

THE MARSHALL MOUNTAIN DIRT

Volume 3 - Issue 1



Minutes, Not Miles: A Marshall Mountain Story

We stumbled across a cardboard box of old VHS tapes in the lodge. Here's a promo clip for a larger video project that we've been cooking up over the last couple years. **Enjoy a dusty ode to warmer days!**



2026 Youth Programming Snapshot: The Kids are Alright

- **16,000+ hours** of outdoor immersion for local youth
- Over **1,400 youth participants** visited the park at least once as part of organized programming
- Marshall Mountain Park partners facilitated youth programming **3–4 days per week during the trail season (May – October)**
- **Over 60%** of the total youth participation hours are outdoor education - fort building, orienteering, wildlife identification and tracking, scavenger hunts, and many more creative escapes!



A couple Marshall Mountaineers earning their turns, trudging up the Challenger face.
Photo Credit: Alex Kim, High Country News

Free the Heel, Free the Mind (Free of Charge)

We're celebrating 100 years of people powered recreation at Marshall Mountain (give or take a year or a few). The Montana Mountaineers were ski touring up Marshall Canyon as early as the 1920s.

Since the lifts have stopped turning, we've gone full circle! Marshall Mountain Park (MMP) is open for backcountry skiing and snowboarding, dawn to dusk, when the snow miser and snowpack allow. We are solely depending on what Mother Nature provides (no snowmaking).

Winter recreation at MMP is at your own risk. There is no ski patrol on duty. Snow conditions can change rapidly, and winter terrain is not maintained. No avalanche control is conducted within the park.

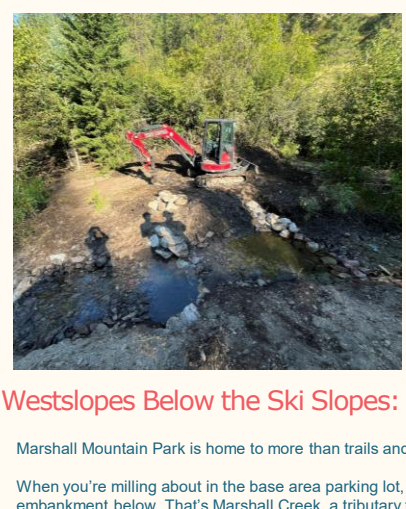
MMP has upsides for people getting into backcountry skiing and snowboarding:

- Convenient access
- Lower angle terrain
- Legacy ski runs

However, winter backcountry travel comes with unique risks. All users are strongly encouraged to carry avalanche safety gear and know how to use it when skiing and snowboarding at Marshall Mountain Park and on surrounding public lands.

We're also adding to the winter recreation offerings at the site. Forest thinning completed last year will improve the legacy ski run experience, a railyard at the base area is in the works with Girls on Shred, and grooming for XC skiing and fat tire biking is happening.

Please mind the skin track: keep snowshoeing and bootpacking off track, space yourselves, and say hello! And if El Niño puts a kibosh on snowpack and trails remain clear, ride when dirt is frozen.





Westslopes Below the Ski Slopes: Marshall Creek Restoration

Marshall Mountain Park is home to more than trails and ski runs.

When you're milling about in the base area parking lot, a highly productive fishery flows through the embankment below. That's Marshall Creek, a tributary to the Clark Fork River, and refuge for a genetically isolated strain of Westslope cutthroat Trout. Their story precipitated before public ownership.

Back in the ski area days, a lack of natural snowfall led to the creation of snowmaking and irrigation ponds in Marshall canyon. In the same era, regional stocking programs led to an abundance of transplant fish falling from the sky via helicopters. This led to the hybridization of Westslope cutthroat trout in many local waterways. Marshall Creek is an exception- due to the dammed ponds, its upper reaches have remained inaccessible to non-native trout species. Some special fish live at Marshall Mountain!

We're working to restore sections of the creek within the park to improve habitat for our fishy friends. We teamed up with Trout Unlimited and Montana FWP this past summer on the first phase – removing a failing culvert and recontouring the section of creek next to the old towrope lift shack.



The Mountain of Yes: Winter and Summer Tunes, Puddle Jumping at the Little Dipper Run, and the return of the Enduro

3 years into public ownership, we've seen growing interest in hosting unique events at Marshall Mountain. Whether its youth program collaboration between mountain bikers and runners (thanks Go Run Missoula and MTCX!) or a face melting lineup at the inaugural Marshall Fest, the continuation of this place as a community gathering space is ascending.

A smattering of the new offerings up at the hill in 2026: Little Dipper run in May, the Montana Enduro Series in July, and MARS-A-Thon in September. A good mix of recreation interests.



A Good Thing Growing: A Note From Missoula Adaptive Recreation & Sports

"At MARS (Missoula Adaptive Recreation and Sports), we're big fans of getting outside, trying new things, and occasionally getting a little dirt on our tires! Our goal is simple: give people with disabilities more chances to get involved in recreation, learn something new, and spend time with others who enjoy getting out and sending it, no matter what that looks like to you.

Marshall Mountain has been a big part of that effort. Trails like Mission to Mars and Izzy Up have made Marshall Mountain an adaptive riders' dream destination. It's been so great to see more adaptive riders getting out on the mountain and becoming part of the Marshall community.

One of MARS' biggest highlights this year was the inaugural Marshall Mountain MARS-a-Thon on September 19. We weren't quite sure what to expect from our first adaptive-friendly mountain bike race, but the community showed up in a big way. At start time we had 81 racers on the mountain, including five adaptive riders, and we raised a record-breaking $15,231 for a MARS fundraiser. There were costumes, plenty of laps, some friendly competition, and a whole lot of pickles!

We're incredibly thankful to Marshall Mountain and everyone who helped put the event together. Having a place that continues to make room for adaptive recreation means a lot to our organization and the people we serve. We are looking forward to providing an adaptive lens to future projects so Marshall can continue to grow into a world-class adaptive recreation destination!"

Hello Kitty's Spiritual Successor is Named Meowabunga

The intermediate downhill MTB trail opens next year.

Want to support?

Want to support continued improvements at Marshall Mountain Park? Donate to Friends of Marshall Mountain to keep the momentum going.

Marshall Park Development Fund



GOATed fireplace at Marshall Mountain circa 1960s
Photo Credit: Carla Green

THE MARSHALL MOUNTAIN DIRT

Missoula COUNTY