Swords Rimrock Park
Donor Opportunities

In Partnership With:

Billings Chamber of Commerce/
Convention & Visitors Bureau

BikeNet
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Swords Park Update

The second phase of the Swords Park Trail is currently in the final stages of development. It will continue east from the existing end of the first phase trail and connect to the existing pedestrian tunnel under Airport Road as well as to the existing trail section south of the Aronson/Airport Road interchange, which leads to Boothill Cemetery.

This would make Swords Park Trail continuous from the airport roundabout to Boothill Cemetery providing access to Yellowstone Kelly’s Grave and Skeleton Cliff along the way. It would also connect to the existing Alkali Creek, Aronson Avenue trails and will be a significant contribution to the Heritage Trail loop. Part of this development will also include four interpretive and educational signs, way finding signs, and mile marker signs within the extents of phase 2.

Donation Opportunities

The second phase of Swords Park Trail leaves other opportunities for enhancing other areas of Swords Park. It also leaves the opportunity for enhancing the current trail from phase 1. These opportunities include donating way finding and mile marker signage along phase 1 and donating amenities to develop trailheads. These amenities and their prices are in the gift catalog provided in this booklet. Other ways of enhancing Swords Park include the sponsorships of entire areas in need of improvement.

These areas include:
- Yellowstone Kelly’s Grave
- Skeleton Cliff
- Boothill Cemetery
- Trailhead Location

The preliminary design and price of these areas are in the following pages. They would ultimately include donations for improvements of road access, viewing area, walking path, and parking lot. The trailhead may be donated in portions from the gift catalog but could also be donated in full.

There are many ways Swords Park can be improved as it is a historically significant area and has seen better days. Please look at the following pages for opportunities to improve this one of a kind outlook of Billings.

Billings Park and Recreation is partnering with BikeNet to make fundraising efforts happen.

Tax Deductible Donation can be sent to:
BikeNet
PO Box 81146
Billings, MT 59108
bikenet.mt@gmail.com

Adopt-A-Trail Donations can be sent to:
Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands
390 North 23rd. St.
Billings, MT 59101
(406)-657-8371
What is the Adopt-A-Trail Program?

The Adopt-A-Trail program is an opportunity for the community to lower the cost of trail maintenance, get outdoors, and keep Billings beautiful. Volunteers have the option to adopt a trail head or trail segment in lengths of 1 mile and up. Any single person, group, club, or business can adopt a trail. Volunteering children under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

What is in it for you?
The name of the volunteer, group, or business will be recognized at each adopted segment of trail. It is also an opportunity to get together with a group and enjoy the outdoors and trails.

Adopt-A-Trail Responsibilities

Adopt-A-Trail volunteers will be required to agree to a minimum 2 year time commitment. Volunteers may renew their commitment at the end of that period for another 2 years. They will be required to visit the trailhead or segment of trail monthly between spring and fall seasons and one time during the winter season.

The responsibilities for the volunteers include:
• Litter Clean-up
• Removing sticks, rocks, and other debris from the trail
• Cleaning debris from benches, tables, shelters, and all other areas of the trail
• Reporting to the park maintenance staff any large issues such as vandalism, erosion problems, safety issues, and illegal activity

After each visit the volunteers will be required to submit a report to the park maintenance staff on the condition of the trail segment or trailhead and the activities preformed.

Volunteers are asked to provide their own tools and dress appropriately with safety gear where needed. If the volunteer does not have their own tools, tools may be loaned through the Billings Parks and Recreation Department with prior notice. All work must be done within daylight and open hours of the park, trailhead, or trail. No work will be done past dark.

What are the cost of adopting a trail?
The cost of adopting a trail has three options. All options are for a 2 year agreement with a renewal option every 2 years. Proceeds will go to the trail maintenance fund and the cost of the sign.

Option 1 - Non-Profit/Service Organization or Individual/Family
• $500 cost every 2 years. Maintenance must be provided by organization, individual, or family.

Option 2 - Corporate Organization
• $2,500 cost for sponsorship. Maintenance must provided by the corporation or business.

Option 3 - Corporate Organization
• $5,000 cost for sponsorship. Maintenance will be provided by the Billings Parks and Recreation Department.

To get started
Contact the Billings Parks and Recreation Department and find out the available miles of trails to adopt and sign the Adopt-A-Trail agreement form.

Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands
390 North 23rd. St.
Billings, MT 59101
(406)-657-8371
How can you give to the local trails?
In a growing community there is always a demand for increasing amenities. It is very beneficial to the community to have well-maintained and developed parks and trails. This gift catalog is an opportunity to give to the areas where amenities lack or where one may see the need to improve an area. These donations would improve the park experience for all park visitors and encourage the community to get outdoors.

This gift catalog in particular is directed towards the amenities of trailheads and specialty areas. For the improvement of access roads, parking lots, view points, and walking paths.

The Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department is encouraging donations that are consistent, high quality, and well-organized. The donations are also encouraged to:

- Cover the total cost of the item/project and installation
- Be sensitive to all park users and surrounding areas
- Be sensitive to design standards for the Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands
- Be sensitive to long-term maintenance and cost of the donated item

Prices are subject to change without notice. All donations are tax deductible. All donations can be sent to BikeNet. Recognition standards of donated elements are in the following pages.
John Burkman, who ran a pack-train under George Armstrong Custer, stands with I.D. O’Donnell, a Billings civic leader, at the Boothill Cemetery obelisk about 1922.

The Coulson “Boothill” Cemetery
Residents of the town of Coulson, established along the banks of the Yellowstone River in 1877, buried their dead at the Coulson “Boothill” Cemetery, just below the Place of the Skulls. The cemetery was abandoned in the 1880s, shortly after Billings was established. The land was later deeded to the city by I.D. O’Donnell, who erected a small obelisk to commemorate those buried at Boothill Cemetery. It was named Boothill Cemetery because many of Coulson’s residents died violently with “their boots still on.”

Peace and Quiet
Crow encampment near the Yellowstone Fair Association grounds, in the area of North Park, circa 1893.

Boothill Cemetery (foreground) and the Rims near the Place of the Skulls / Skeleton Cliff.

A Final Resting Place
The surrounding landscape was described by Lt. James H. Bradley in 1876 as “The Place of the Skulls,” the location of several Crow [Absaalooke] Indian graves. Dr. W.A. Allen, a resident of the nearby town of Coulson, recalled bright colored cloth hanging from the trees at “Skeleton Cliff,” and “bodies were draped in bright blanket shrouds and bound to the trees with rawhide thongs.” These graves were associated with smallpox epidemics that killed thousands of Crow [Absaalooke] Indians.

Like most Native American tribes of the Northern Plains, the Crow Absaalooke Indians sought out quiet places to pray, fast, and seek spiritual guidance through a vision quest. According to Crow historian Lawrence Flat Lip, Crow leaders Bell Rock and Little Head, while fasting on the Rimrocks, saw bright lights shining into the night sky from the future site of Billings. Dr. W.A. Allen, of Coulson, said the high point near Yellowstone Kelly’s gravesite was a vision quest site for the Crow Indians.

A Service of Silence
The student body and faculty of Billings Polytechnic, now Rocky Mountain College, held their annual “Service of Silence” along the Rims in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Absolute silence would be observed by everyone as they made their way up the Rims. In silence, they gathered at a specific spot where the leader read a Psalm and offered prayer, after which they returned to the campus below. The service was “one of the most beautiful and impressive of the Polytechnic affairs,” and a highlight of their annual commencement.

1930 Billings Polytechnic Institute yearbook and poem about the Rims.
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<th>Bike Rack</th>
<th>Picnic Table</th>
<th>Bench</th>
<th>Mile Marker</th>
<th>Short Wayfinding Panel</th>
<th>Long Wayfinding Panel</th>
<th>Information Kiosk</th>
<th>Interpretive Sign</th>
<th>Drinking Fountain/Cistern</th>
<th>Restroom</th>
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<td>Skeleton Cliff</td>
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Site Improvements for Yellowstone Kelly’s Grave Include:

- Low walls that provide seating and restrict vehicle access
- Defined parking improves appearance
- Paved walks and parking to improve ADA access
- Landforms to screen cell tower
- Enhanced interpretive opportunities
- Native landscaping/restoration

Estimated Cost
$173,711

With majority sponsorship, name would be recognized on monument rock at Yellowstone Kelly’s Grave.
Site Improvements for Skeleton Cliff Include:

- New plaza with shade arbor, interpretive and display area to commemorate Native American culture
- Informal stone stairway to lookout
- Continued one-way vehicle access loops perimeter
- Addition of limited parking access

Estimated Cost

$447,867

With majority sponsorship, name would be recognized on monument rock at Skeleton Cliff.
Site Improvements for Boothill Cemetery Include:

- Retains Vehicle Access
- Improves Handicap Access
- Improves Pedestrian Access
- Provides / Retains Attractive Memorializing Features
- Commemorates Multiple Burials
- Improves Aesthetics

Estimated Cost

$140,000

With majority sponsorship, name would be recognized on monument rock at Boothill Cemetery.
Site Amenities for trailhead include:

- Expand parking lot for 20 vehicles
- Drinking Fountain
- Signage and information
- Benches
- Landscaping and Restoration
- Restroom

Estimated Cost
$130,000

With majority sponsorship, name would be recognized on monument rock at trailhead.
Recognition for Total Sponsorship

If the majority of an area was sponsored by a single person, group, or business, their name would be recognized on the entry sign to the area or trailhead as previously shown. The recognition would be under the name of the area or trailhead on the large monumental sign as seen below. The name would remain on the sign for the initial 10 years. After 10 years there is an opportunity for another donor to give a substantial donation to obtain naming rights or the current donor to give another substantial donation to retain naming rights.

This signage is currently in the process of being adopted as the standard for entry monuments for parks. The sign size is substantial and featured in high traffic locations. This would make the donators name very visible to the public.

Recognition for Other Donations

All recognition for donation will be located on the information kiosk at trailheads along the trails and on the Billings PRPL website. Depending on the amount of donation or cash value of donation from the gift catalog will determine the level of recognition on the information kiosk.

The levels are:
- Marathoners - $50,000-100,000
- Sprinters - $25,000-49,999
- Runners - $10,000-24,999
- Joggers - $5,000-9,999
- Walkers - $700-4,999

*100,000 + should contact Billings Parks and Recreation for more information
*$699 and under donations will be recognized on the Billings PRPL website only.

We hope you would take part in the improvement and sponsorship of Billing's park and trails making them a vital part of the community.