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**“TRAIL RUNS THROUGH IT” AND GOGUEN LAND EXCHANGE IN FINAL STRETCH  
City of Whitefish, Flathead Gateway Partners and Goguen Formalize \$3 Million Donation  
Land Exchange Proposal Scheduled for State Land Board Agenda December 15, 2008**

Whitefish, Mont. – The City of Whitefish and the non-profit organization Flathead Gateway Partners, along with Whitefish landowner/philanthropist Michael Goguen, have formalized an agreement approved by the Whitefish City Council at its meeting on Monday, December 1, 2008. The agreement confirms Mr. Goguen’s donation of \$3 million to the public-private “Trail Runs Through It” partnership to commence construction of the extensive trail project and to secure permanent conservation of state lands.

The agreement provides specific details on two inter-related projects, the Goguen Land Exchange and the “Trail Runs Through It” recreational loop trail. Both projects implement strategies developed over the past five years by dozens of local stakeholders through the Whitefish School Trust Neighborhood Plan and the “Trail Runs Through It” Master Plan. The state trust lands affected by the neighborhood land-use and trail plans include Spencer Lake, Beaver Lake/Skyles, Stillwater, Swift Creek, Haskill Basin, and Happy Valley/KM areas, surrounding the community of Whitefish.

Goguen said he has enjoyed working with the local community to achieve recreation and conservation goals. “I am pleased to support the community values of conservation and recreation through this unique partnership. I was able to walk the flagged sections of the first phase of the trail this week and I am extremely excited – it’s a beautiful trail with awesome views – if all goes well with the Land Board’s approval of the land exchange, we all will be hiking and riding on it soon!”

Lin Akey, member of the Flathead Gateway Partners, called Goguen’s contribution an “outstanding gift to the people of the Flathead Valley. Our valley is growing and changing at a rapid pace, so we’re grateful that many people have come together to help preserve the values that make this a great place to live. Open lands, recreational access, and clean water are priorities that bring us together. We encourage other community members to join Mr. Goguen by supporting this project with donations or volunteer time.”

Whitefish City Councilor Nancy Woodruff, also a member of the TRTI Steering Committee, said that the Goguen donation is a boost to the local economy and quality of life. “This is a win-win project for everyone. This shows the ability of our community to work together and get extraordinary things done.”

With approval by the City Council and Flathead Gateway Partners, the agreement confirms Goguen’s donation as part of the land exchange proposal, which will be considered by the Montana Land Board on December 15. The City and Flathead Gateway Partners stipulate that the donation will be used for trail construction and maintenance, purchase of easements for trail corridors and conservation.

The agreement also specifies Goguen’s commitment to place an easement for the “Trail Runs Through It” across his private property and to construct and maintain a 3-mile section of the public trail from Two Bear Road to Beaver Lake Road. The “Trail Runs Through It” Steering Committee agreed to leverage the funds to raise additional funds when possible. The agreement allocates at least one million dollars to acquire easements on state lands to establish permanent trail corridors and to conserve ecologically and culturally significant lands.

The “Trail Runs Through It” project, a priority of the Whitefish School Trust Neighborhood Plan, was spearheaded by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Whitefish and the non-profit organization Flathead Gateway Partners. The partnership has worked with the citizen committees, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the US Forest Service, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, completing the trail master plan in 2006. The City of Whitefish signed a 10-year land use license with the DNRC in 2007. The City and Flathead Gateway Partners recently (September 19, 2008) signed an additional MOU when the City Council re-appointed a steering committee consisting of city representatives and Flathead Gateway Partners. The steering committee includes Diane Conradi, Steve Thompson, Karl Cozad and Nancy Woodruff (Nick Palmer is an alternate).

Flathead Gateway Partners is a Montana non-profit corporation, whose leadership includes Diane Conradi, Steve Thompson, Mike Jopek, Lin Akey, Charlie Abell, and Marshall Friedman. For more information on the “Trail Runs Through It” and/or to download the master plan, log on to [www.trailrunsthroughit.org](http://www.trailrunsthroughit.org).

The Goguen Land Exchange will be given final consideration at the Land Board meeting on December 15, 2008. The Land Board will review the proposal based on the DNRC land exchange criteria and the Whitefish School Trust Neighborhood Plan. Goguen has been working with the DNRC on the proposal to provide more acreage, access, recreation and diversified revenue streams to the state. The proposal includes the following details:

**DNRC**

State parcel to be exchanged is 435 acres, which includes:

- Permanent trail easement
- A permanent conservation easement limiting development potential to two homesites
- Measures to protect wildlife habitat, including restrictions on motorized trail uses

**GOGUEN**

Goguen's Lupfer 570 acre parcel ( Lupfer Road ) for exchange, provides:

- Conservation easement, limited to three homesites
- Developed trail system, constructed by Goguen
- Forest management plan for "old-growth characteristics"
- Dust control on Lupfer Road
- Parking lot for trail system access

Goguen's 30 acre parcel (Livermore Flats) for exchange, provides:

- Connects two unconnected state parcels
- Highway frontage, currently lacking for adjacent state parcel
- Corridor to Spencer Lake

Goguen's Downtown property (Railway District) for exchange, provides:

- Newly constructed townhome-style commercial building in downtown Whitefish
- Under multi-year lease, providing additional revenue source for beneficiaries

Goguen's Contribution to the "Trail Runs Through It" provides:

- \$100,000 "gift" for Phase I planning and design of trail
- Permanent trail easements on his adjacent private land, plus construction and maintenance of 3 miles of trail across his private, state and federal land
- \$3 Million contribution for trail construction and maintenance, purchase of easements for trail corridors, and/or for conservation

Community members can provide comments on the exchange to the State Land Board prior to December 15, 2008 by e-mailing [Irishards@mt.gov](mailto:Irishards@mt.gov). For more information on the Goguen Exchange, if you are interested in staying apprised of the project status, to make a donation, or to volunteer on the "Trail Runs Through It" project, send an e-mail to [trailrunsthroughit@gmail.com](mailto:trailrunsthroughit@gmail.com) or log on to [www.trailrunsthroughit.org](http://www.trailrunsthroughit.org). # # #