16	SPRING MEADOW	
Bob Decker	Helena	L.C. County	Spring meadow	

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR LONGER FORM.

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.



City of Whitefish

Baker & 2nd Street

Phone 862-2640

February 23, 1981

Mr. Martin Gilman
P. O. Box 638
Whitefish, Mt. 59937

Re: Les Mason Memorial Park Proposal

Dear Mr. Gilman:

At its meeting of February 2, 1981, the Whitefish City Council voted to go on record in support of the "Les Mason Memorial Park" proposal. At present, the city owns one of the only two public accesses to Whitefish Lake and certainly supports a proposal for a third access.

The "Gaines Point" property being proposed for this park lies approximately half way up the east lakeshore of Whitefish Lake and would certainly relieve some of the congestion occurring at the southern end of our magnificent lake. It is also one of the last pieces of accessible Whitefish Lake frontage available for this purpose. We feel that its location is ideal in that the property fronts a secondary highway and yet is far enough removed from the existing accesses that it would certainly help alleviate the congestion occurring at times at our own city beach.

The City Council of Whitefish and several Whitefish residents recognize that we are a destination center for the ever growing tourist industry and feel that we can't delay any longer in acquiring the facilities that these folks come here to use. There is a definite need for additional access to Whitefish Lake and this proposal.

Sincerely yours,

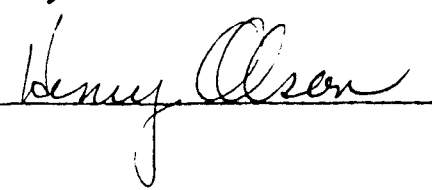
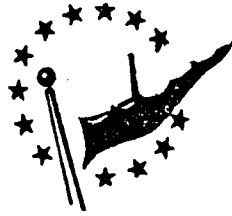

Henry Olson
Mayor

Exhibit A

Whitefish Lake Boat Club and Regatta Association Inc.

MEMBER OF AMERICAN POWER BOAT ASSOCIATION



March 19, 1981

Martin Gilman
Whitefish Chamber of Commerce
Box 1309
Whitefish, Mt. 59937

Re: Les Mason Memorial Park Proposal

Dear Mr. Gilman:

At its meeting of this date, the Whitefish Lake Boat Club adopted a motion to support the above mentioned park proposal. The club consisting of 88 families sees a definite need for additional access to Whitefish Lake. This proposal is far enough removed from the other public access that it would certainly relieve the congestion now occurring on the south end of our lake.

We would be pleased to lend any further support or assistance to this project.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dow Crum".

Dow Crum
Commodore

TESTIMONY OF RON HOLLIDAY
ADMINISTRATOR, PARKS DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
BEFORE THE LONG-RANGE BUILDING COMMITTEE
March 20, 1981

I am Ron Holliday, Administrator of the Parks Division, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The 44th State Legislature earmarked a portion of the coal severance tax revenue for the acquisition of lands for the State Park System. Until 1979, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks had the responsibility of finding and choosing areas for coal tax acquisition. But in 1979, the legislature passed House Bill 550 which allows anyone to submit a proposal for the coal tax acquisition of a State Park System site.

Eleven proposals were accepted by the department until December 1, 1980, and then presented to the legislature by the Fish and Game Commission in January.

I look forward to the legislature's decision on these proposals and the resultant new opportunities available to the people who visit Montana's State Park System.



Flathead Valley Community College

BOX 1174 PHONE 406-755-5222 KALISPELL, MONTANA 59901
Ober 10-24-80

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Parks Division
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Sirs:

I am presenting this nomination for consideration under the Department's coal tax acquisition program for state parks.

I feel that this parcel at Marias Pass is geographically suitable, re-creationally adaptable and culturally and historically appropriate.

Currently, only a large obelisk marks the summit of the pass and a statue of John F. Stevens is on a distant hill (unmarked) overlooking the rail line. There are no maintained or easily accessible markers that identify the pass. Additionally, the U.S. Forest Service, Lewis and Clark Forest has discontinued a small campground near the summit recently. The land that I have proposed is owned by an out-of-state individual who is proposing it as a possible commercial site and campground.

Further features that make this site worthy of consideration are:

1. Economics--Because of the severe winter conditions on the pass, this park could be maintained during the seven or eight "good weather" months of the year.
2. Agency cooperation--The close proximity of Glacier Park affords the opportunity to cooperate with that agency as well as with the Forest Service on joint facilities, interpretive displays, etc.
3. Access--This site is located on the major east/west highway no. 2

Enclosed are other descriptive and informative items that may assist in your decision making. Thank you for your consideration of this site. If I may be of further help, I would be happy to discuss this proposal by phone at the above number X212 or at my home number, 755-1792.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Ober
Michael J. Ober
College Librarian

enc
cc
mjo

Exhibit D

SPRING MEADOW LAKE PARK PROPOSAL

Sponsored By: Lewis And Clark County Park Board
Room 104 - Capital Building
March 20, 1981 - 1:30 P.M.

PRESENTED BY: Robert Murdo
Vice-Chairman - Lewis & Clark County Park Board

ATTENTION: Representative Moore Senator Etchart
 Representative Donaldson Senator HimsI
 Representative Hurwitz Senator Thomas
 Representative Manuel Sentaor Haffey
 Representative Bardanouve

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Robert Murdo, a member of the Lewis & Clark County Park Board, and I appear to present testimony on the merit of funding Spring Meadow Lake Park.

It seems reasonable to bring recreation close to the people of Montana because of the energy crunch and to provide better accessibility. Many people of Montana have become involved in the development of parks because money has been set aside for park development under the "Coal Tax Park Trust Program". We believe this is good since it has resulted in maximizing involvement of citizens as well as legislator participation.

"The Treasure State" has had a history of "rape and run" and some of this is evident in our communities around the state. I believe the concept of setting aside a portion of mineral extraction taxes in a perpetual trust to preserve our recreational and cultural heritage is sound from a moral and fiscal perspective.

The Lewis & Clark County Board and members of the community have identified a real need for additional water-based recreational facilities close to Helena and are seeking approval of funds for Spring Meadow Lake Park. This area is on the west end of Helena between the Green Meadow Golf Course and the old Kessler Brewery. The proposed area consists of 35 acres of land and 20 acres of water. The lake is spring fed and over 50 feet deep in some areas and has excellent fish and non-game wildlife population.

G. F.

The current owner, Mr. Reber, has offered the property for \$335,000 and has agreed to donate \$35,000 for a net price of \$300,000. A professional appraisal done by Dittman Appraisal Company was completed on March 12, 1980, and the market value assessed at that time was \$267,800. A review appraisal completed by the Department of Highways confirmed the original appraisal. However, with current inflation figures, this would bring the property close to the asking price. The worth of this property has been further enhanced because part of the proposed area has already received subdivision approval from the county for condominiums and townhouses. There are also additional plans for subdividing the remaining acreage into 98 lots. There currently exists city sewer to this property as well as a drilled water well. Other considerations regarding the merits of this proposal are as follows:

- (1) The development of Spring Meadow Lake would provide an ideal park site that would be central to a large population center.
- (2) If this site is funded, it will be the first site approved under coal tax funds for Lewis & Clark County.
- (3) A site of this size is difficult to fund from local city or county park budgets.
- (4) If the economic picture changes, county residents could lose this splendid park site to subdivision development.
- (5) The Lewis & Clark County Park Board is resolved in assisting with the development of the site and have put in many hours in determining the need and pursuing funding for the development of this area.
- (6) Repeated county studies have shown this as an excellent potential recreational site.
- (7) There is widespread support for this park development from various outdoor organizations.

We thank you for your interest in the Spring Meadow Lake Park proposal and if members of this committee would like to visit the proposed site, we would be happy to arrange a tour.

My name is Pat Nichols. I live at 217 8th Ave in Helena. I am here testifying in favor of the acquisition of Spring Meadow Lake. I am representing the Board of Directors of the Last Chance Audubon Society. We strongly support the acquisition of Spring Meadow Lake for a State Park. The local Chapter sees great potential for the area to be developed into a natural area, and if it is approved we would like to participate in its development both with money and man power. Our ideas are just being developed but we feel that we could help develop a nature trail and interpretive programs. The Last Chance Audubon Society is looking for a conservation project and we feel that a State Park at Spring Meadow Lake could provide us that kind of opportunity. The park could provide for nature study and other outdoor recreation which would be readily accessible and would therefore be heavily utilized. Here is an opportunity to provide recreational and educational opportunities to people which would be accessible by bicycle or on foot.

For these reasons the Last Chance Audubon Society would like to go on record in support of the acquisition of Spring Meadow Lake for the State Park System.

Thank you