



Missoula's Conservation Lands:

Trailheads and Trails Priorities

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Missoula Conservation Lands (MCL)
Trailhead Inventory

Types of Signs

- **Permanent Signs:** eg. directional info., trail etiquette/rules, trail name, trail maps, informational/interpretative signs
- **Temporary signs:** eg. construction, detour trail closure, rehab projects
- **Seasonal Postings:** eg. closures, warning signs, management activities

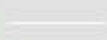
Trailheads Hierarchy

- **Major Trailhead:** main trail system access points with: parking for 8-10, bike racks, access gate, informational kiosk w/space for permanent signs and seasonal postings, trail map, mutt-mitts and garbage.
- **Minor Trailhead:** similar access but with parking for 2-8, bike parking, access gate, space for permanent signs and seasonal postings, trail map, mutt-mitts and garbage.
- **Neighborhood Access:** primarily used by adjacent residents and has space for permanent signs and seasonal postings.
- **Access Point:** located on trail where trail crosses a property boundary and has space for permanent signs and seasonal postings

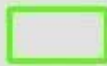
Legend



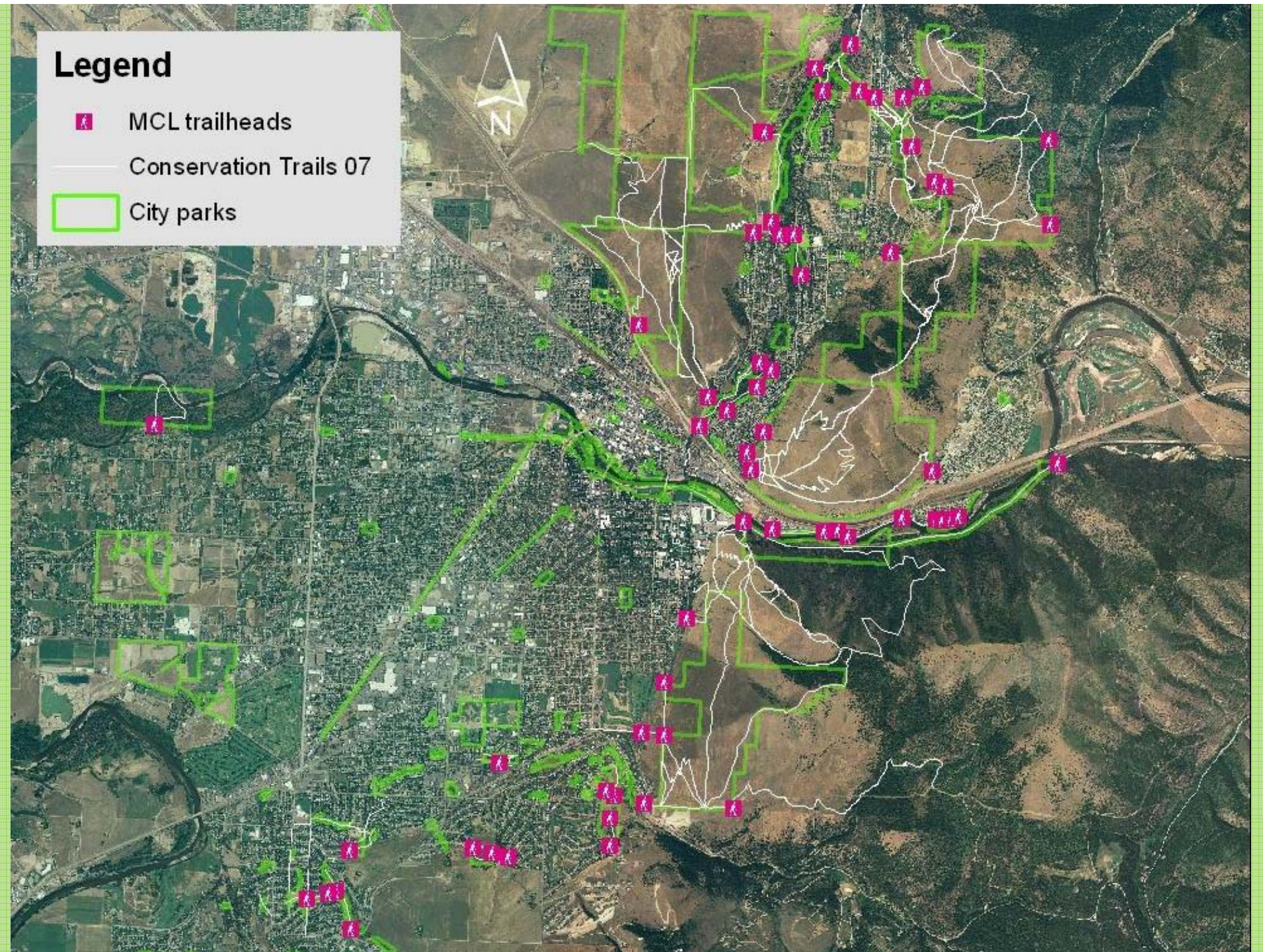
MCL trailheads



Conservation Trails 07



City parks

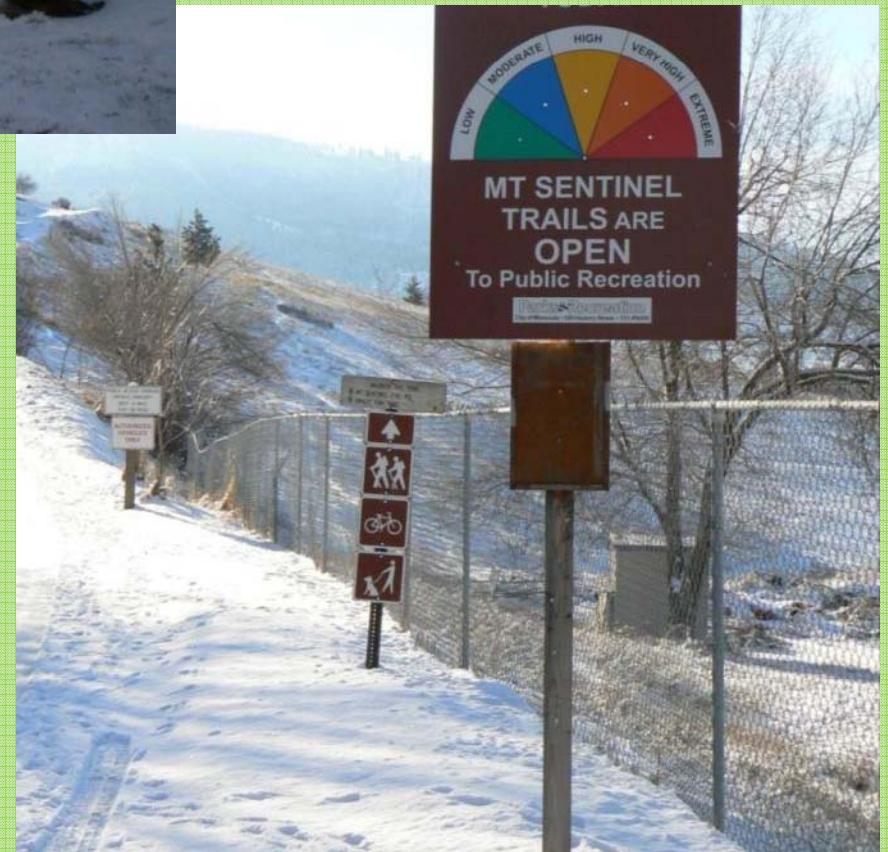


Trailhead Inventory

- 63 Trailheads in the MCL System.
- 166 Signs
- 23 garbage cans (8 that are bearproof)
- 22 Mutt-mitt dispensers

The Signage Bottom Line

- We have no consistent design theme for signage.
- We have no protocol for # or type of signs at trailheads.
- Almost all trailheads don't have adequate space for seasonal postings.
- Multiple trailheads have too many signs and many have too few.







Current Trail Maps

- Primary trail map used by public
- Show about 16 mi. of trails (30% of established)
- Multiple dead – ends



Management Goals for MCL Trailheads

Short-term goals:

- Standardize signage at trailheads
- Increase areas for seasonal postings
- Repair or eliminate degraded interpretative signs
- Develop New Trail system Maps

Long-term goals:

- Develop design theme for all MCL Trail signs.
- Upgrade all Major trailheads
- Prioritize interpretative areas for future projects.

MCL Trail System Inventory

MCL Trail System Inventory

- Complied information from 2004 to Jan 2008.
- Categorized trails based on physical characteristics, origination and users
- Mapped all trails not just designated trails

Legend

- Conservation Trails 07
- Conservation trails 06
- City parks

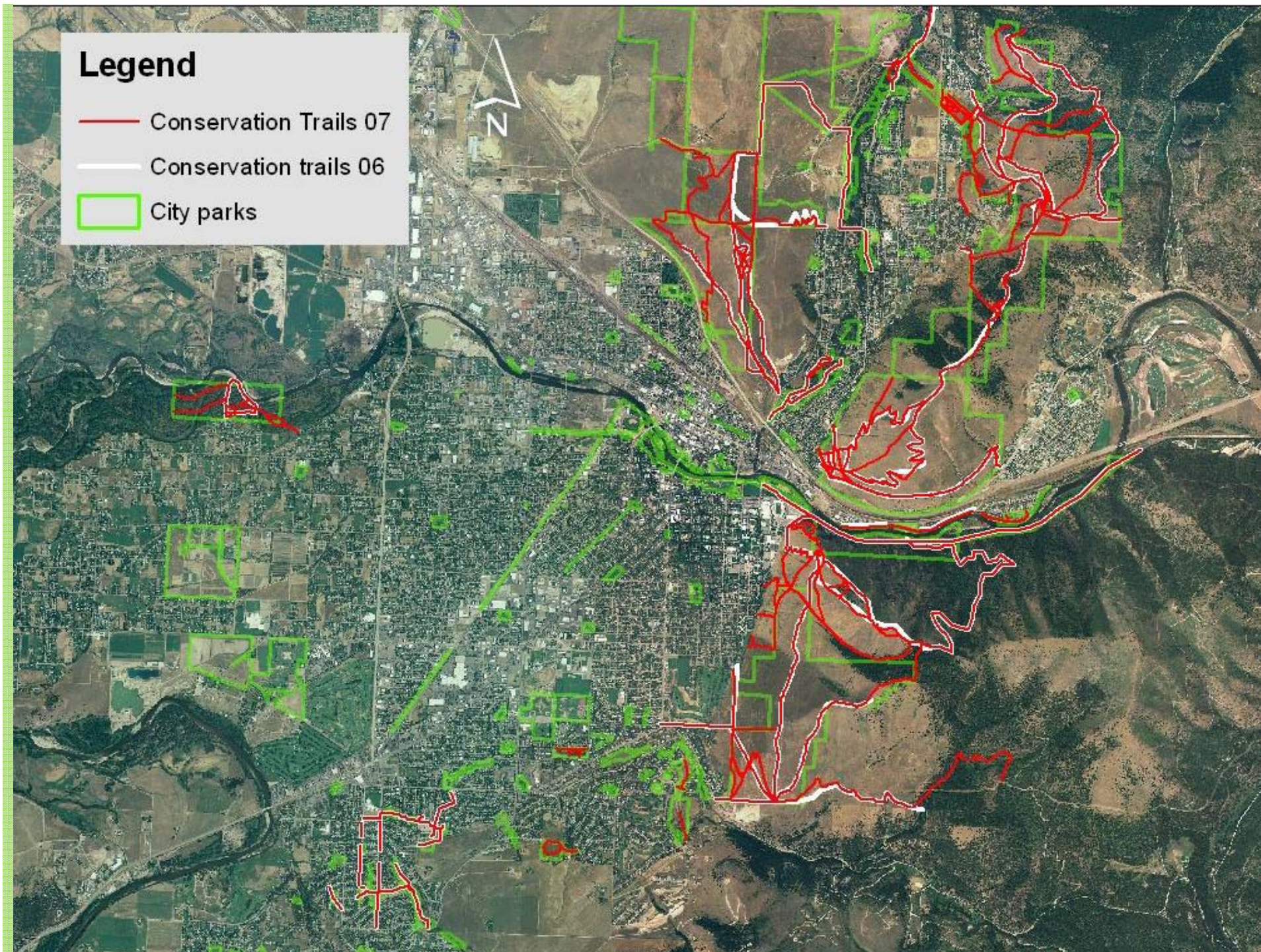


Fig 2: Miles of Trails by Type

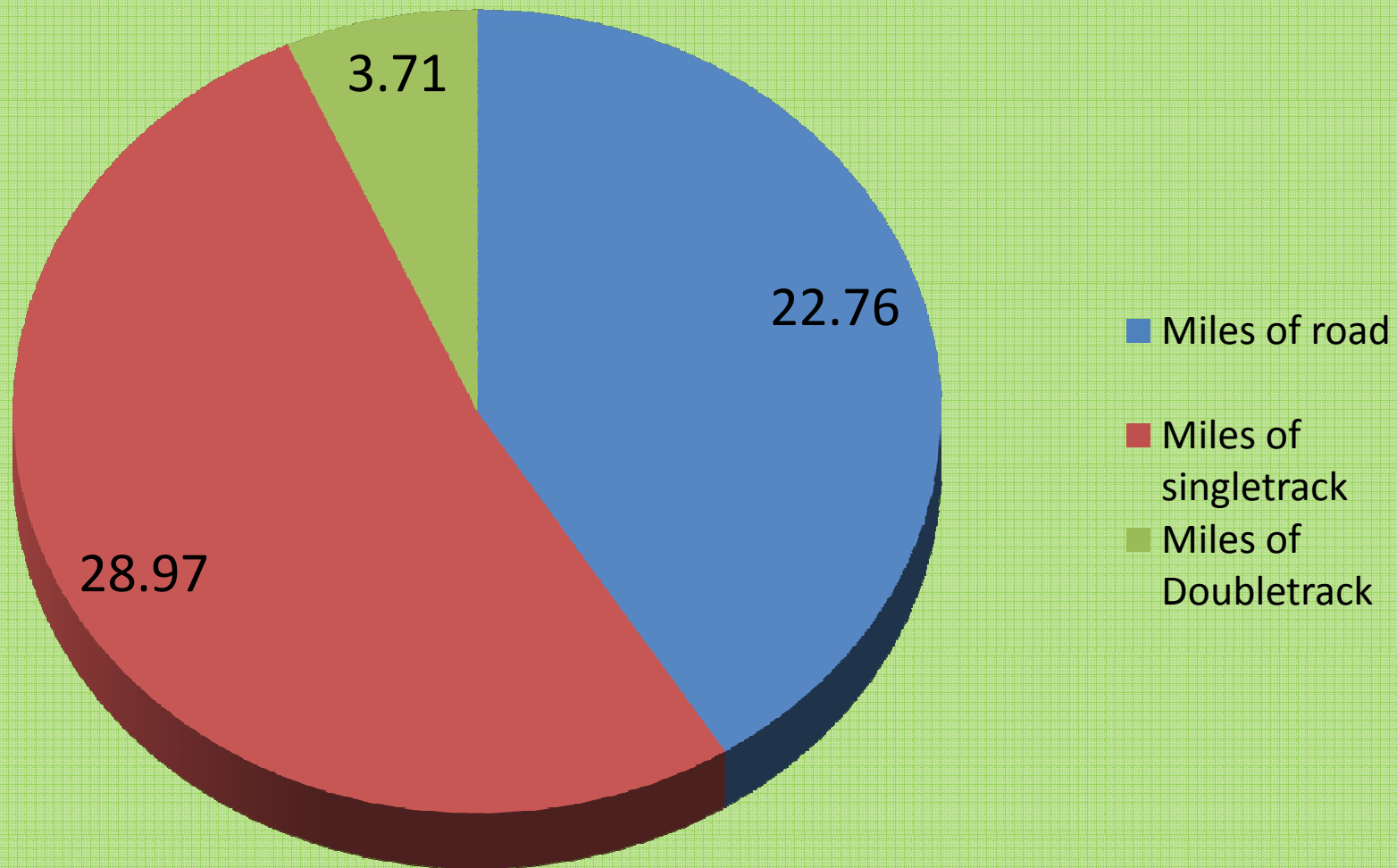
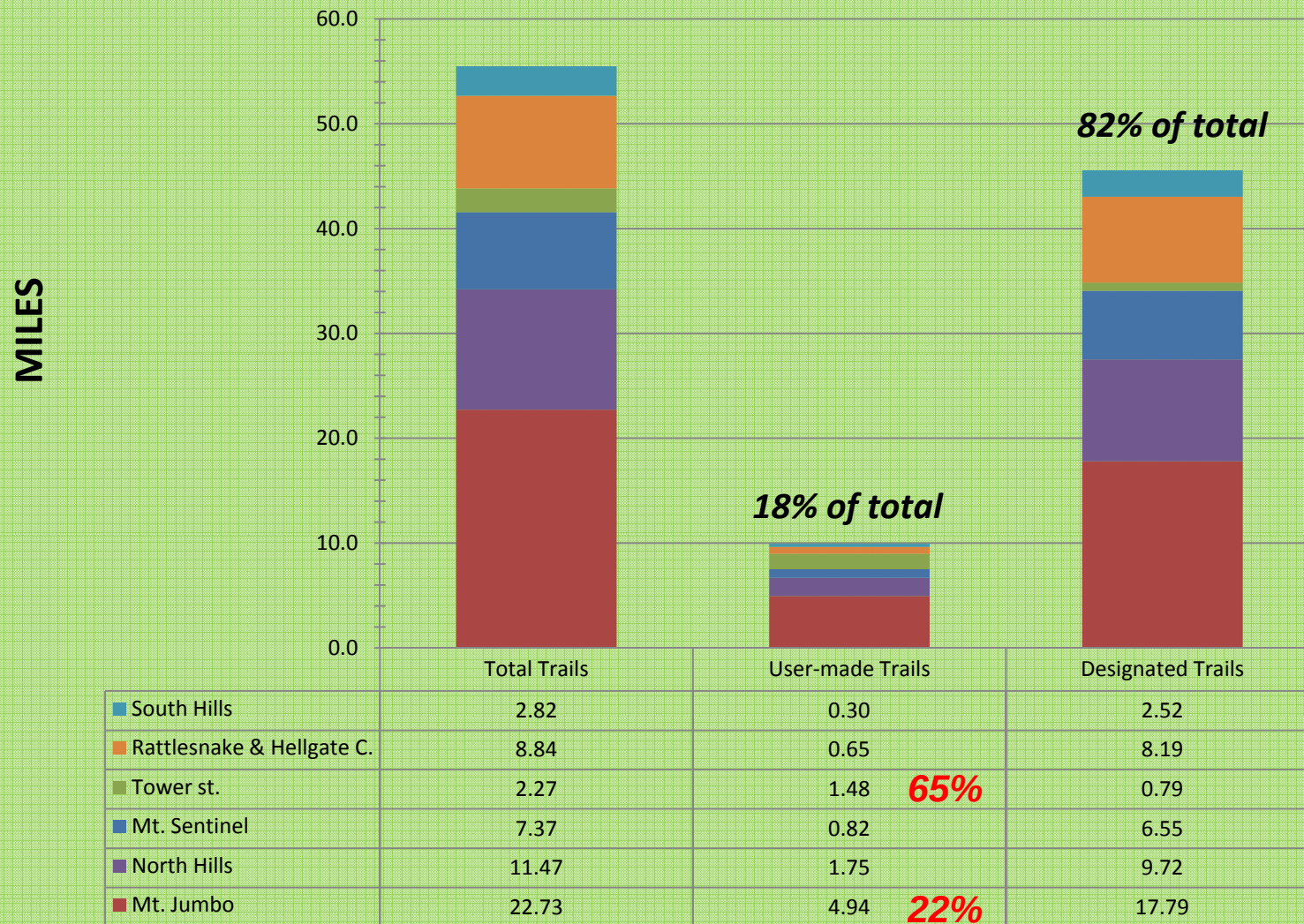




Fig:3 Distribution of Trails between Properties



Estimate for Closing 1mi. of Trail (option 1) \$\$\$	
YEAR 1	
Labor (signage, debris)	287.8
seed (30 LBS @ \$15.00/LB plus labor)	450.0
Signs	50.0
	subtotal: 787.8
YEAR 2	
Labor (signage, debris)	287.8
seed (20 LBS @ \$15.00/LB plus labor)	300.0
Signs	25.0
	subtotal: 612.8
YEAR3	
Labor (signage, debris)	67.0
seed (15 LBS @ \$15.00/LB plus labor)	225.0
	subtotal: 292.0
GRAND TOTAL: 1692.6	

Estimate for Closing 1mi. Of Trail (option 2) \$\$\$	
YEAR 1	
Labor (signage, debris)	287.8
seed (10 LBS @ 15.00/LB plus labor)	150.0
Signs	50.0
live plants (planting at 1 per 5 ft. with labor)	996.7
	subtotal: 1484.6
YEAR 2	
Labor (signage, debris)	287.8
seed (5 LBS @ 15.00/LB plus labor)	75.0
Signs	25.0
	subtotal: 387.8
YEAR 3	
Labor (signage, debris)	67.0
	subtotal: 67.0
GRAND TOTAL: 1872.4	

Costs for Closing Trails:

- Approximately, \$600 a year to close and restore 1 mile of User-made trail (dependant on location, aspect, age of trail, vegetation establishment and user reaction to closure).
- If we choose to.....it would cost around \$17,800 and take about 3 years to close and restore all user-made trails in the system.

Management Goals for User-Made Trails

- Prioritize trails for closure
 - Eliminate redundant trails
 - Eliminate unsustainable trails and those through sensitive areas
- Incorporate "good trails" into trails system.
 - Costs will include fixing unsustainable sections
- **MUST DIRECT USERS TO SUSTAINABLE DESIGNATED TRAILS!** (Mileage markers?... update trail maps!!)

USER GROUPS

How Have We Determine Which User Groups are Acceptable?

- Historic Use of the Property (eg. Mt jumbo trails)
- Based on transportation corridors (eg. Rattlesnake Greenbelt)
- In Reaction to User Conflicts (eg. Mo-z trail)
- "Cause that's the way it's always been" (eg. North Hills)
- Ultimately the Park Board decides.

Fig. 4: Percentage of All Designated Trails Open to Multiple Trail User Groups

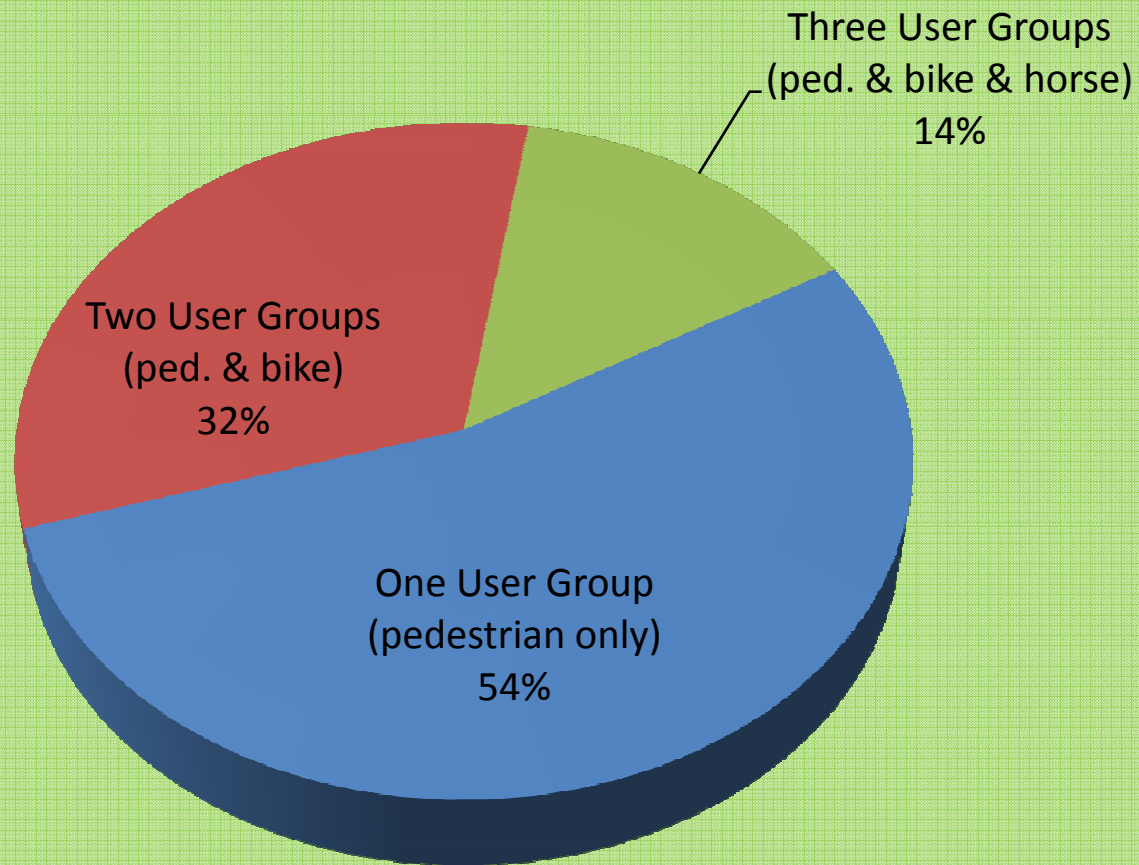
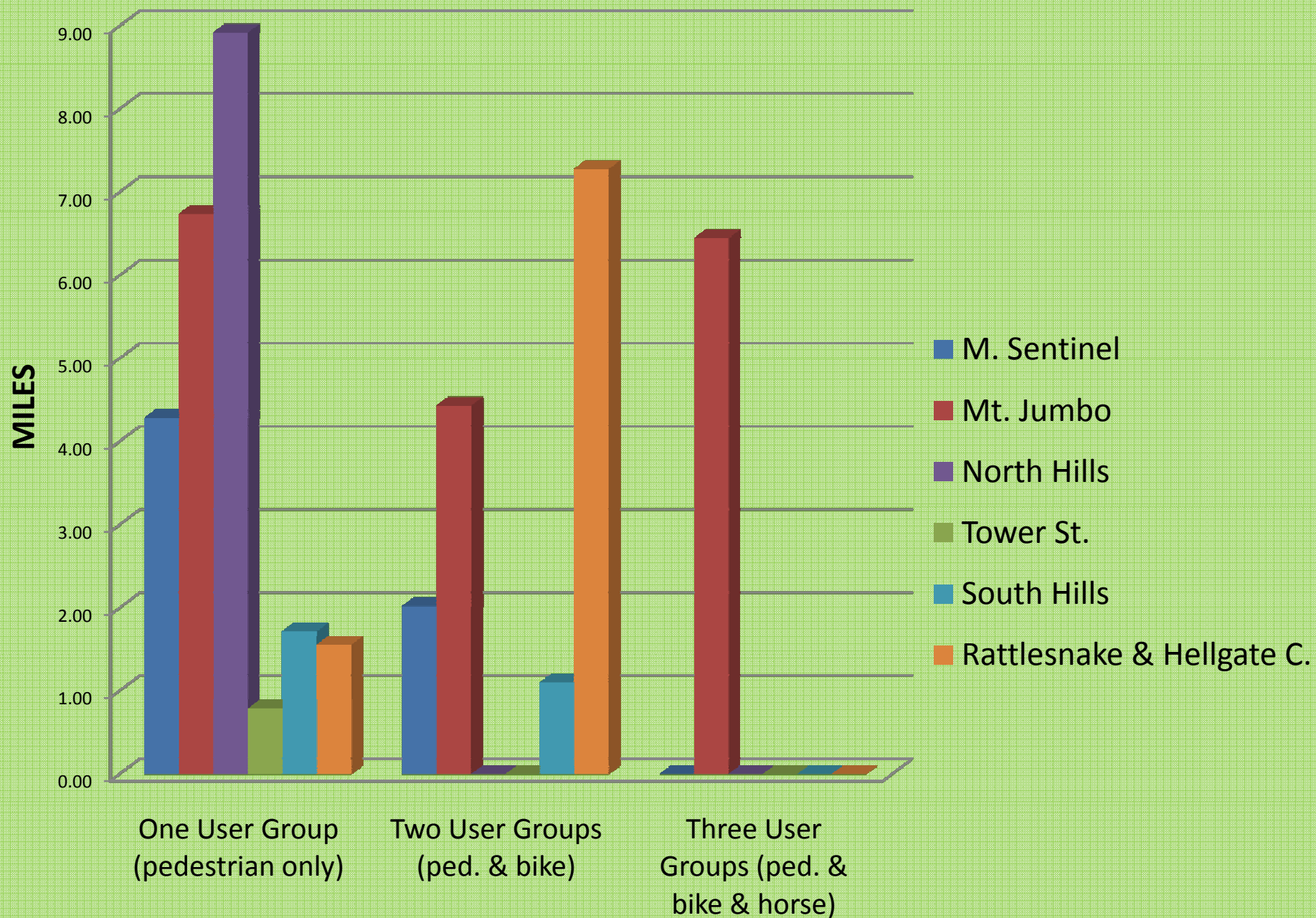


Fig. 5 Miles of Designated Trails Open to Multiple Trail User Groups



How We Should Evaluate Trail Development and Access

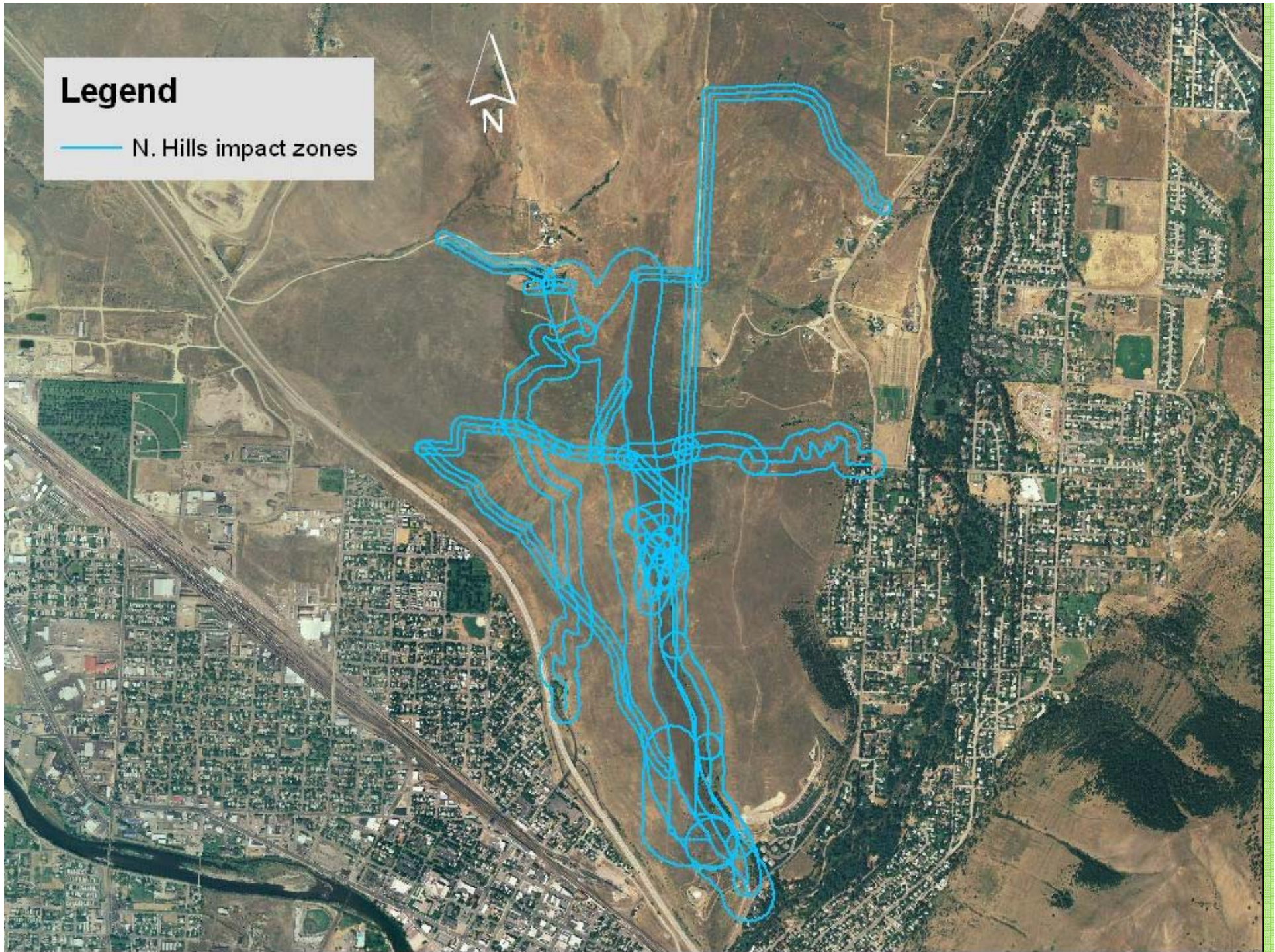
- 1) Need to study the amount of use and abuse our Conservation Lands receive from users.
- 2) Need to develop a system that evaluates impacts of users on flora and fauna vs. recreational opportunities.
- 3) All new trail construction and access decisions must be based on current use and habitat impacts.
- 4) We must also begin to incorporate population trending into our trail construction.

Plan for Evaluating Trail Development and Access

- Inventory critical areas for Flora and Fauna (ongoing)
- Begin Trail use Monitoring Program (spring of 2008)
 - Institute a scientific monitoring program for trail usage
 - Utilize volunteers and parks employees to collect data
- Rank and Buffer all current trails based on data collected (fall 08-2009)

Legend

— N. Hills impact zones



THE END

