

Highlights ~ Buffalo Mountain Parkland Preserve Open Space Management Plan

In the interest of creating and maintaining the best possible environment, the Developers at Buffalo Mountain, with the assistance of WESTECH Environmental Services, Inc., have established management practices and are committed to their implementation. The management practices presented in the plan are based on standard, successful procedures used throughout northwestern Montana, and include noxious weed control, re-vegetation planning, wildfire control, recreation resources, quality wildlife habitat and overall forest health.

This brief summary is intended to outline the strategies which will be utilized for conserving and managing 324 acres of over 370 acres of open space within the development.

Noxious Weed Control

The most successful method of weed control is generally considered to be the Integrated Weed Management (IWM) system, which utilizes a combination of herbicides, cultural techniques (re-vegetation, grazing, mowing) and biological agents. Buffalo Mountain Conservancy will implement an IWM program that includes a combination of control measures, some of which are listed below:

- Minimize soil disturbances by vehicles, equipment and people
- Use certified weed-free hay, straw, mulch, gravel or other materials during the development, construction, reclamation and operation phases of the project
- Require all contractor vehicles and equipment to arrive at the worksite clean and free of weeds. Equipment wash and spray areas would be set up as necessary at designated locations
- Chemical applications would only be performed by, or under the direct supervision, of a licensed herbicide applicator
- Promptly re-vegetate areas disturbed during construction related activities
- Create an annual monitoring report that includes detailed information on all identified noxious weed areas, treatments applied, effectiveness of the treatments, and recommendations for future site-specific management. Reports will be submitted to the Flathead County Weed District Coordinator for review.

Information regarding noxious weed identification, management, and techniques for minimizing the spread of them will be available to landowners and contractors.

Re-vegetation

To minimize the permanent loss or alteration of native habitats at Buffalo Mountain, construction-related disturbances (including roads) and weed-infested sites will be promptly re-vegetated wherever possible. This will be accomplished primarily by seeding, supplemented by the planting of appropriate mixes of native grasses, forbs, shrubs and/or trees. Preparing an adequate seedbed, planting of compatible species and scheduling re-vegetation activities during optimal planting seasons will also be implemented.

Wildfire Control

Wildfire control efforts are intended to protect personal property, maintain safe public use areas, create defensible space, and prevent catastrophic wildfires. The following measures are outlined in the management plan:

- Remove weak, dead, and overcrowded conifer trees within 150' of residences
- Maintain at least 10' space between tree crowns
- Maintain tree limbs at least 15' away from structures, chimneys, and power lines
- Use appropriate, fire-resistant building materials including Class A and Class B fire-rated roofing materials

Recreation Resources

Open Space is a valuable amenity that provides unique recreational opportunities and enjoyment of the surrounding natural resources. The Recreation Plan presents goals and management strategies for:

- The development and management of environmentally-sustainable recreation trails
- Coordinated use of open lands by Owners with varying interests
- Considerations for surrounding landowners
- Development of universally accessible trails for children, elderly and users with disabilities
- Implementation of a routine trail maintenance schedule

Quality Wildlife Habitat

The Developers at Buffalo Mountain recognize that wildlife is one of the primary attractants of the development, and are committed to maintaining wildlife occupancy and use of the property. Practices to meet the goals of the Conservancy include, among others:

- Development of procedures to address urban wildlife conflicts
- The absence of fencing within the development so that wildlife movement is not hindered or funneled to sites where potential human-wildlife conflicts (e.g., wildlife/vehicle collisions) might occur
- Preservation of zones, particularly along drainages, where wildlife could permeate the housing development to reach habitats either above or below the elevation of the houses
- Apply for grant programs designated to manage or enhance wildlife use and minimize conflicts between humans and wildlife.

Overall Forest Health

Improving the health of the forest and maintaining a high-quality environment for the nourishment and growth of what Buffalo Mountain has to enjoy and preserve, is of high importance to the Developers of Buffalo Mountain. The Conservancy plan includes management practices for:

- Reducing tree overcrowding
- Managing dwarf mistletoe infestations

- Improving aspen stand vigor
- Preventing severe pine bark beetle infestations
- Implementation of prescribed burns to promote root suckering

- A Board of Directors will be established consisting of:
 - One representative of Buffalo Mountain Homeowners Association
 - One representative of the Developer
 - Specialist(s) for land and wildlife resource management

Funding for the Conservancy:

The Conservancy's primary source of funding will be the collection of a fee which has been incorporated into each Owner's monthly Homeowner's Dues. This amount will be based on the total cost of the Management Plan, divided equally amongst all Buffalo Mountain Owners.