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Big Sky

Feb. 15-28, 2019
Volume 10 // Issue #4

Big Horns charge into district tournament

After 25 years, Hungry Moose changing hands

Tensions surface over resort tax increase bill

Resilience: Planning for drought

Giddyap! Skijoring in Big Sky

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ON THE COVER: Senior point guard Kolya Bough drives the lane. According to coach Brian Van Eps, Bough's quickness, grit and scoring ability were crucial in propelling the LPHS Big Horns basketball team to two victories in their last regular season games. With that momentum, the Big Horns will take on Shields Valley in the first game of the district tournament Feb. 14. Bough will be attending Yale University in the fall. PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

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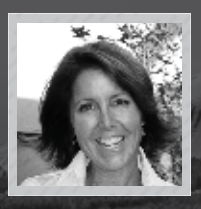
A skier flies high behind horse and rider during the Big Sky Skijoring Association's Best in the West Showdown in Big Sky Town Center on Feb. 9 and 10. Read what Staff Writer Bay Stephens' learned after partaking in this, his first skijoring event, on page 36. PHOTO BY MARK LAROWE

Do you want to see your photography in the pages of EBS? Submit a maximum of three images via email to carie@theoutlawpartners.com or use #explorebigsky on social media to be eligible. One photo per issue will be chosen for the opening shot.

CORRECTION: In an article titled "TEDxBigSky anchors first Big Sky Ideas Festival weekend," published in the February 1, 2019 edition of Explore Big Sky, we mistakenly credited the photos accompanying the article. The photos were taken by Myles Wilson.



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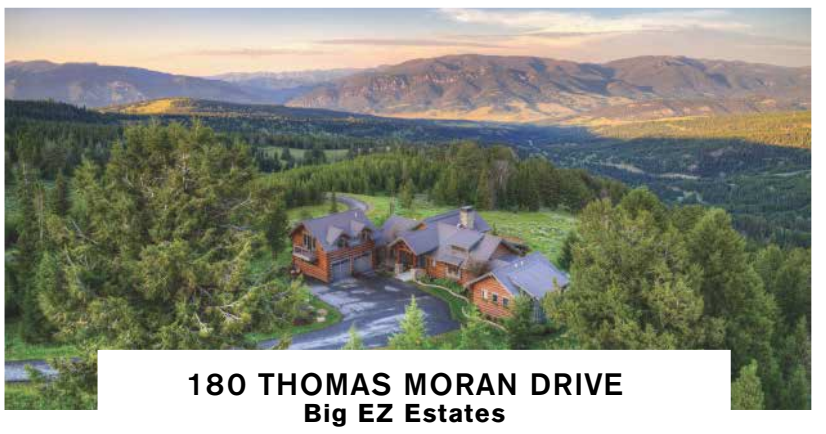

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Big Sky recycling win-win for community and the environment

BIG SKY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Thanks to widespread community collaboration, the condition of Big Sky's public recycling site on U.S. Highway 191 is rapidly improving.

Donated by John Haas of Haas Builders, the designated plot's infrastructural upgrades are being carried out by Big Sky Landscaping.

According the Gallatin County Waste Management District, 282,900 pounds of recyclables were collected from the Big Sky site in 2018, a figure up from 212,280 pounds collected in 2017, underscoring the need for enhancement.

Cardboard products constitute about 60 percent of all collected materials in Big Sky.

Big Sky's public recycling site accepts plastic denominations No. 1 and No. 2, aluminum and steel cans, paper, cardboard products, but does not accept clamshells nor dairy tubs.

Visit gallatinsolidwaste.org for more details and what can and cannot be recycled.

Big Sky Resort area district to begin Community Visioning process

OUR BIG SKY

The Big Sky Resort Area District is excited to announce the Community Visioning Strategy, *Our Big Sky,* which will guide future development and plan for, prioritize, and budget capital improvement projects and strategic investments within Big Sky over the next ten years.

The board is working with the community to build the Visioning Strategy of the community's vision for the future to reflect its hopes and priorities.

This process is projected to take place through November 2019, and offers an opportunity for all residents to join in a community-based dialogue focused on capturing what is already successful in Big Sky, as well as what initiatives and projects might further improve the town.

There will be multiple opportunities for public input at community events, one-on-one interviews, online questionnaires, advisory committee meetings, and photo contests. These include the Feb. 26 and Feb. 27 one-on-one interviews at the Compass Café and Caliber Coffee, respectively, as well as the Feb. 27 and Feb. 28 "Polaroids and Pints" kickoff event series, held at the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill and Beehive Basin Brewery, respectively.

All additional upcoming events and opportunities will be posted and publicized within the area, through various newsletters, newspapers, and the project website, OurBigSkyMT.com.

Legislation to extend brewery hours voted down

EBS STAFF

Rep. David Fern, D-Whitefish, recently proposed House Bill 185 which called for an extension of brewery operation hours, replacing the current 8 p.m. mandated closure with a 10 p.m. one. HB 185 applied to breweries that produce between 100 and 60,000 barrels of beer annually.

Fern argued an extension on brewery hours would increase revenues of local businesses and have a positive economic impact on the communities in which the respective breweries operate.

A Montana House panel ultimately rejected the bill on Feb. 8 in a 16-3 vote due to the fact breweries are considered manufacturers, not retailers. Brewery closure time will remain at 8 p.m.

Rangers successful in investigation and conviction of illegal taking of wolf

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Grand Teton National Park rangers recently conducted an investigation into the illegal taking of a gray wolf within the Teton National Park boundaries, resulting in a conviction.

Two Wyoming individuals—a male, 56, and a female, 55—were charged with the illegal taking of wildlife within the park. The male pleaded guilty, receiving a $5,040 financial penalty, one year of unsupervised probation, and one year's loss of wolf hunting privileges. The female's charge was dismissed as part of the case's resolution.

On Jan. 1, park rangers identified evidence that suggested illegal hunting activity within the park near Spread Creek and the eastern boundary of the park. Rangers proceeded with a thorough investigation and determined the individuals from Wyoming were responsible.

Chief Ranger Michael Nash said, "I commend our park rangers on their professional and timely investigation. Their work to protect park resources, even during the shutdown, was outstanding as limited park rangers were available to respond to emergencies, protect property and provide basic visitor services during this time."

Search and rescue results in successful evacuation of missing hikers

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

On Feb. 5 at 6:30 p.m. a Big Sky Sheriff's Deputy received a report from a wife in Utah that her husband and 12-year-old son were overdue from a hiking trip in the Spanish Peaks.

Despite heavy snow and temperatures below zero degrees Fahrenheit, the deputy found their abandoned vehicle 5 miles from U.S. Highway 191 at 8 p.m. Twenty rescuers responded to the search and rescue call, and at 10 p.m. the first search teams found the boy in a hypothermic and confused state. He was brought back to the highway while the search for the father continued.

After interviewing the boy, the team established a narrowed-down search area using landmarks, estimated times and Geographic Information Systems data. At 1:15 a.m. Wednesday morning, rescuers located the father a few miles from where the boy was found.

The father and son were both flown to the University of Utah Burn Center for frostbite injuries.

406 Forum

With PBR in Big Sky Town Center, MusicFest in Moonlight Basin and weekly Music in the Mountains, there are growing opportunities for enjoying live music in Big Sky. What headliners or genre of music would you like to see come to Big Sky?

Joey Martinez
Big Sky, Montana

"I would say over the last couple of years, the music's all been great. I would like to see a little more rock out here, but I'm a musician so I'm very open to everything. Who would I want specifically out here? I have a lot of favorite bands, like System (of a Down). Jazz is also really great, I love jazz."

Andrew Arvanitis
Leominster, Massachusetts

"The style of music I'd like to see here would probably be an excellent funk band. Like Tower of Power because their music is so exciting and it gets everybody moving. You can't sit still. Just a a lot of energy."

Audray Coury
Big Sky, Montana

"As a former member of the Big Sky Arts Council, I really promote live music, especially in the summer. It's just great to have. I've also been on the Classical Music Committee, so I enjoy all the classical music concerts we have."

LeAnn Shaw
Big Sky, Montana

"I like the bluegrass music and the country music a little bit better than the rocky music. More of that."

OUTLAW™ | News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

New EBS website improves user experience

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY
EBS DIGITAL EDITOR

BIG SKY – The editorial team at Explore Big Sky launched its new web platform in an effort to streamline content and the overall reader experience. With an increased focus on ease of locating the latest and greatest content, our team believes this updated experience will better connect EBS with our audience and advertisers alike.

The update could not have come at a better time, with Local Editor Bay Stephens joining the EBS team nine months ago, Editor-in-Chief Joseph T. O'Connor returning this month, and me, as Digital Editor, joining the team Jan. 29.

With fresh blood and a new perspective, we are motivated to continue delivering news to the Big Sky community by the most effective means possible.

"EBS.com has always been a great local source for news and events," said O'Connor, who returned to head the media team after spending two years in Boston as Editor-at-Large. "I think this reorganization of our digital presence will up our visual appeal, both to our readers and to advertisers looking to reach a broad audience."

With new and improved features, such as placing both latest and trending articles above the digital fold, an option to toggle quickly between tabs for the latest video content and upcoming events, and a simplified business directory, users can expect a premium experience.

"I think it looks more professional, more appropriate for a news site," Stephens said. "It will make accessing content a lot easier. The transition is definitely a smart move for our organization."

Pursuing current trends and implementing them into our media strategy is a paramount objective for EBS, especially in this modern media landscape where storytellers and publications are left behind seemingly overnight due to an unwillingness or inability to adapt.

From a sales perspective, this update also allows advertisers to access improved avenues to reach their target demographics.

According to Sam Brooks, Outlaw Partners' media sales associate, this launch will open eyes to the possibilities of advertising through web-based means, garnering fresh interest in the digital frontier.

"The new site gives our advertisers an advantage," Brooks said. "It's a great opportunity to express themselves to our growing digital audience."

With this web platform release, and with myriad pieces of regular content and platforms in development (with fast-approaching releases of their own), our organization intends to stay ahead of the curve while meeting the specific wants and needs of our readership.

"We're constantly trying to improve our engagement with our audience," O'Connor said. "And we welcome all feedback as we look to improve our platform for the community."

Professional bull riding event returns to Big Sky for ninth year

Tickets on sale March 1 at 9 a.m. MST

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Big Sky PBR, the six-time award-winning event of the year, returns with six days of events July 21-27. Tickets go on sale March 1 at 9 a.m. MST.

The event, which sold out in eight minutes last year, will feature three nights of bull riding on July 25, 26 and 27.

"By adding a third night of bull riding, we hope to be able to accommodate as many people as possible," Outlaw Partners CEO Eric Ladd said. "We did our best to accommodate the demand last year but at the end of the day, it's the hottest ticket in town."

Ladd advised anyone interested in watching the toughest sport on dirt not wait to buy tickets considering the event has sold out the past eight years.

However, the new location of the arena—dubbed the Big Sky Events Arena—provides approximately 15 percent more seating, helping to address ticket demand. The arena's new orientation also places Lone Mountain in the backdrop of the competition.

The PBR Week kicks off with the fourth annual Big Sky Art Auction on Sunday, July 21 in Big Sky Town Center. The third annual golf tournament to benefit the Western Sports Foundation will take place on July 24, followed by the Street Dance in the new Town Center Plaza.

Every night of bull riding, pre- and post-party events and music will take place in the plaza, integrating the event into main street and drawing customers to local stores and restaurants.

Thursday night's competition will coincide with the Music in the Mountains performance organized by the Arts Council of Big Sky, and on Saturday night, Hell's Belles, an all-female AC/DC cover band, will close out Big Sky's Biggest Week.

The ever-popular mutton bustin' contest returns this year with three nights of competition and will feature 10 participants per night on a first come, first served reservation basis. Buckaroos must be 3-6 years, weigh less than 60 pounds, and have a valid ticket for the event.

Big Sky PBR supports local and regional charities with proceeds from the Calcutta auction each night of the event, 50/50 raffle ticket sales, donations and more. Over the past eight years, more than $500,000 has been raised to support nonprofits directly and indirectly involved with the event. Previous nonprofit partners include Yellowstone Forever, Montana Land Reliance, Western Sports Foundation, Gallatin River Task Force and the Rotary Club of Big Sky.

Visit bigskypbr.com for additional event details. Reservations for mutton bustin' open March 1 and can be requested by emailing blythe@theoutlawpartners.com.

2019 BIG SKY PBR SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, July 21
Big Sky Art Auction

Wednesday, July 24
Big Sky PBR Golf Tournament benefiting the Western Sports Foundation
The RESERVE at Moonlight Basin

Big Sky PBR Street Dance in Town Center Plaza: music by Jason Wickens band

Thursday, July 25
Big Sky PBR Bull Riding Night 1
Big Sky PBR After Party: Music in the Mountains

Friday, July 26
Big Sky PBR Bull Riding Night 2
Big Sky PBR After Party: Music to be announced

Saturday, July 27
Big Sky PBR Bull Riding Night 3
Big Sky PBR After Party: Hell's Belles

New hire brings heat to Outlaw's digital platforms

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

BIG SKY – After missing his flight from London to Munich, Germany, for Oktoberfest, Michael Somerby didn't bother buying another plane ticket. He bought a bus pass instead.

From London—where he was studying abroad during the fall of 2015—the bus carried Somerby across the English Channel via ferry to Paris, France. From there, he hitchhiked the 500 miles to Munich to celebrate the age-old holiday.

"I guess my friends in Munich were having wagers on if I would make it at all," Somerby said. "Adventurous" is one of the words he thinks friends would use to describe him and is underscored by time exploring places like China, Turkey, Switzerland, and India. Now he's on to his next adventure: Montana.

As the newest addition to the Outlaw Partners team, Somerby was hired in January as digital editor, a role that involves managing and growing the company's digital and social platforms while helping on the editorial side as a reporter.

In 2017, Somerby earned a bachelor's in journalism from Elon University in North Carolina, a degree he pivoted to after a displeasing freshman year in the school of business. He's always been a storyteller, he says, so journalism was a far better fit.

After graduating, Somerby spent two months teaching high school students in rural southern India before returning stateside and working as a media buyer for a prominent media company in New York City where he purchased advertisement space on network and cable television.

After five months he traded the position for work on the production team at Whitehouse Post, a commercial editing company also located in the Big Apple.

There he oversaw post-production for various commercial campaigns, including editing, color work, sound work and visual effects. The biggest job he produced was the ESPN College Football Championship campaign, which he endeavored on from August to December. He also produced works for Facebook, Nike, and American Biopharmaceuticals Companies.

Somerby said the 11-month experience taught him the ins and outs of post-production, personnel and asset management, and how to juggle a litany of tasks.

Having grown up visiting Ennis, where his great grandfather and now grandfather has ranchland, he knew a more manageable pace of life in a more organic setting was out there. He left his previous job Dec. 31 and, after interviewing, officially started at Outlaw Jan. 29.

Mike Somerby, Outlaw Partners' newest team member, closes out a wave of four young new hires the company has brought to Big Sky in the past nine months. PHOTO BY BAY STEPHENS

"I was coming out here regardless," he said. "I just knew it was a good place to be."

Montana is a welcome change for Somerby, offering more prospects of community and outdoor recreation than the big city or even his hometown in southwest Connecticut. He looks forward to hiking and camping this summer, as well as honing his skiing, fishing and rock-climbing prowess. Mountain biking and elk hunting are also on Somerby's list.

In the meantime, Somerby is relishing the opportunity to think creatively with the Outlaw team and bolster the company's digital platforms while carrying on its spirit of powerful storytelling.

"Outlaw has a great company culture," Somerby said. "We have a canvas and we're given a lot of ability in what we can do and what we can try. Big Sky is going through a very transformative stage, and I think Outlaw and EBS are part of the stewardship of that growth. There's still so much that can happen and I want to be a part of it."

Although his nose is to the grindstone bolstering the company's digital presence and thinking up new and compelling storytelling methods, Somerby says he's looking forward to meeting community members and learning more about Big Sky. And he's thrilled for this next adventure.

A community pillar, Hungry Moose sees new ownership this month

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY
EBS DIGITAL EDITOR

BIG SKY – After nearly 25 years of Robin family ownership in Big Sky, the Hungry Moose Market and Deli officially traded hands on Feb. 11, starting a new chapter for the iconic local food provider.

Effective this month, Frank and Kristin Kern will assume proprietorship of both the Town Center and Big Sky Resort locations. Kristin, niece of Big Sky Resort founder and famed newscaster Chet Huntley, and her husband believe the transition will preserve the community-driven character of the brand.

"We watched it evolve from a 700-square-foot location to 1,500 square feet to a new building entirely with an additional satellite kitchen, and then to opening a new location at the resort," said Frank, who retired in December 2018 from his role as chairman of Altran, a global leader in engineering and R & D services.

"The big message with this transition is that nothing is changing," he added. "We want to maintain the Big Sky family-owned legacy that is the Hungry Moose Market and Deli. It has a role in this community."

Jackie Robin with the new Hungry Moose Market and Deli owners Frank and Kristin Kern. The Kerns look forward to maintaining the 25-year-old culture and legacy of the Moose.

In December 2017 Mark Robin passed away from complications related to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. His dedication to the Hungry Moose Market and Deli made it what it is today.

"Everybody knew Mark," Jackie said. "Mark was the heart of this business. He worked harder than anyone, and was an icon in this town. I'm grateful the new ownership wants to carry on the legacy of what we built, and will run the Hungry Moose Market and Deli with the same passion."

Jackie and her son Andrew Robin will continue working with the Kerns and Moose staff into the summer. Ultimately, the Kerns hope to carry on the business independently, but under the direction of the time-tested practices carved out by the two-and-a-half decades of Robin ownership.

"We're extremely excited that Jackie will still be part of it all," Frank said. "We need her to guide us. We want the original DNA of what made the Hungry Moose Market and Deli great; to carry the legacy of what the Robins started."

Mark and Jackie Robin moved to Big Sky in the fall of 1993, opening a roadside produce stand the following summer. Offering fresh vegetables, fruits and flowers to the Big Sky community, this venture inspired the opening of a small retail shop that expanded rapidly, adding a deli in 1998.

The rest, as they say, is history. The Hungry Moose Market and Deli became a pillar of Big Sky enterprise, practically writing the book on efficient business practice in conjunction with healthy Big Sky community involvement.

In fact, Jackie wrote a 10-itemed "Moose Mantra," while on drives to her sons' six-man football games. Written from the perspective of a customer, bullets of the mantra include, "I always receive a sincere greeting from staff members," "They know me here. I feel welcomed and well-cared for," and "A visit to the Hungry Moose might even make my day."

Those hallmarks of service at the Hungry Moose are byproducts of the Robins' emphasis on employee wellness. For instance, in a town infamous for a lack of affordable workforce housing, the couple solved the problem for their own business, offering four housing units for their staff.

The Robins also elected to establish a human resources department, an unusual act for a relatively small business, ensuring the best possible care for the staff, the individuals that make it all possible through their matched devotion to the missions of the Hungry Moose.

The cornerstone of the business, and what sets the Hungry Moose Market and Deli apart from the herd, is an absolute dedication to the community's needs. Both Hungry Moose locations—on Aspen Leaf Drive in Town Center and in the Mountain Mall at Big Sky Resort—are open from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

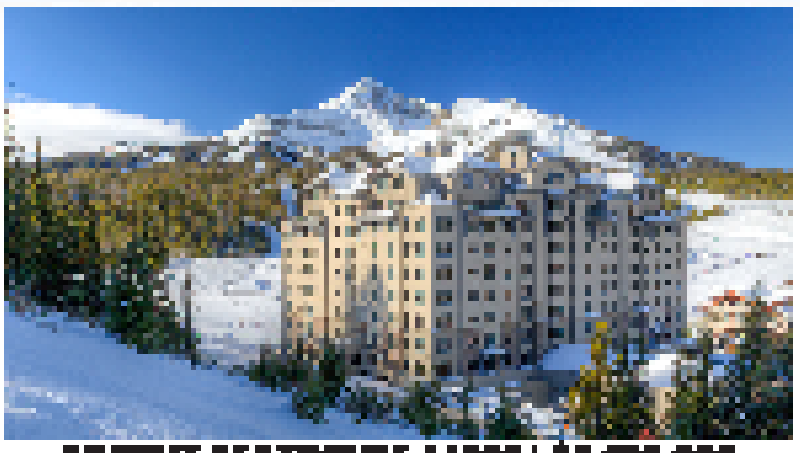
"People know we're here for them as we've created a culture of good work ethic," Jackie said. "We watched businesses come and go in this town because people couldn't put themselves fully into it. They hired a manager or saw it as a side project. Mark and I were all in from the start."

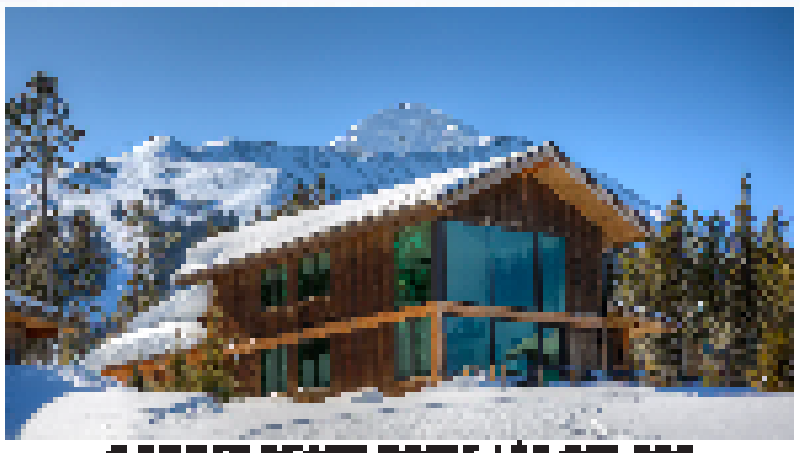
Over the past two summers, the Robins have organized a beloved community event together with the Arts Council of Big Sky called Big Sky Soul Shine, a carnival and concert that serves as a fundraiser for ALS causes, a thank you to the community that rallied around Mark, and to celebrate the life and spirit of the man that built the Hungry Moose. This summer's event marks a particularly special Soul Shine, one that will also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hungry Moose Market and Deli and the welcoming of the Kerns.

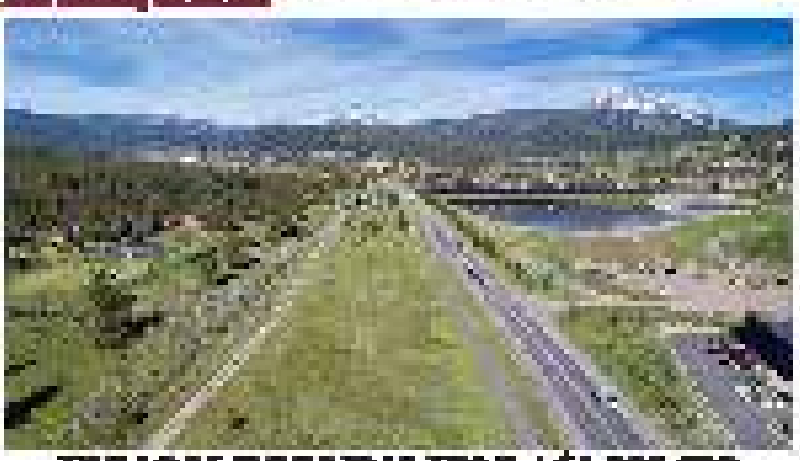
Join the Robins, the Kerns and the Big Sky community June 20 in Town Center for this year's Big Sky Soul Shine.

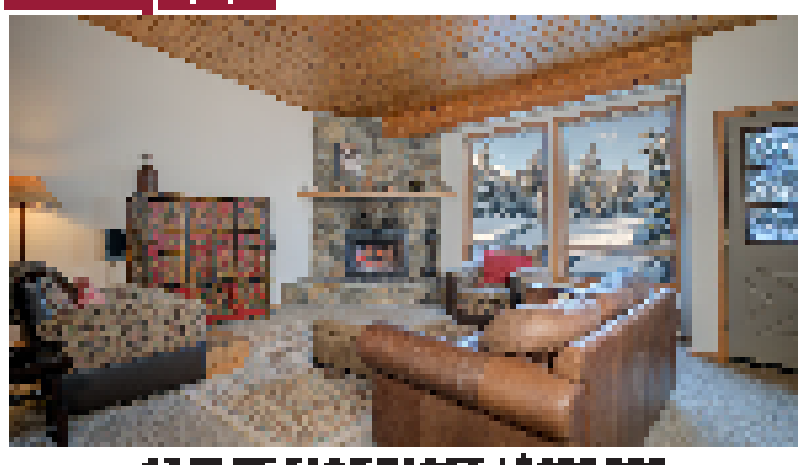
Visit bigskysoulshine.org/ for more information on Big Sky Soul Shine.

PURE big sky









The Great Kindness Challenge nurtures positivity at Ophir Elementary

Students, faculty, parents and community members participated in Ophir Elementary's The Great Kindness Challenge last week, which started on Feb. 4 and concluded on Feb. 8. The annual challenge sets out to educate students on the harmful effects of bullying, but also seeks to develop skills that foster self-esteem and edify others through various exercises such as a "Kindness Tunnel" and a checklist of kind acts and activities. Created by the Kids for Peace organization, over 10 million students participated in the kindness challenge in 2018, including more than 19,000 schools in over 100 countries. PHOTO COURESTY OF ERIKA FROUNFELKER

Winners of the Ophir Middle School Science Fair

Among many scientists-in-the-making at Big Sky School District, several stood out during the Ophir Middle School Science Fair held in the Lone Peak High School gym on Feb. 7. From left to right, Alex Redmon, Chloe Wier, Chloe Unger, Hazel Buotte, Chloe Coleman, Sadie Nordahl, Jonah Adams, Cash Beattie, Ryken Daugaard, and Logan Barker, (not pictured) Drew DiTullio and Colter Smit won the fair for the design and presentation of their experiments. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE VINCENT

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EVERY MONDAY 5 PM-Close	Industry Night at The Lotus Pad Asian Cuisine (Drink and appetizer specials. Bar seating only. 47 Town Center Ave., Unit D1)
EVERY FRIDAY 8 PM-Close	Trivia Night at Lone Peak Cinema (Win free drinks, movie tickets, t-shirts, etc. Teams of 1-4)
EVERY SAT & SUN 9 AM-2 PM	The Standard Weekend Brunch (The Standard Cocktails & Deserts at 47 Town Center Ave., Unit B1)
FEB 9-10	2nd Annual Best In The West Showdown (BSSA Skijoring, calcutta & awards celebration at Choppers Grub & Pub)
FEB 19	Full Moon Trails Event (Nordic ski, fat bike, snowshoe, and hike under the full moon on BSCO trails around Town Center and the Big Sky Community Park)
FEB 22 9:30 PM	Scavenger & Arkheron Thodol Free show at Choppers Grub & Pub
FEB 23 7 PM	Backcountry Film Festival at Lone Peak Cinema

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Resort tax increase contentious topic at chamber, BSRAD meetings

BY BAY STEPHENS AND MICHAEL SOMERBY
EBS EDITORS

BIG SKY – Concerns over a Montana bill that could enable a 1 percent increase in resort tax that the Big Sky Resort Area District Tax Board is lobbying for surfaced during both the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce board meeting Feb. 12 and the resort tax board meeting Feb. 13.

The legislation, known as Senate Bill 241 and sponsored by Sen. Jeffrey Welborn, R-Virginia City, would give Montana's 10 resort tax areas and communities the ability to levy an additional 1 percent resort tax should individual areas or communities vote to implement it within their respective boundaries. The effort has been led by West Yellowstone, which is under a building moratorium due to infrastructure issues.

This increase may spell trouble for local businesses trying to compete with no-tax markets like nearby Bozeman or online retail giants like Amazon if it passes the Legislature and is approved by the Big Sky electorate.

The financial gains from this additional percent, as proposed by SB 241, will be used exclusively for infrastructure, defined by the draft bill as, "tangible facilities and assets related to water, sewer, wastewater treatment, storm water, solid waste and utilities systems, fire protection, ambulance and law enforcement, and roads and bridges."

As currently drafted, any utilization of the up-to-1-percent increase would be project-based and not in perpetuity, the bill states.

Along with the boards of the Gallatin River Task Force and Big Sky Community Organization, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce voted to approve a letter of support for the bill, and requested it be amended to replace "roads and bridges" with the broader term "transportation" in order to include the Big Sky Transportation District.

The chamber vote, like the BSCO vote, was not unanimous as Grizzly Outfitters co-owner and chamber board member Ken Lancey voted in opposition.

"I've talked to a lot of people in retail [in Big Sky] and they are not super psyched about [the bill]," Lancey said at the meeting, wondering how representative the action was of the chamber's constituency of Big Sky business owners.

"This was a deeply divided, I'd say community-wide [issue] the last time around," Lancey said of the 2017 legislative session. "It drove a pretty big wedge in Big Sky. I guess I'm just cautious about where we as a board send our message to the community."

Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of Big Sky's Chamber of Commerce, said that because they are a representative board and the bill isn't a local issue yet—rather one regarding 10 resort areas and communities statewide—the chamber had not sought out constituent input. If the bill passed the Legislature, she said, and a petition was drafted to increase the tax in the Big Sky Resort Area District, the chamber would survey its members.

"We're asking for enabling legislation that puts a funding tool in the toolbox," Carr Strauss said in a Feb. 13 phone interview.

Kevin Germain, who serves on both the chamber and resort tax boards, said in the chamber meeting that large local projects coming down the pipeline—such as the estimated $21.7 million wastewater treatment plant upgrade proposed by Big Sky Water and Sewer District to meet current peak demand—call attention to Big Sky's limited funding options as an unincorporated entity.

"There's only two funding mechanisms for infrastructure projects in this community: property tax or resort tax," Germain said, estimating that for every dollar locals pay in resort tax, visitors pay $50. "If it's not resort tax, it's property tax, and property tax is paid 100 percent by the locals."

This is the third attempt to get similar bills through the Montana Legislature, having come just short in the 2017 legislative session of the simple majority vote in the Montana Senate required to keep the bill alive for House review.

The Big Sky chamber, which represents and supports member businesses, receives half its budget from resort tax.

The following morning, the BSRAD tax board met for an open board meeting at the resort tax office in Town Center, the meeting's focus centered on the 1 percent increase legislation.

According to the BSRAD website, "On April 13, 1992, the general electorate of the Big Sky area created the Big Sky Resort Area and adopted a 3 percent Resort Tax to be charged on 'luxury' goods and services not deemed necessities of life."

Andrew Schreiner, co-owner of Grizzly Outfitters with Lancey, was in attendance Wednesday and expressed his concerns and want for addressing the issue to become a priority.

"We have … locals ordering goods on Amazon and having them delivered for free," Schreiner said. "Or they just go down to Bozeman. I'm not concerned with the tourists, I'm talking about locals purchasing higher-end goods."

Schreiner also noted an inconsistency in what was taxed.

"A pair of Carhartt pants, a necessity for many, won't have a tax applied. And then a pair of Mountain Khakis will be taxed," he said. "It would be nice to have some consistency."

According to the draft bill, "'Luxuries' means any gift item, luxury item, or other item normally sold to the public or to transient visitors or tourists. The term does not include food purchased unprepared or unserved, medicine, medical supplies and services, appliances, hardware supplies and tools, or any necessities of life."

Ambiguity in the verbiage has been a problem in the past, since it is open to some interpretation and can vary between each resort tax area and community.

Mike Scholz, director of the resort tax board, brought another issue to the table: compliance. According to Scholz, it is often unclear what has and has not been taxed until an audit is performed.

"We don't have a list of what you sell," Scholz said. "We only know what you collect with an audit."

EBS reached out to Big Sky Resort, the largest collector or resort tax in the district, but the resort declined to comment at this time.

SB 241 will be heard on the Senate floor in the Montana Legislature on Wednesday, Feb. 20 at 8 a.m.

"We'll be up there," said Steve Johnson, vice-chair of the BSRAD tax board. "This is the first opportunity to show up and weigh in [on the bill] if you want to."

The board voted in favor of a motion to approve SB 241 as submitted.

The meeting commenced on a lighter note, touching on BSRAD's "Community Vision Process." Kicking off with events slated for the week of Feb. 25, the board's hope is to incorporate the voices of community members within the decisions of the board.

The objective of the strategy, called "Our Big Sky," is "… to guide future development and plan for, prioritize and budget capital improvement projects and strategic investments within Big Sky over the next 10 years," according to a press release from Colorado-based environmental planning firm Logan Simpson, which BSRAD hired to guide the process.

Events will include opportunity for public comment, one-on-one interviews, online questionnaires, advisory committee meetings and photo contests, according to the press release.

On Tuesday, Feb. 26 and Wednesday, Feb. 27, one-on-one interviews will be held at Compass Café and Caliber Coffee, respectively.

Kickoff group events, dubbed "Polaroid's and Pints," will occur on Wednesday, Feb. 27 and Thursday, Feb. 28 at the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill and the Beehive Basin Brewery, respectively.

Recreation counties dominate in population growth and average newcomer income

According to Headwaters Economics: Recreation counties attract new residents and higher incomes since the end of the Great Recession in 2010.

By definition, recreation counties are, "places with a large recreation-related economy, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service."

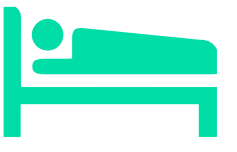
DEFINING A RECREATION COUNTY

The four criteria used to define a recreation county by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service were:

"Wage and salary employment in entertainment and recreation, accommodations, eating and drinking places, and real estate as a percentage of all employment reported in the Census Bureau's County Business Patterns for 1999."

"Percentage of total personal income reported for these same categories by the Bureau of Economic Analysis."

"Percentage of housing units intended for seasonal or occasional use reported in the 2000 Census."



"Per capita receipts from motels and hotels as reported in the 1997 Census of Business."

MIGRATION RATES (2010-2016, per 1000 people)

	RECREATION COUNTIES	NON-RECREATION COUNTIES
RURAL	Gained 1.3 people	Lost 20 people
MICROPOLITAN	Gained 21.6 people	Lost 15.6 people
METROPOLITAN	Gained 45.9 people	Lost 12.5 people

Recreation counties have higher net migration rates since 2010

AVERAGE GROWTH IN EARNINGS (per job since 2010)

	RECREATION COUNTIES	NON-RECREATION COUNTIES
RURAL	4.7% increase	0.8% increase
MICROPOLITAN	4.0% increase	1.4% increase
METROPOLITAN	2.0% increase*	2.6% increase

Recreation counties have faster growth in earnings per job.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVELS (since 2010)

	RECREATION COUNTIES	NON-RECREATION COUNTIES
RURAL	$48,828	$36,550
MICROPOLITAN	$56,992	$37,243
METROPOLITAN	$58,781	$45,734

Recreation counties have higher household income levels among newcomers.

Big Sky

Sotheby's

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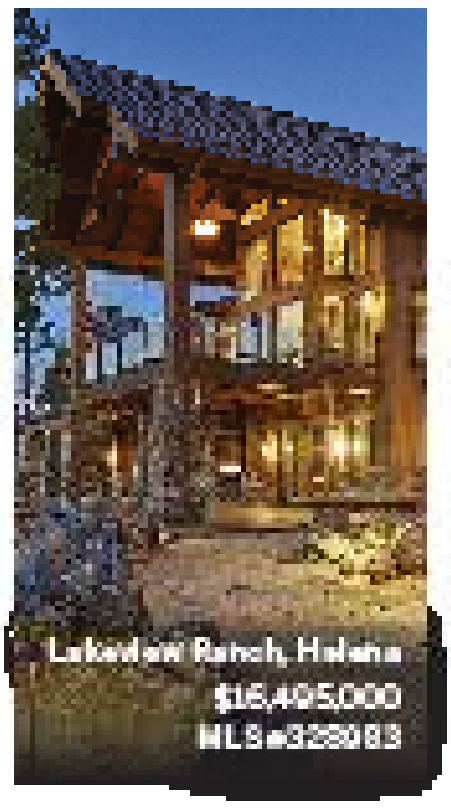

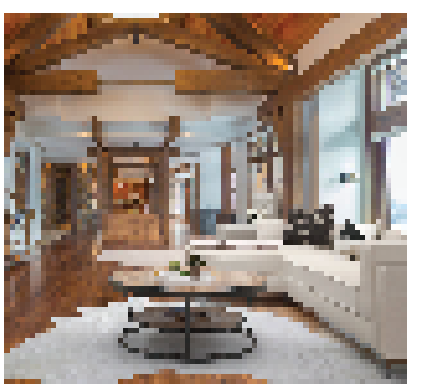

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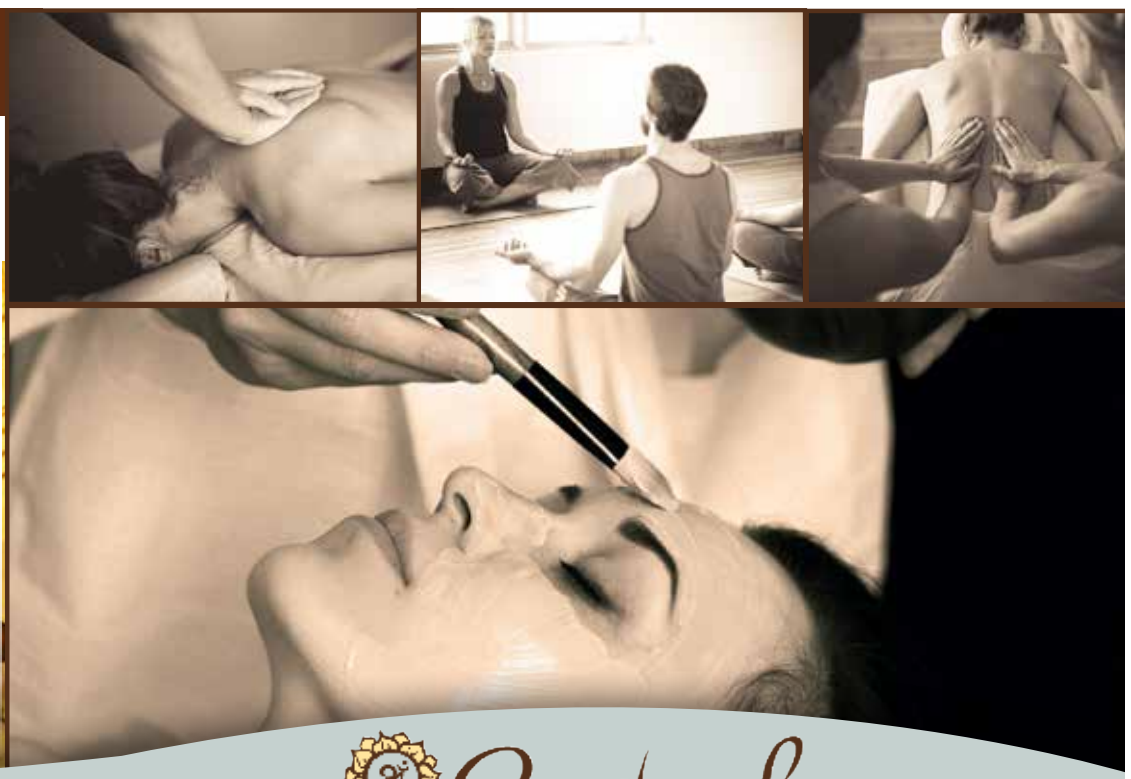

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10:00-11:30am All Levels Yoga 5:00-6:15pm Heated Yin/ Restorative Yoga	7:30-8:30am All Levels Pilates 9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga 4:15-5:15pm Gentle Apres Ski Yoga 5:45-7:00pm All Levels Yoga	7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga 9:00-10:00am All Levels Yoga 5:45-7:00pm Heated Flow	7:30-8:30am & 9:00-10:15 All Levels Yoga 11:00-12:30pm The Practice (Level 2-3 Yoga) 4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga 7:00-8:00pm Awareness Wednesday	7:30-8:30am Core Focused Yoga 9:00-10:00am All Levels Yoga 5:45-6:45pm Heated Flow	9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga 12:00-1:00pm Heated Flow 5:00-6:00pm All Levels Yoga	9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga 5:00-6:15pm All Levels Yoga 7:30-8:30pm Yoga Jam

Lawmakers Grapple Over the Future of Montana's Coal Industry

BY SHAYLEE RAGAR
UM LEGISLATIVE NEWS SERVICE

HELENA -- The state of Montana's coal industry is in flux.

Conservationists credit the market's move away from fossil fuels. Industry leaders blame strict regulations.

Rep. Mary Ann Dunwell, D-Helena, is carrying House Bill 193, also called the Montana Climate Action Act, which would tack a $10 tax onto each ton of carbon emissions. During the House Taxation Committee hearing Jan. 30, Dunwell argued to move away from coal energy because it negatively affects public health, the environment and the economy.

The bill calls for splitting the projected $210 million yearly revenue generated by the tax between the state's general fund and the "redevelopment" of impacted communities who rely on fossil fuels.

Bob Gilbert, a former legislator from Sidney who now works as a lobbyist, testified against the bill, representing the town of Colstrip. He asked how the bill would replace hundreds of lost jobs and why 50 percent of the revenues would go to the general fund. He also disputed the public health argument.

"Don't give me the garbage that coal is killing people," Gilbert said.

The two-hour hearing drew 11 proponents of the bill, including Anne Hedges of the Montana Environmental Information Center, who implored lawmakers to consider the expensive consequences of climate change disasters.

Fourteen different groups and individuals opposed the bill at the hearing, including David Hoffman with NorthWestern Energy, who said the cost of the tax would increase Montanans' utility prices.

While coal has often been a contentious topic, the dramatic changes in the national coal industry and the impending 2022 closure of units one and two of the coal-fired power plants in Colstrip have added urgency to the debate. The closures are part of a 2016 settlement in a suit filed by environmental groups claiming the plant was violating the Montana Clean Air Act.

Colstrip's state senator, Republican Duane Ankney said the loss of coal mining would be a huge hit to Montana's economy.

Last year, the Montana Chamber Foundation commissioned the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana, with the aid of industry leaders, to make a report predicting the economic impacts of reducing coal production.

It found the state would lose roughly 3,000 jobs in all and about $80 million in state collection revenues each year between 2028 and 2043.

According to the federal Energy Information Administration (EIA), national coal exports declined drastically between 2013 and 2016, during the Obama administration, which introduced new carbon emission regulations and pushed for use of renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

University of Montana law professor Samuel Panarella said two main factors are contributing to coal's demise: competitively priced natural gas and cheaper batteries that can store electricity from renewable energy.

Rep. Mary Ann Dunwell, D-Helena, speaking at the House Taxation Committee hearing on Jan. 30. PHOTO BY SHAYLEE RAGAR

"I don't have the view that it's Obama-era legislation that is causing coal to be in a slump," Panarella said.

In Montana, 2017 was the first year coal accounted for less than 50 percent of the state's energy generation according to the EIA's profile of the state, yet the EIA also noted that Montana has the largest coal reserve in the U.S. with 75 percent of mined coal slotted for exported.

Those exports are now struggling to reach high-demand foreign markets, like Asia, with states like Washington blocking construction of a coal export port.

Montana Rep. Joe Read, R-Ronan, introduced House Resolution 4 in January, which requests the federal government intervene. The resolution claims that Washington is violating the interstate commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, and that the state is discriminating against the project because it involves coal.

Others, like the Northern Plains Resource Council, argue that Washington has the right to govern the environmental quality of its land and water. When the Washington Department of Ecology denied the Millennium Bulk Terminals permit, it released a statement saying there were too many, "unavoidable and negative environmental impacts," to allow for the port.

For now, the debate rages on.

U.S. Senate reauthorizes Land and Water Conservation Fund

BY TIM BEHUNIAK
EBS CONTRIBUTER

In a 92-8 vote on Feb. 13, the U.S. Senate passed the Natural Resources Management Act, a public lands package that includes the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

According to LCWF's website, the fund was, "created in Congress in 1964 to safeguard natural areas, water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans," using revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling as support.

Many of Bozeman's city parks and land access projects across the nation are direct beneficiaries of the fund, yet in September 2018, the fund expired and was not renewed by the current administration.

In a statement on the Senate floor, Sen. Murkowski, R-Ala., said, "This package contains huge wins for Americans. It also expands and enhances access for our sportsmen and women on federal lands for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities."

If the House approves the nearly 700-page bill for President Trump's signature, other conservation efforts, such as the Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act, will go into action.

The Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act, which saw bipartisan backing in the Montana House and Senate with Republican Rep. Greg Gianforte, Republican Sen. Steve Daines, and Democrat Sen. Jon Tester supporting the act, would ban proposed mining projects in the Paradise Valley north of Yellowstone by permanently eliminating 30,000 acres of land from mining consideration.

Montana's Park County Environmental Council executive director Michelle Uberuaga said, "We were able to set aside personal politics, stand shoulder to shoulder, and work to safeguard the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, our public lands, our wildlife, people and jobs that depend on clean water and open lands in our community."

The Natural Resources Management Act is expected to pass through the House without any significant amendments and without a Presidential veto.

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The New West:

Underwater photog turns fish art into conservation

BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

During winter, when others are bundled in thermal layers and plying the slopes, Pat Clayton makes his living by taking polar bear plunges into icy rivers. In summer, once the snow melts and high water begins to recede, Clayton inconspicuously humps into the high country, carrying 50 pounds of camera gear and a surfer's wetsuit in his backpack, checking out pools few of us notice.

Cutthroat trout in the Yellowstone high country. PHOTO BY PAT CLAYTON

Is Clayton the best underwater photographer of trout and salmon in North America?

Besides taking pictures of fish that make us think, and giving scientists visual reference points for where they reside in an age of climate change, Clayton creates truly breathtaking collectible art.

Through his company, Fish Eye Guy Photography, he has amassed a remarkable portfolio hung in homes and offices throughout the northern Rockies. The only question is whether he's documenting visions of what once was, or wake-up calls for what's at stake in the decades ahead.

I first became aware of Clayton's luminescent images a few years ago after Orvis underwrote his three-month mission to southwest Alaska. There, Clayton highlighted the menacing threat posed by the proposed Pebble Mine slated for construction in one of the last—and still healthy—headwaters for wild salmonids left on Earth.

For most Americans, Pebble Mine is merely an abstraction. To highlight what could potentially be destroyed, Clayton immersed himself in the fish spawning streams that flow off the Alaska Peninsula into the north Pacific Ocean, birthing the fertile commercial fishing waters of Bristol Bay.

He's embarked upon similar missions to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; to the drainage of Montana's legendary Smith River where a controversial hardrock mine is being planned; and into the Gallatin River southwest of Bozeman where there's concern about sewage effluent from Big Sky harming that blue-ribbon trout mecca. He's trekked all over the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Clayton's photographs are analogous to Thomas Moran's colorful paintings of Yellowstone before it became a national park and which convinced Congress to safeguard it as the first preserve of its kind.

Upon his return from Bristol Bay, Clayton's images were circulated by Orvis, Patagonia, Trout Unlimited and the Natural Resources Defense Council, reaching millions of citizens.

Despite the Pebble Mine's estimated billions of dollars' worth of gold and copper that could be extracted, his photos ask, what about the value of irreplaceable habitat for five species of salmon, which account for 75 percent of local jobs, as well as Dolly Varden trout and wild rainbows?

With modesty, Clayton told me, "I'm just glad I can help raise awareness."

Late last summer, he went north again, this time to chronicle fish and mammal species inhabiting the North Slope in and around the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. ANWR is now being targeted by the Trump Administration—first by former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and now his proposed replacement, David Bernhardt—for oil and gas drilling.

Clayton enlisted a bush pilot to fly him to the foot of the Brooks Range, the same mountains beloved by the Murie family of Jackson Hole. In solitude, he spent weeks traveling via packraft from the mountains down to the Beaufort Sea.

Of all the far-flung places he's gone, this product of Washington State holds special reverence for his adopted home region, Greater Yellowstone. A former ski bum in Jackson, he feels an urgency based upon the changes he's witnessing in the high country affecting the outlook for wild native fish.

While charismatic megafauna—bears, wolves, mountain lions and ungulates—seize a lot of the attention, Clayton says fish are equally spectacular products of evolution that sometimes persist on thin margins.

Clayton has been outspoken in his concern for the Gallatin River, whose water quality may be threatened by water and sewage disposal challenges in Big Sky.

As Clayton shared hundreds of digital photos of Greater Yellowstone's westslope, Yellowstone and Snake River cutthroats, bull trout, Arctic grayling, goldens and rainbows, he made me vow that I would never reveal the locations where they were taken. In addition to climate change and development, fish populations are imperiled by social media, he notes.

Modern cameras are to blame. Many people are unaware of GPS geotagging technology that shares the locations of where photos are taken. Unwittingly, discreet remote venues are getting overrun, and in some cases, fish refuges hammered by anglers, because the locations are shared via Instagram and Facebook.

"I've seen it happen," Clayton said. "That's the problem with social media and geotagging. It's like revealing maps that lead people to buried treasure. They can't hold back their impulses. They want to claim that they fished these streams before the trout went away and they don't stop to reflect that they're part of the problem."

Clayton's first bit of advice: All photographers should turn their automatic geotagging features on their cameras off. Next, he says, don't be the person who, for reasons of sating personal egos and fame seeking, sets out to claim the last best wild country for themselves. Fish have low tolerance levels for disturbance.

Pat Clayton is bearing witness. Support an artist who is devoted to conserving piscatorial wildness in our backyard and which, besides giving us clean water, provides habitat for other species. He can tell you how, with climate change, how fragile the headwaters of Greater Yellowstone really are.

Todd Wilkinson is founder of Bozeman-based "Mountain Journal" (mountainjournal.org) devoted to protecting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and a correspondent for National Geographic. He also is author of "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399 available only at mangelsen.com/grizzly.

INSIDE YELLOWSTONE

Become a citizen scientist in Yellowstone

BY CHRISTINE GIANAS WEINHEIMER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Have you ever wanted to conduct field research in the great outdoors? Growing opportunities in citizen science provide an exciting way to assist Yellowstone National Park by helping researchers collect data that aids park managers in planning their conservation efforts. Here's your chance to think like a scientist about the future of Yellowstone's plants and animals, while giving something back to the park.

The Yellowstone Citizen Science Initiative is a collaboration between Yellowstone National Park and its official nonprofit partner, Yellowstone Forever. The program encourages visitors to collect essential data that will help park scientists and management officials better understand how the Yellowstone ecosystem is responding to changing environmental conditions.

The projects that citizen scientists work on are all priorities of Yellowstone National Park, so the work they do directly contributes to the science-driven management of the park.

"By leveraging our unique partnership with the park, we are able to provide unique experiences for park visitors, reach our educational objectives, and contribute usable data. It's a win, win, win," said Joshua Theurer, citizen science program manager at Yellowstone Forever.

Some active citizen science projects include the Yellowstone Phenology Project—the study of plant and animal life-cycle changes over time—plus red-tailed hawk nest monitoring, invasive weeds mapping and northern range ungulate research. During the summer season, volunteers commit to several days in a row, or a series of weekends, to participate in one of the studies.

Yellowstone Forever is currently working to create even more opportunities for participants to become involved by folding the research projects into existing educational programs.

"We are building out our youth programs to incorporate these projects as a core component of those experiences," said Theurer. "There is profound value in allowing students to contribute to real research."

Starting this summer, the Yellowstone Forever Institute will also add four new citizen science programs to its popular Field Seminar series. Participants will contribute to a citizen science project while learning new skills, engaging with Yellowstone on a deeper level, and enjoying spending time in the park.

Learn more about the Yellowstone Citizen Science Initiative and related Field Seminars at yellowstone.org/citizen-science.

Christine Gianas Weinheimer lives in Bozeman, Montana, and has been writing about Yellowstone for 17 years.

Yellowstone Forever will offer a series of citizen science projects this summer, allowing volunteer visitors to collect data that helps park scientists and managers. NPS PHOTO

Upcoming Citizen Science Field Seminars include:

Citizen Science: Red-Tailed Hawk Nest Monitoring
May 27-28, 2019
Help monitor red-tailed hawk nests by conducting nest surveys and observing hawk behavior. The data collected will be part of a continent-wide effort to provide baseline information on nesting success, serving as an important indicator of future changes to red-tailed hawk habitat and distribution.

Citizen Science: Field Skills Workshop
June 3-7, 2019
This seminar is focused on developing field skills. Participants will be introduced to all five citizen science projects while collecting data on plants, insects, bison, pika and environmental conditions.

Citizen Science: Home on the Range
June 18-19, 2019
A historically large bison population is changing the landscape of northern Yellowstone. Is there home on the range for the most diverse and abundant ungulate and carnivore community in North America? Help answer this question by collecting data on a variety of ungulate species.

Citizen Science: The Yellowstone Pika Project
July 11-12, 2019
Due to their sensitivity to warming temperatures, the pika is considered an indicator species for detecting the ecological effects of climate change. Help monitor the persistence of this small mammal in Yellowstone to assist researchers in understanding the effects of climate change on the ecosystem.

Yellowstone recruiting for 2019 Youth Conservation Corps program

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

How would you like to work, learn, play and serve in the world's first national park? Yellowstone is currently recruiting for the 2019 Youth Conservation Corps, a residential work-based education program for young men and women between the ages of 15 and 18. Visit the YCC program website to apply. Completed application materials must be received by March 1.

Two one-month-long YCC sessions will be offered June 9-July 10 and July 14-August 14. Sixty youth will be randomly selected from across the country to participate in the program. Applicants must be citizens of the U.S. and 15 years of age by June 9, but not over 18 years of age by Aug. 14. Yellowstone recruits youth from all social, economic, ethnic and racial backgrounds for the program.

No previous wilderness experience is required. Applicants should possess a positive attitude, a willingness and ability to work in a physically active outdoor program and get along well with others.

Participants will be required to live in the park. Room and board will be provided at a minimal cost. Wages will be set at the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour.

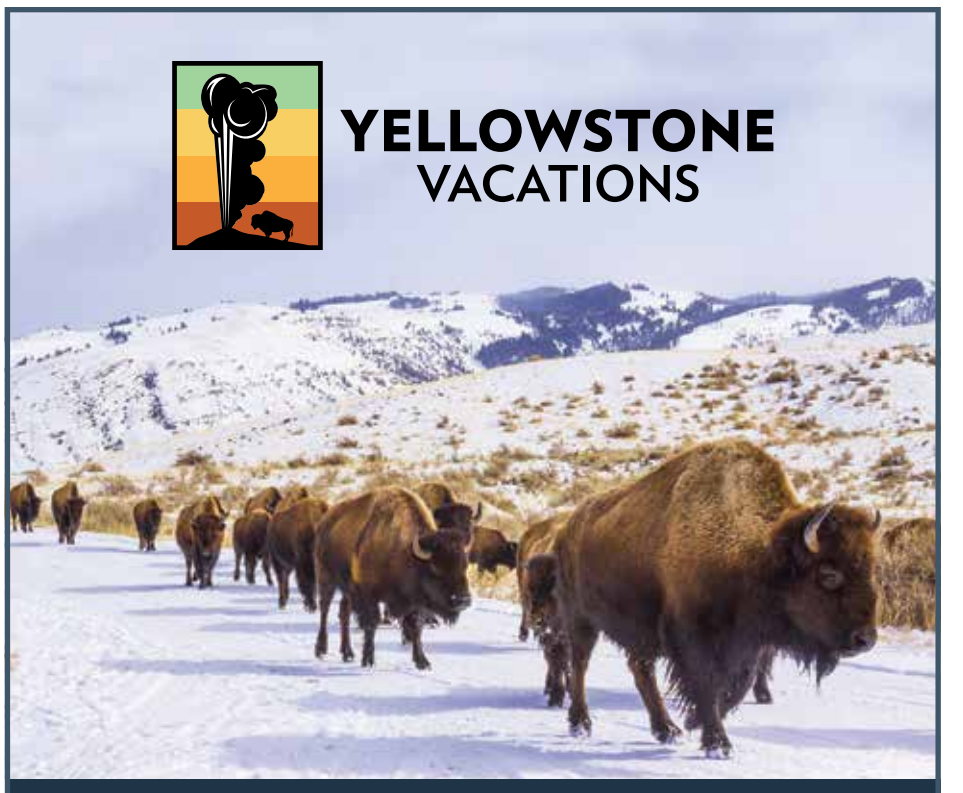
YCC is designed to develop an appreciation for the nation's natural resources and heritage through unique educational, recreational and work experiences. Corps members work together with National Park Service staff to complete conservation projects such as trail rehabilitation, campground restoration and a wide variety of resource management, visitor support services and maintenance projects.

Participants develop their job and leadership skills while exploring personal values, gaining self-esteem, expanding their awareness of work ethics and learning firsthand about environmental and conservation issues. Corps members also participate in evening and weekend recreational activities and discover the many options for careers in the National Park Service and other land management agencies.

The YCC program is funded by park entrance fees and donations to Yellowstone Forever, the park's official nonprofit partner.

Questions may be directed to yell_ycc_office@nps.gov. Visit nps.gov/yell/learn/management/yccjobs.htm for more information and to apply.

Participants of the Yellowstone National Park Youth Conservation Corps. YCC enrollees work on a variety of park projects each year in a program designed to instill an appreciation for natural resources. NPS PHOTO



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Grizzlies remain hot-button topic as states, fed appeal relisting

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

LIVINGSTON – As December snow fell to the ground at the close of 2018, 63 grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem bedded down with radio collars that quietly stored away their locations. Used by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, this data provides essential information about life history, reproduction and mortality, which biologists say is necessary for tracking the overall population.

"You do that with enough bears over time and you get some very valuable information," said Frank van Manen, IGBST supervisory research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. Since 1975, the research team has radio-monitored over 830 individual grizzlies under what van Manen describes as an intensive capture program that entails baiting the bears into large culvert traps.

"That's always an exhilarating moment and a moment when you have to be most careful," van Manen said, describing the capture process. "Usually they are very calm in the trap, but occasionally they roar and that's very impressive."

An interdisciplinary group of researchers, the IBGST consists of personnel from eight federal, state and tribal agencies, while USGS coordinates the operations. Created in 1973 and sustained as the research team for Yellowstone grizzlies, IBGST is tasked with monitoring the bear population.

In 2018, there were what van Manen calls a conservative estimate of 709 bears in the ecosystem. "It's almost certainly more than that, so we can think of that [estimate] as the low end," he said, adding that there are probably about 2,000 bears in the lower 48. This compares with an estimated number of 50,000 grizzlies that were here historically.

While the Yellowstone bears took to their dens for hibernation in December, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the states of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, each filed for an appeal of a federal judge's ruling in September that placed the Yellowstone bruins back on the list of endangered species.

While the exact course of action remains to be seen, as the appellants have until March 26 to file a formal appeal, the Wyoming and Montana legislature are considering joint resolutions in support of returning grizzlies to the control of the states.

On Feb. 13, the Wyoming Legislature passed a resolution to delist Greater Yellowstone grizzlies, which serves as a request to Congress to introduce federal legislation for the delisting. The bill will now go before Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon for signing, as will a second bill authorizing the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish to hold grizzly hunts in the future.

A joint resolution asking Congress to remove all Montana grizzlies from the Endangered Species List is also before the Legislature in the Treasure State. Sponsored by Sen. Mike Cuffe (R), the bill was sent to a public hearing on Feb. 14, just one day before EBS press time. A similar resolution passed the Montana Legislature in 2017, however Montana congressional members did not introduce a bill on the federal level.

A contentious issue, the argument over delisting has taken form as protracted litigation that began in 2007 when the Fish and Wildlife Service moved to delist the Greater Yellowstone grizzly for the first time after all bruins in the lower 48 were listed as threatened on the Endangered Species list in 1975. At that time, an estimated 136 to 312 bears roamed the GYE.

Yellowstone's bears remain a hot-button issue both at the federal level and to environmental and tribal groups seeking prolonged protections. However regardless of federal classifications, representatives from the wildlife agencies in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho say their commitments to monitoring and research would continue in a delisting scenario.

Brian Nesvik, the Wyoming Chief of Wildlife, said the state of Wyoming has spent nearly $50 million dollars between 1990 and 2018 on grizzly bear management. "We continue to be a player," he said. "All of those things that we do now, we would continue to do after delisting."

Greg Lemon, the head of communication and education for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, agreed with Nesvik, saying that monitoring is critical in order to estimate population numbers and would be very important if hunting were implemented as a management tool.

"It's certainly easy for the public dialogue to focus on hunting. I understand that. I understand the sensitives that people have to hunting grizzly bears. At the same time, they are considered a game animal," he said. "We wouldn't prioritize a hunting season over a secure grizzly population."

Despite the departments' assurances, some conservation groups remain cautious.

"Our opinion is that right now there are too many bears dying every day [from traffic accidents and human conflict]," said Greater Yellowstone Coalition wildlife program coordinator Chris Colligan. Because of this concern, GYC has several programs in place to reduce human conflict, such as funding electric fences and installing bear-safe trash receptacles at campgrounds in the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The coalition also supports bear education efforts.

"There are really very few conflicts in Yellowstone because of the great management there … Even though we have over 4 million visitors," he said. "The goal would be to continue that outward into the ecosystem. Some conflict is inevitable. I think it's how we respond to those conflicts and how we can adapt and improve."

A grizzly bear near Canyon in Yellowstone National Park. NPS PHOTO

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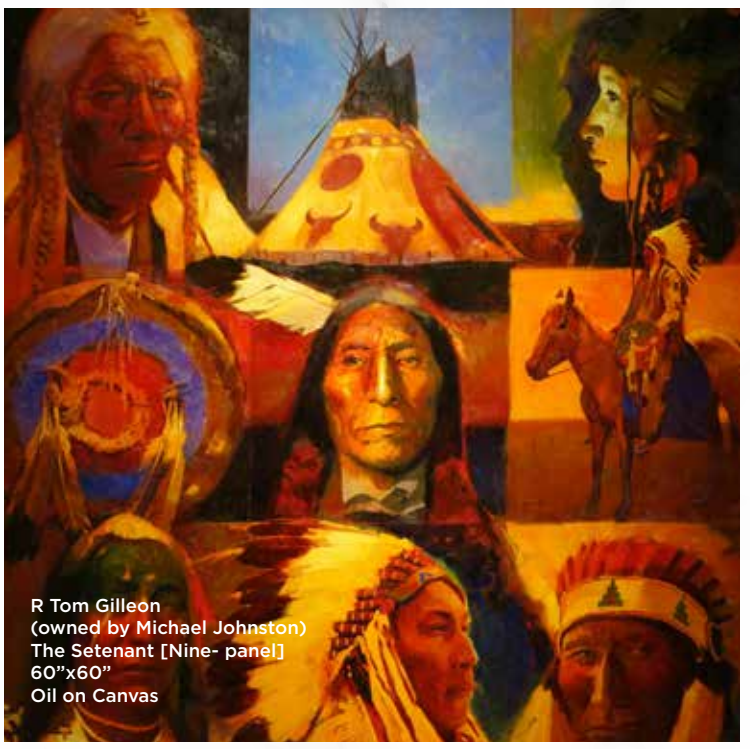
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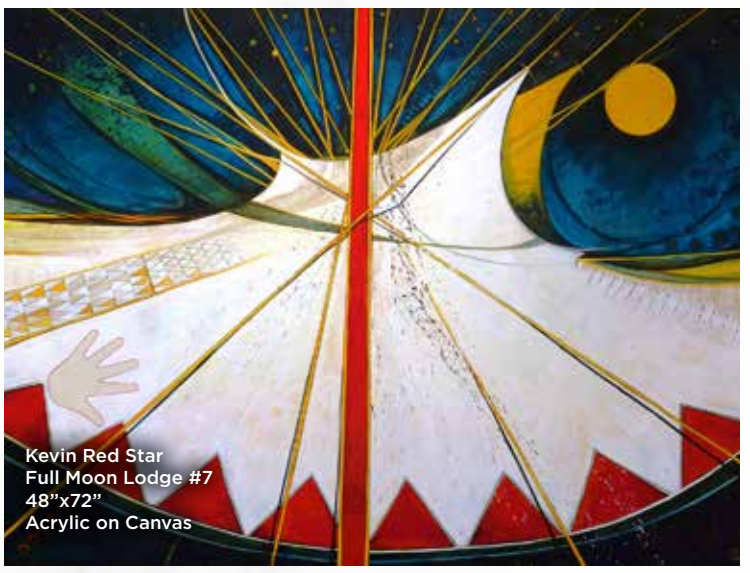
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WATER WISDOM

Presented by the Gallatin River Task Force and its partners, this recurring series highlights the conservation work done and environmental concerns found in our local watersheds.

Water Wisdom: Shrinking snowpack

Climate change threatening Montana's economy, ecology

BY STEPHANIE LYNN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Despite the recent subzero cold snap, Montana, on average, is heating up as a result of human-induced climate change.

The uptick in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution has caused a rapid rise in temperatures globally, triggering impacts to both humans and natural systems. The consequences are already apparent in Montana, where the climate may warm faster than the rest of the United States, according to the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment. The study reported statewide temperatures increased 2-3 degrees Fahrenheit between 1950 and 2015, and predicted a continued rise in temperatures by an additional 4-6 degrees by mid-century.

Even small shifts in temperature can lead to big impacts on snowpack and water supply. A few degrees of increase could result in an additional month or longer with temperatures above freezing in western Montana. As a result, more precipitation will fall as rain rather than snow.

"That rain doesn't hang around into the springtime, so it is more likely lost from the system rather than melting out in the spring or summertime when people, fish and wildlife need it most," said Molly Cross, climate change adaptation coordinator for the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Snowpack has decreased by approximately 20 percent statewide over the past 80 years, as reported by the Montana Climate Assessment. As average temperatures warm, this trend may continue over the next century, particularly when conditions hover near freezing in the spring and at mid and low elevations.

Deteriorating snowpack imperils the state's outdoor economy, particularly winter recreation. One national study published by the peer-reviewed journal "Global Environmental Change" forecasts that warmer winters will reduce ski season length at some downhill resorts by more than 50 percent by 2050. Although elevation and northern latitude position Big Sky for climate-change resilience, the ski season may be as much as a month shorter by mid-century, the study predicts.

According to Twila Moon, a Big Sky-based glacial research scientist, reduced snowpack also influences water supply, fisheries, wildfire risk and agriculture.

"We need to plan for these changes and also act individually, locally and regionally to reduce our fossil fuel use so that we can help to slow or reduce the changes," Moon said. "That is the best protection for ensuring that the economy and activities we establish today will be strong in the future."

Proactive management strategies, such as those outlined in the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed plan that recharge both groundwater levels and summer streamflow, will help the community adapt to both shrinking snowpack and warming temperatures.

Stephanie Lynn is the education and communications coordinator for the Gallatin River Task Force.

Montana Climate Change Stats

- By mid-century, temperatures could increase by as much as 6 degrees Fahrenheit

- Montana's snowpack has declined by 20 percent on average over the last 80 years

- Southwest Montana may experience 30-41 more days with temperatures above freezing

- Big Sky's ski season could be 10-15 percent (20-30 days) shorter by 2050

- The rate of warming in the next 50 years is predicted to occur more than twice as fast as it has over the past 50 years

Avoid spread of noxious weeds during winter

BY JENNIFER MOHLER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – Winter is my dogs' favorite season. Nothing makes them happier than heading out with me for a ski, and since they're Australian shepherds with thick and woolly coats, they have no problem keeping warm. The downside, though, is that they easily pick up unwanted burs, especially houndstongue seeds.

Houndstongue is a state-listed noxious weed, and its seeds are covered with barbs that have been referred to as nature's Velcro. This characteristic facilitates the effective, widespread dispersal of seeds on the fur of passing wildlife, livestock and pets, and also on the clothes of humans.

Invasive weeds are one of the greatest threats to Montana's environment, as they're known as "habitat transformers" because they change an area's physical structure and forage availability, eventually pushing resident wildlife out. Additionally, invasive species degrade fisheries through erosion and sediment buildup, reduce property values, and erode our beautiful viewsheds. Houndstongue foliage also has the potential to poison livestock and wildlife.

Seeds are the only source of reproduction for houndstongue, so it's important to look for seeds clinging to you or your dog and dispose of them properly. Take an extra plastic bag with you—many responsible dog owners already have pet-waste bags with them—and if you find your dog covered in burs, take the time to collect and dispose of them in the trash. If you just toss the seeds alongside the trail, you'll be spreading noxious weeds and could make it worse for years to come.

Anyone who enjoys the amazing trails in our area can do their part in reducing the spread of noxious weeds. Pay attention to what clings to your pet when you're out and about, and help keep our trails beautiful and noxious-weed free.

Visit gallainisa.org for pictures and more information on houndstongue.

Jennifer Mohler is the executive director of the Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance.

ABOVE: A black lab with houndstongue seeds caught on its fur. PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTANA NOXIOUS WEED EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

RIGHT: The noxious houndstongue plant in bloom. CC PHOTO

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Watershed groups say planning key to drought resiliency

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BOZEMAN – In a crowded room of approximately 70 at the Bozeman Lindley Center, homeowner Jeff Moore recently described what it was like to watch from his home as smokejumpers leapt from an aircraft while a separate plane dropped red plumes of fire retardant just a few miles away.

Moore, who owns property near O'Rea Creek west of Livingston, waited for the call to evacuate as the September 2017 fire quickly spread from a single bolt of lightning, coming uncomfortably close to his home.

"The way it came so fast, it really felt like we were just a tinderbox," he said. "When there's a big snow year, we're not as worried about fire [but] when it's a really small snowfield then we get pretty concerned about fire."

Moore's first-hand account was one of three given during the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council's annual meeting on Jan. 30, and the impacts of drought were at the forefront of the night. In addition to Moore, fly-fishing guide Dale Sexton and Leavitt Group insurance agent Josh Pulst shared their experiences related to low stream flow due to drier seasons and the devastating loss that's caused by fire.

> **"Sure, we all dread smoke season, but we're lucky. For most of us, it's not our house going up in flames, it's not our child's tuition wilting in the fields, and it's not our business loan going belly-up like the whitefish on the Yellowstone."**

"For most of us in the Gallatin watershed, drought remains a relatively abstract concept," said GGWC board chair Lilly Deford. "Sure, we all dread smoke season, but we're lucky. For most of us, it's not our house going up in flames, it's not our child's tuition wilting in the fields, and it's not our business loan going belly-up like the whitefish on the Yellowstone."

However, Deford said she hopes the stories of others can serve as a reminder for how important watershed stewardship is. "We're seeing drier spells march their way across the state," she added.

Holly Hill, the coordinator for GGWC, said their organization works closely with farmers and ranchers in the Gallatin Valley. "In talking directly with agricultural producers in the area, it's clear water shortages are becoming more likely," she said. "Even after last year's snow levels, by the middle of the summer, many producers were experiencing water shortages."

Over the past three years, GGWC has worked in partnership with the Gallatin River Task Force, the city of Bozeman, Gallatin Conservation District and Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators, among others, in developing a watershed-wide plan for drought resiliency. A part of the larger planning effort by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation for the Upper Missouri River Basin, this work takes a close look at the Gallatin watershed as a sub-basin to the Missouri.

An ongoing effort, this has led to the development of unique watershed stewardship programs based on community-specific interests.

"Everyone's perspective of drought is a little different," said Emily Casey, the water conservation coordinator for GRTF. Through public meetings and surveys, GRTF has been able to establish a water stewardship program for Big Sky.

"People [in Big Sky] were really interested and engaged in having this program where they could see individual participation," Casey said. As a result, GRTF has implemented a series of rebate programs that encourage the community to save water by installing water-efficient home fixtures. This includes toilets and washing machines, as well as weather-based "smart" sprinkler systems.

While Big Sky enjoys a measure of natural insulation from the effects of drought—many north-facing slopes and the abundance of forest cover around rivers can help protect against rising temperatures—there is still an increased risk of wildfire during drier summers. Casey also said drought can impact the length of the ski season, which directly affects economics in the region.

"The natural features are a benefit, but I think a big part of it is the interconnectedness of the river and we need to be aware," she said. "Users upstream need to be more proactive of how we're using our resources." In preparation for spring, Casey said the Big Sky community can be proactive by thinking about ways to implement water-wise landscaping and installing efficient irrigation systems that utilize rain sensors.

To further encourage water efficiency, the Big Sky Water and Sewer District charges customers on a tiered water-rate schedule, meaning homeowners who use more gallons of water are charged a higher rate per gallon. This contrasts sharply with the $30 flat rate the district once charged, which resulted in a lot of wasted water, according to BSWSD Water Superintendent Jim Muscat. He added that in 2018, the district used approximately half the amount of water that was being used on an annual basis in the late '70s and early '80s.

"We have enough water currently," Muscat said. "But conservation has always been a good idea."

The Gallatin River as it runs near Big Sky. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Biological tissue database building scientific collaboration

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

LIVINGSTON – Lauren Meyer, a doctoral student at Flinders University in South Australia, nearly failed her Australian honours degree simply because she couldn't get her hands on enough shark liver.

"I had spent months trying to source shark liver, which sounds odd, but is very difficult to obtain and I couldn't find enough for the research I needed to do," she wrote in a recent email to EBS. Meyer, who grew up in the Northern Rockies, was looking at toxin buildup in large sharks and needed the livers in order to measure the toxin levels.

In an effort to access samples, she attended shark fishing tournaments, contacted fishermen and called fellows scientists, to no avail. "Shark livers are especially hard to find because you need to kill the shark to get the tissue samples," she said. "Despite my constant e-mailing and calling of research teams along the entire east coast of Australia, I was out of luck as no one had spare liver samples at the time."

Just a few months later, while attending a conference, she was surprised to hear that another scientist had leftover shark liver sitting in the freezer. "I didn't realize I just wasn't contacting the right researchers who did have samples."

> **"In a time when the natural world is facing so many challenges, being able to study and understand more, on global scale, is really powerful."**

Meyer says it was that moment when she realized just how disconnected universities and research institutes are when it comes to utilizing biological samples. Frustrated from missing out on the opportunity to collaborate, Meyer and fellow biologist Madi Green decided to create a tool that would help researchers fully utilize their samples and create collaboration.

In June of 2018, the duo launched Otlet, a database designed for sharing and finding biological samples. Without handling the physical tissues, Otlet allows scientists to upload information about the kinds of animal samples they have left over after investigative projects. Researchers looking for animal tissue or data can then search the database and request access to samples.

With nearly 300 active users spanning 30 countries, Otlet serves to connect scientists internationally, making research more accessible, affordable and timely.

According to Meyer and Green, thousands of researchers collect biological samples from around the globe every day in an often expensive and lengthy process. Meanwhile, others discard samples or leave them closed up in storage, unsure what to do with them. On top of that, destructive sampling—when an animal must be euthanized in order to obtain a specific tissue—often results in unused tissues and leftover samples that could be otherwise utilized.

"Invasive and destructive sampling will still be necessary for a number of different research programs, irrespective of our platform and effective research collaborations," Meyer said. "However, it is with this destructive sampling we see the tool being especially useful."

She gave the example of connecting different research teams looking at diet with stomach contents, muscle and liver, those studying brains and eyes, and those understanding populations through genetics. "By being more effective with sharing these samples, it will result in less need for destructive sampling in the long run and help expand research programs now."

Meyer said there are many applications for this collaboration within the Greater Yellowstone and beyond. "Connecting research teams around the world, including those in Yellowstone, means that the scientists studying bird migration from Canada have easier access to genetic samples of birds as they move through the national park; the cougar researchers from across North America can share blood samples to look at diet across different habitats; and the fish ecologist based at the University of Montana can access jaws from freshwater fish in Australia to compare morphology."

"In a time when the natural world is facing so many challenges, being able to study and understand more, on global scale, is really powerful," she added.

In the spirit of accessible information, Green and Meyer decided to name their database Otlet after the Belgian information scientist Paul Otlet. Born in 1868, Otlet spent his life fostering universal access to knowledge by reimagining how to connect people to information well before the advent of Alan Turing's computer.

Otlet attempted to create a repository of all the world's knowledge in his Mundaneum project, whereby facts and ideas were written on individual index cards. The collection totaled over 12 million cards and people could request information by mail. It's reported that by 1912, Otlet and his team managed 1,500 requests annually.

According to Meyer and Green, Otlet's fostering of international work and emphasis on building connections are ideals that drive the overall global expansion of knowledge. On the database's website, they write, "These are the visions we seek to instill within Otlet today."

Visit otlet.io to learn more.

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Stakeholders weigh in on forest management plan

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

A hiker travels descends Ramshorn Peak in the Gallatin Range, with the Madison Range visible to the west.
PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUISE JOHNS PHOTOGRAPHY

BOZEMAN – As the U.S. Forest Service moves into its third year of a four-year process to revise the forest plan for the Custer Gallatin National Forest, various stakeholders are working to make their voices heard.

The Gallatin Forest Partnership, a coalition representing more than 10 diverse stakeholders within the Gallatin and Madison ranges, submitted a proposal to the Custer Gallatin in January of last year. The partners say they hope this agreement will be included in the Forest's forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which includes management options and how these decisions can affect the landscape. The release of this document will be followed by the last opportunity for public comment before development of a final forest plan early in 2020.

Having formed after the Gallatin Community Collaborative failed to reach a consensus approximately six years ago, the Gallatin Forest Partnership is currently seeking endorsement in preparation for the upcoming public comment opportunity.

"We'll have a three-month public comment period to take action, then 30 years or more to reap the benefit of this management plan, so it's a good time to get involved," said Ryan Cruz, the Montana conservation organizer for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, who served on the Gallatin Forest Partnership.

A part of the partnership's proposal includes 124,000 acres of recommended wilderness. While Congress is ultimately responsible for creating wilderness areas under the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Forest Service is tasked with identifying lands that could be suitable for the designation. These areas are treated like federal wilderness, wherein mechanized and motorized recreation isn't allowed.

About 100,000 of those proposed acres are in the core of the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area, a 155,000-acre area in the heart of the Gallatin Range that was created in 1977 as a temporary designation. Over the years, proponents have sought and failed to have the wilderness study area both eliminated and permanently protected.

"Personally, it's about the resource and the need for preservation," said Steve Johnson, a Big Sky resident and member of the partnership. "To me, that's the most important thing. We can't let the quality of that very special habitat decline if we all want to enjoy it. We've all chosen to be here in some way because of that resource."

In search of a balance between protecting wild spaces and serving the need for diverse recreational access, the partnership proposes to designate a portion of the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn as a wildlife management area, thereby prioritizing wildlife and wildlife habitat but still allowing regulated motorized and mechanized recreation.

Under this determination, seasonal recreation closures would occur in a similar fashion to current area closures so as to lessen the human footprint in an area that provides habitat connectivity between Yellowstone National Park and the Gallatin and Madison ranges.

"No one's losing access, we're maintaining access and we're thinking about wildlife in terms of trail and road densities. I'm really proud of that," said Darcie Warden, GYC's Montana conservation coordinator. "The key to getting us to an agreement was listening. We dug deep and we tried hard, and we got those compromises."

Beyond allowing for some motorized and mechanized travel in the area, the partnership is asking managers to monitor area wildlife to ensure increased recreation doesn't have a detrimental impact.

"By recommending a specific management area rather than a wilderness study area, it allows for more adaptive management," said Melissa Cronin, the director of development for the Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association. Cronin represented SWMMBA and the Big Sky Mountain Bike Alliance in the larger Gallatin Forest Partnership and said that allowing user groups to access the area maintains an engaged community where partner groups can help maintain trails.

Phil Knight, of Montanans for Gallatin Wilderness, disagrees with the partnership's handling of the wilderness study area. He said he wasn't invited to be a part of the partnership, though he did participate in the Gallatin Community Cooperative.

"We've compromised away so much land already," Knight said. "I'd like to see the Gallatin Forest Partnership step up to the plate and at the minimum recommend wilderness for the entire Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area.

"This is really some of the top wildlife habitat we have in the lower 48 because it has remained roadless," he added. "Wilderness has been shown to be pretty much the best for wildlife habitat. It also provides a place for people to avoid the overall hustle and bustle."

Other groups also felt left out of the partnership. Kerry White, a board member of the Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association, said motorized recreation was not given a voice.

"[The Gallatin Forest Partnership] was a select few individuals gathered together by three environmental groups to make their proposal look like a grand agreement," White wrote in an email to EBS. "It was not inclusive but rather very exclusive. We were in fact not invited and when we asked to participate, we were told 'no'."

Despite the opposition, members of the partnership said they're pleased with their proposal.

"We all feel really good about this agreement," said Denise Wade of Lone Mountain Ranch, who serves on the partnership representing some of the commercial interests involved. She added that each of their recommendations were agreed upon by consensus. "Now we can move beyond this state of limbo [in the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn] and still protect the open spaces we all love and want."

Cronin, of SWMMBA, pointed out that the overall contingent sought definitive management despite early trepidation. "The Wilderness Study Area is a land management purgatory, not one thing or another," she said. "Being able to recommend sensible and enduring land management areas is good for the community, the environment and future generations.

"I think it was very cathartic for everybody," she added. "On a community level, I think it accomplished something very rare in these really polarized times, where people were able to come together and agree on these shared values."

John Mutter, former president of the Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen, agreed with Cronin, though he would've liked more land included in the recommended wilderness area.

"If you get a unified voice, you get heard more," he said. "I think we came up with a damn good compromise to be honest with you. I think our recommendations to the Forest Service are safe and sane. I really hope that they take it very seriously."

BIG SKY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

On the Trail: Carlin's Cruise to Joy's Loop

Explore local hiking, biking and equestrian trails with Big Sky Community Organization's trail series.

BY CIARA WOLFE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Carlin's Cruise to Joy's Loop is exactly what the name suggests—a joyful cruise. This trail is perfect for beginner- to intermediate-level Nordic skiers looking for a quick and scenic ski.

The 4.2-kilometer loop starts near the Lone Mountain Ranch outdoor shop on an easy, flat trail heading north. At the first intersection, take a left toward Carlin's Cruise followed by a hard right onto the trail.

This section of the trail entails a gradual climb for another 0.5 km. During the climb, the trail slowly bends east until arriving on top of a small bluff above the ranch.

Continue for another 1.2 km on Carlin's Cruise for a fairly flat ski with beautiful vistas of Lone Mountain to the west and the Meadow to the east. At the next intersection, continue straight onto Joy's Loop for a shorter ski; or take a left onto the Ranch Loop for an additional 3.5 km of beginner to intermediate trail.

Joy's Loop heads downhill around a sharp corner that leads to 1 km of gradual downhill. At the base of the bluff, a left will take you back toward the outdoor shop.

Olive Wolfe, 8, skis Carlin's Cruise to Joy's Loop, a quick, fun Nordic trail accessible to all ages and abilities. PHOTO BY CIARA WOLFE

A fun loop for skiers of all ages and abilities, this trail is one of my favorites to take my children on when we want to get out of the house for a little exercise, or need a place to release some afterschool energy during our long winter months. Once back at the outdoor shop, my children's favorite après ski activity is hot cocoa by the fire in Horn and Cantle Saloon.

An annual season pass or day pass can be purchased in the LMR outdoor shop. All proceeds from pass sales go toward the cost of grooming Big Sky's Nordic trail system. For a complete map of Big Sky's 85 km of groomed Nordic trails, visit lonemountainranch.com/grooming-report.

Visit bscomt.org for more information about Big Sky's parks, trails and recreation programs. The Big Sky Community Organization engages and leads people to recreational and enrichment opportunities through thoughtful development of partnerships, programs and places.

Ciara Wolfe is the executive director of the Big Sky Community Organization.

A version of this story was first published in the Feb. 2, 2018, edition of EBS.

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Yours in health

Magnesium, the wonder mineral

BY DR. ANDREA WICK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Magnesium is an important mineral and electrolyte the body needs. It's vital for many bodily functions, enzymatic processes and aids in healthy musculoskeletal and nervous system function, cardiovascular health and digestion. Low levels of magnesium have been associated with muscle cramping, constipation, irregular heartbeat, migraines, insomnia, depression and anxiety, to name a few.

According to the "Journal of American Board Family Medicine," there's a significant relationship between magnesium deficiency and depression in young adults. And experts say oral magnesium supplementation aids in increasing insulin sensitivity in patients with type 2 diabetes.

One study in the "Headache Journal" assessed whether magnesium oxide supplementation helped relieve migraine symptoms in children. Although more research needs to be done, oral magnesium led to a decrease in headache frequency. Research also shows that supplementation with magnesium and B6 decreases the severity of PMS symptoms. With all the seemingly great benefits with magnesium, which forms are most effective?

There are many different forms of magnesium that serve for helping different metabolic functions. Magnesium glycinate is the easiest to digest and is easy on the stomach. Magnesium glycinate is also the most effective for aiding in brain function. For post-concussion injuries and Traumatic Brain Injury, it's important to take 375-500 mg. Magnesium glycinate may help in alleviating depression symptoms associated with TBI. Magnesium glycinate is helpful in decreasing chronic inflammatory stress, muscle pain and cramping. Studies have shown that athletes who supplement have accelerated exercise performance and magnesium can act as a true ergogenic aid as reported by the medical journal "Current Sports Medicine Reports."

Magnesium taurate, which is a combination of magnesium and the amino acid taurine, may be helpful for high blood pressure. Taurine in itself has blood pressure lowering effects. In a recent study, taurine supplementation decreased systolic blood pressure by seven points and diastolic pressure by five points.

Magnesium citrate and magnesium oxide are helpful for the digestive system and particularly constipation. Magnesium citrate works by pulling more water into the colon causing stools to become softer and easier to pass. Magnesium oxide is a more difficult form of magnesium for the body to absorb and assimilate. Due to the fact that it's difficult to digest, it aids in helping relieve constipation and indigestion.

Lastly, magnesium threonate has the ability to penetrate the mitochondria of the cell. The mitochondria are the powerhouse of the cell where energy production occurs. This form of magnesium is highly absorbable and has the least amount of impact on the digestive system.

The best way to get more magnesium comes from a diet rich in avocado, spinach, kale, swiss chard, dark chocolate, pumpkin seeds, almonds, black beans, figs, raspberries and bananas.

It's important to consult with your doctor to make sure that magnesium is safe for you in case of possible drug interactions and medical conditions.

Dr. Andrea Wick is a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist. She graduated from Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and now practices in Big Sky. She has a passion for holistic health care and being active in the outdoors. Her practice, Healing Hands Chiropractic, is located in the Meadow Village Center. Visit drandreawick.com to learn more.

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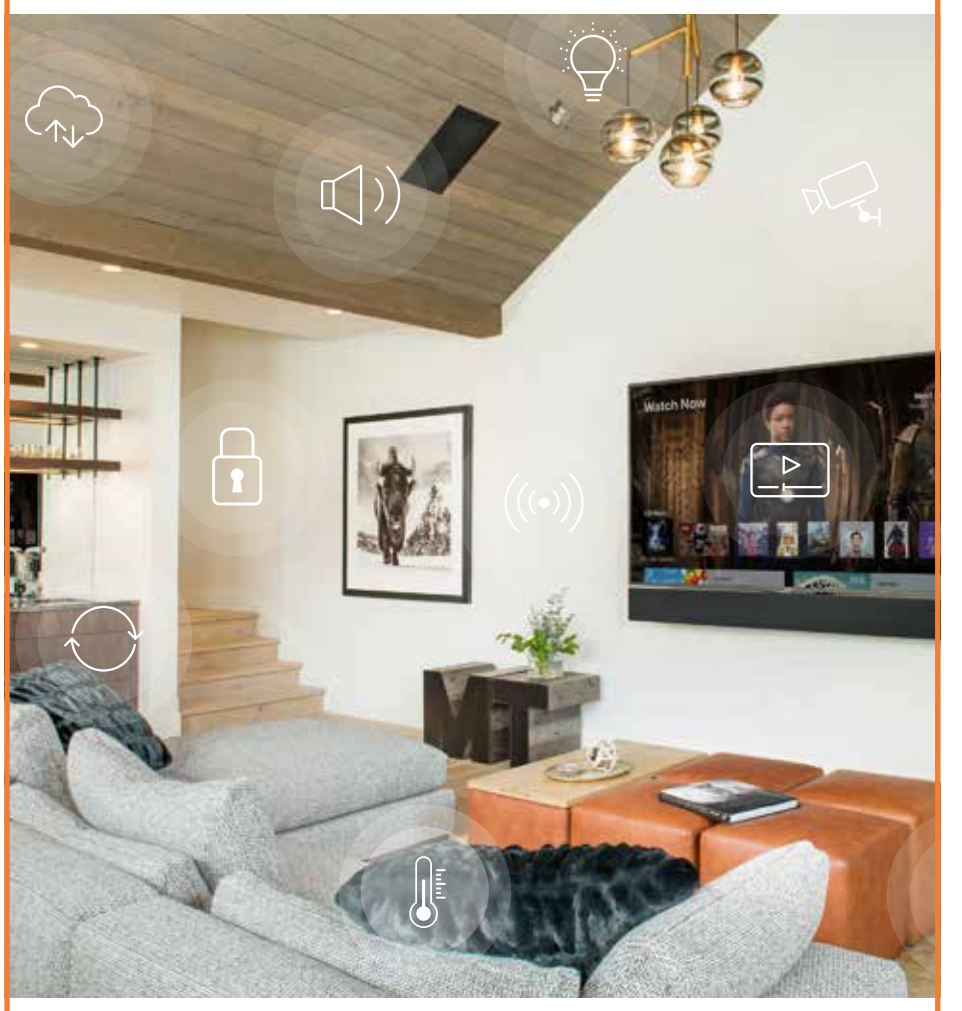

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SECTION 3:
SPORTS & BUSINESS

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THE LONE PEAK PLAYBOOK

Big Horns head into district tournaments as underdogs

BY DOUG HARE
EBS STAFF

The Lone Peak High School basketball season has had it ups and downs for the boys and girls teams. The Lady Big Horns finished 6-12 overall for the regular season and the boys team ended up with a 5-13 record heading into the postseason. Both squads finished 2-8 in conference play and earned no. 5 seeds in the 6-team district tournament. The top two teams from districts will advance to the divisional tournament the following weekend.

But their respective records or seeding will not determine the outcome of the District 11C basketball tournament held in Memorial Events Center in Churchill, Montana, Feb. 14-16. Both teams are heading into the postseason with momentum after their respective wins against the Sheridan Panthers on Saturday, Feb. 9.

"We had a great weekend with two wins against West Yellowstone and Sheridan. Kolya Bough really took over late in both those games and simply willed us to victory," coach Brian Van Eps said. "It's that type of grit that we will need for the district tournament. This weekend is a clean slate for us and we hope to finish well."

Coming off a 46-43 win against the Sheridan Panthers, the boys team will take on no. 4 seed Shields Valley in the first round. Early in the season, the Big Horns lost to Shields Valley in a lopsided game. The second matchup between the two teams was a much closer affair that Shields Valley also won.

"It's always tough to beat someone three times in a row and we know what we need to do to win," Van Eps said.

The winner of that game will face a tough matchup against the 18-0, first seed Manhattan Christian Eagles to make their way to the finals—which would qualify them for the divisional tournament the following weekend.

No. 10 Libby Flach, no. 20 Brooke Botha and no. 3 Solae Swenson will lead the charge against Shields Valley in their first district tournament game Thursday, Feb. 14. PHOTO BY DOUG HARE

Junior point guard Frankie Starz has been a big part of the Big Horns front court offense this season. PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

The Lady Big Horns drew no. 4 seed Gardiner in the first round of districts. Their dominant victory over Sheridan gives them confidence heading into districts.

"Our seniors Brooke and Solae really came up big in our last regular season game. The underclassmen played hard all game long too," coach Ausha Cole said. "I feel good going into districts. We changed up our practice routine and the energy is good. The confidence is there."

The future is bright for Lady Big Horns basketball. The Ophir Lady Miners, as of presstime, were still undefeated at 16-0, after winning tournaments at Harrison and West Yellowstone.

BIG SKY MONTANA

RESORT ROUNDUP | Your guide to events, activities and news at Big Sky Resort

Making waves of the freeride circuit: Q&A with snowboard phenom Holden Samuels

BY DOUG HARE
EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Lone Peak High School graduate Holden Samuels is only 19 years old but already has a storied career as a snowboard athlete. As a senior in high school, he overcame an ACL tear to earn a silver medal in the Freeride World Junior Championships in Kappl, Austria. Since graduating from the FWJT, Samuels has competed in two 2019 Freeride World Qualifier 2* events, finishing first at both Beartooth Basin and La Parva, Chile this summer.

In his first ever 4* event at Revelstoke Mountain Resort, he finished in third place, and then in the following 4* event on Feb. 9 at Crested Butte Mountain Resort in Colorado, Samuels found himself back on top of the podium, winning by a full point. With a only a few competitions under his belt on the adult circuit, Samuels already has secured a second place ranking in North America for men's snowboard on the qualifying circuit.

Explore Big Sky: *What was the recipe for your success in the Crested Butte competition?*

Holden Samuels: The venue in Crested Butte was gnarly. It was steep, and had a super-thin snowpack. My plan was just to hit as many features as I could while maintaining high fluidity.

EBS: *What adjustments have you made since graduating from the junior circuit? How much different is the level of competition?*

H.S.: The snowboard field is much bigger in the qualifiers than it was at the junior level, and there are many more riders capable of throwing down. I have definitely had to start going for bigger features and throwing more tricks in competition.

EBS: *You are a freshman at University of Colorado at Boulder. How has the transition to college been? Do you find time time to practice and, if so, where? Do you have an intended major yet?*

H.S.: The transition to college has been a little wild. I graduated with a class of 26, and now I go to a school of 30,000 students. I have already met so many cool people and experienced so many new things. I have been able to snowboard quite a bit because I have no class on Mondays and Wednesdays, so that gives me four days a week to snowboard. However, it has been tough commuting to the mountains, with most resorts being an hour and a half away and I70 becoming a zoo whenever it snows.

EBS: *What freeride athletes do you look up to?*

H.S.: Most of the freeriders I look up to are actually skiers. Candide Thovex is the GOAT in my opinion, and Sammy Carlson is one of the most fun athletes to watch. Also, I look up to Kelly Slater and the success he has had on the World Surfing League. He turns so powerfully on waves and I try to mimic that on snow.

EBS: *What are your goals for this season on the qualifying circuit?*

H.S.: My goal for the qualifying circuit is to qualify for the [Freeride World Tour] and hopefully pick up some sponsors along the way.

EBS: *Who do you go to for advice about competing? Do you have a coach? Who are you closest friends on the competition circuit?*

H.S.: I learned so much about competing from my old coach, Cooper Raasch, who has travelled all around the world with me. Nowadays, if I need to talk about competing or just riding in general I go to my older brother, Chase. My closest friends on the circuit are all the kids that were always at the junior championships with me.

EBS: *What sponsors have you picked up along the way and how do they help you out in your rookie season?*

H.S.: I only have two sponsors right now: Never Summer and Blackstrap. Never Summer has been hooking me up with the strongest boards for a few years now, and Blackstrap hooks me up with the warmest face masks.

Holden Samuels has his eyes set on qualifying for the elite Freeride World Tour even in his rookie season competing on the Freeride World Qualifying Tour. After four competitions on the FWQT, Samuels has already collected three first-place finishes and is currently ranked as the no. 2 contender in the male snowboard division. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLDEN SAMUELS

EBS: *Your older brother Chase is a strong skier and freeride athlete. What it helpful to grow up with an older brother who also enjoys winter sports?*

H.S.: Chase is a huge reason why I have been so successful in snowboarding. He is the reason I started competing in freeride in the first place. Since before I can remember, he has been waking me up and dragging me out of bed to go riding with him. Following him around the mountain for so long has pushed me to ride bigger lines and hit airs that I would have never done on my own.

EBS: *What's the best advice that you have ever received about snowboarding?*

H.S.: Best advice: If you're not falling, you're not trying.

EBS: *What would be your ideal venue to compete on and why?*

H.S.: My ideal venue to compete on is the Bec des Rosses in Switzerland, which is where the FWT championship is held.

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Skijoring: Pro tips from someone who's done it once

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

We decided we wanted to represent Outlaw Partners in the second annual Best of the West Showdown skijoring event held in Big Sky Town Center Feb. 9-10. The Big Sky Skijoring Association organized the two-day competition, the fourth of eight races on the Skijoring America circuit which includes stops in Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana.

The event garnered 91 teams competing in junior, women, novice, sport and open categories. Each team was allowed one run a day, though different combinations of horse, rider and skier allowed individuals more than one run per category.

I'd heard of skijoring before—the wedding of ski and cowboy cultures in which a horse and rider tow a downhill skier on a 33-foot rope through a course fraught with jumps, gates, banked turns and sometimes rings for skiers to collect on their arms. Although there are multiple origin stories for this now-Western sport, consensus holds that its roots are in Scandinavia where a mode of winter travel involved directing a horse via long reins from a set of skis behind the steed.

The Western variation added a rider and bets for whose team was fastest, likely aided by the influence of alcohol.

"I'm absolutely thrilled from the feedback from all the competitors, skiers and riders," said Justa Adams, the Big Sky Skijoring association board member who organized the race. "It was a very fun and safe event. I could not be happier with how it turned out."

I grew up skiing and had done so behind snowmobiles and boats on lakes: How different could it be skiing behind a horse?

There are certainly similarities, but I learned a thing or two about the wild sport of skijoring while competing for the first time. Ordered not by importance but by the chronology of when each met me, here are some insights into the sport that an audience member might not glean.

Find a pull

Once we decided to have a team, my first move was to call RJ Klotz, the only skijoring pro I knew at that point. Klotz, who won the skijoring race in Ridgway, Colorado, and produced the Bozeman race the weekend prior to Big Sky's, recommended first finding a pull.

Although skijoring may have originated in Scandinavia, it has a long tradition in the West and continues to grow in popularity. PHOTOS BY MARK LAROWE

"A pull just means a horse and rider," Klotz clarified so I didn't have to ask.

I immediately thought of my colleague Jessianne Castle, who has been a contributing writer for EBS for longer than I knew the paper existed. I knew she and her husband Ryan own several horses, and as individuals I enjoy, they'd be my first pick for team. I reached out.

After testing out their horse Mayple, a beige quarterhorse born in the month of May (hence the name), with Ryan skiing behind her, Jessianne said they were in.

Get rubber gloves

Klotz' second pro tip was to buy gloves with a rubber coating from Ace Hardware for gripping the rope. Leather gloves were not the move, which I understood after my first run.

"Rope management"

I heard this phrase a hundred times, from my editor Joe O'Connor who'd skijored in 2013 when 320 Ranch used to host an event, and other competitors and spectators. Some YouTube videos the previous night showed me—while also striking fear into my already nervous mind—that the last thing a skier wants is for the rope to get ahold of them.

A friend from college told me to start with the rope taut to the horse, gripping halfway up so you have some slack to let out to dampen the transition from standing still to racing over the snowy course. A combination of observing more experienced racers and learning from my runs revealed that rope management consists of climbing the rope hand over hand when possible—on straightaways or the ramp of jumps—and conversely letting rope through your hands to spill speed and make a gate, while avoiding getting tangled at all costs.

Skijoring is a unique Western tradition that brings together cowboy and ski culture into a an entertaining spectacle that requires coordination between a horse, rider and skier.

Rope management is essential for making gates, managing jumps, and getting across the finish line the fastest.

Peter Jessens, a member of Big Sky Resort and the boards of the Big Sky Skijoring Association and Skijoring America, told me he rope-burns the rubber off four pairs of Ace Hardware work gloves in a weekend of racing. A key to keep in mind is that the less rope you have between you and the horse at the finish line, the faster the time.

Get course beta before your run

Seasoned skijorers are a wealth of knowledge and, despite their intimidating swaggers, will clue you into the cruxes of the course, optimal lines over jumps and through gates, etc. It's worth asking for the inside track.

Look two gates ahead

Jessens, who was encouraging and welcoming even to a newbie such as myself, allowed Ryan Castle and I to walk the course with him and told us to keep eyes at least two gates down the course.

"Your body will just take care of the rest," Jessens said. The advice aligned with reality and once team Outlaw hit full speed, I found myself automatically hitting gates, moving up and down the rope like I'd done it before. Jessianne, who grew up riding had a similar experience atop Mayple.

"When it came time to make the pull, my body just took over and it was like I was just along for the ride," she told me after our run Sunday. "It might be one of the most out-of-body experiences I've had."

Slow is fast

Another slice of wisdom Jessens lent was a variation of advice my editors have repeated to me that seemed particularly apt for skijoring: Go slow to go fast. Take your time inspecting the course and calm your mind, quell the butterflies just before your pull erupts in a gallop.

"Slow is fast," he told a nervous me just before my day two run.

EBS contributor Jessianne Castle and her horse Mayple were surprisingly calm before their first skijoring competition.

Skijoring is not just for riders on two planks. Snowboarders also compete in Skijoring America circuit.

If you get serious about the sport, don't wear Telemark skis

A detail I haven't mentioned is that I raced in tele skis—which also have Scandinavian roots—and was told I was crazy. I was fortunate to have a gentle introduction to the sport because Jessianne and Mayple were as new to the sport as myself, so they weren't pulling me anywhere near as fast as the other teams. I went for it on tele skis because they're all I ski on, but if I continued to skijor, the wiser option is alpine bindings that will release your boot if you biff.

Some other highlights in closing from the Best in the West Showdown:

Lone Mountain Ranch contributed a massive draft horse as a pull on Feb. 9, but were unaware there were two days of races, so the behemoth did not compete Sunday as it was occupied pulling sleighs.

Community support came in clutch to sculpt the coarse: LMR's Patrick McVey spent hours grooming the course after Colin Cook moved and piled excess snow thanks to a loader contributed by John Delzer and a track skid steer that Dick Anderson volunteered. Among many other sponsors and volunteers, Town Center allowed Big Sky Skijoring Association to use the land and East Slope Outdoors retail shop volunteered their water spicket to fill buckets for horses.

Never before have I had to worry about skiing plum through the middle of a pile of horse manure.

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Speed week for the Big Sky Ski Team

BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Alpine

The Lone Peak Speed Series was held at Big Sky Resort on Feb. 9-10. Prior to the event, the U-16 Western Regional Training group hosted the annual speed training camp on Hangman's trail. More than 70 boys and girls from the Western Region participated, some coming from as far away as Alaska for speed training on a fast and icy run. Daron Rahlves and Stacey Cook, both former World Cup speed skiers, were guest coaches offering valuable tips to the next generation of racers.

Super G is a mix of downhill and giant slalom—a very fast discipline with built-in jumps, blind gates, and speeds approaching 70 mph. Even the skis are specialized for Super G racing—some racers wearing skinny long skis exceeding 220 cm. Saturday's race was cold and fast, and the Big Sky crew and volunteers did a fantastic job prepping the hill and lining Hangman's with safety nets known as B-nets.

The training paid off for the Big Sky team, which won overall and had multiple racers garner podium spots. Sunday's race was even colder with wind and light snow. There was another race scheduled the same weekend at Bridger Bowl that was cancelled due to cold temperatures. The next race will be in Missoula Feb. 15-17 with 3 regional slalom qualifiers.

Members of the Big Sky Ski Team were all smiles after a successful Big Sky Speed Week. PHOTO BY MARTHA JOHNSON

Nordic

While the alpine team is in the busiest time of their racing season, the Nordic team is just gearing up for peak race season. "The Nordic team has been skiing and training hard getting ready for the next couple of races. We had an epic powder day and experienced true cross country skiing in blizzard conditions," Denise Wade, head coach of the Nordic team, said. "The team skied through over 8 inches of powder around the Black Diamond trail and ended with testing Nordic parallel turns off the hills down to the park. Fun was had by all with some crazy wipeouts too!"

The next competition for the Nordic squad is a biathlon in Bozeman on Feb. 23, and then the 5@5 Big Sky Town Series race on Feb. 26. The races are open to all with events including a 1 km course for age 9-and-under; 3 km for 15-and-under; and 5 km for all ages. Registration starts at 4 p.m. for $10 on the BSCO trails in Town Center.

The largest race in the region is slated to be held March 2 in West Yellowstone. The Yellowstone Rendezvous is the longest running race in the region and is in its fortieth year. Elite skiers will be coming to skate ski 50 km in just over 2 hours. Many BSSEF skiers will be skiing the 5 km, 10 km, and 25 km courses.

Big Sky Ski Team Results

Saturday, Feb. 9th
Super G

U-14 Girls
2. Brown, Brooke (55.47)
4, Manka, Skylar (56.95)
5. Vap, Morgane (57.24)
6. Brown, Lili (57.36)
7. Unger, Chloe (57.60)
12. Klug, Carson (59.26)
16. Schreiner, Graycen (1:01.68)
20. Ditullio, Drew (1:04:14)
21. Davis, Margaret (1:04.22)

U-16 Girls
4. Carish, Gracie (53.67)
5. St. Cyr, Francy (53.84)
8. Davis, Hillary (54.68)
9. Johnson, Winter (55.11)

U-19 Women
1. Schreiner, Mazie (50.97)
2. Winters, Mackenzie (51.55)
3. St. Cyr, Maci (51.73)
7. Winters, Madison (52.08)

U-14 Boys
3. Ueland, Cameron (56.34)
11. Pecunies, Cameron (1:00.10)
24. Johnson, Russell (1.06.52)

U-16 Boys
1. Beatty, Ryan (40.70)
4. Kirchmayr, Luke (51.77)
5. Hassman, Kjetil (52.71)
12. Hoover, Miles (55.27)

U-19 Men
1. Johnson, Sam (50.02)

Race 2

U-14 Girls
2. Brown, Brooke (58.13)
3. Manka, Skylar (59.68)
4. Unger, Chloe (59.89)
6. Brown, Lili (1:01.20)
7. Vap, Morgane (1:01.31)
11. Klug, Carson (1:01.75)
16. Schreiner, Graycen (1:03.54)
19. Ditullio, Drew (1:05:50)
22. Davis, Margaret (1:07.21)

U-16 Girls
4. Davis, Hillary (57.11)
5. St. Cyr, Franci (57.35)
6. Carsich, Gracie (57.45)
7. Johnson, Winter (58.75)

U-19 Women
2. St. Cyr, Maci (55.61)
3. Winters, Mackenzie (55.81)
4. Winters, Madison (56.24)

U-14 Boys
2. Ueland, Cameron (59.52)
10. Pecunies, Cameron (1:03.61)
23. Johnson, Russell (1:10.65)

U-16 Boys
2. Beatty, Ryan (54.31)
4. Kirchmayr, Luke (55.81)
10. Hassman, Kjetil (57.78)
12. Hoover, Miles (59.26)

Sunday, Feb. 10

U-14 Girls
2. Brown, Brooke (56.56)
4. Manka, Skylar (57.55)
6. Vap, Morgane (59.29)
7. Klug, Carson (59.33)
10. Brown, Lili (59.66)
14. Schreiner, Graycen (1:01:18)
17. Johnson, Allene (1:02:36)
18. Ditullio, Drew (1:03.01)
22. Davis, Margaret (1:05.23)

U-16 Girls
4. St. Cyr, Franci (54.18)
5. Carisch, Gracie (55.15)
6. Johnson, Winter (55.66)
7. Davis, Hillary (55.81)

U-19 Women
1. St. Cyr, Maci (52.77)
3. Winters, Mackenzie (53.29)
5. Winters, Madison (53.81)
7. Schreiner, Mazie (53.88)
8. St. Cyr, Franci (54.18)

U-14 Boys
8. Pecunies, Cameron (1:02:10)
21. Johnson, Russell (1:055.39)

U-16 Boys
2. Beaty, Ryan (52.70)
4. Kirchmayr, Luke (54.62)
5. Hassman, Kjetil (54.70)
14. Hoover, Miles (58.16)

U-19 Men
2. Johnson, Sam (53.53)

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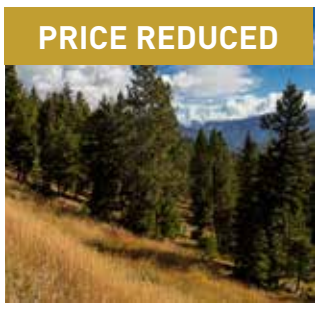

Lot 113 Crow Point Rd.
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6,203 SQ FT / $2.95M

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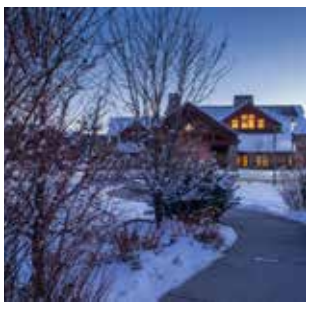

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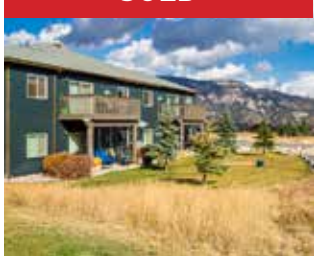

Firelight D-10
List Price: $324.9K

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Thank you, coach

BY DAN EGAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Last week I spent the day ripping around the mountain with my high school ski coach. It was a cold, sunny day, and the snow slowly softened up as we took turns following each other down the steep, groomed slopes of our local resort. On the chairlift the conversational tangents bounced between reminiscing, catching up on friends and family, and breaking down the current state of the U.S. Ski Team.

Off the chair, hunched over on our ski poles at the top of the mountain, I lost myself in our time together and marveled at his enthusiasm for seizing the day mixed with his passion for the topic of the moment and our mutual ability to consume the banter we shared.

As we pushed off to arc down the slope for yet another run, I lost myself in yesterday remembering the coaching style that inspired me over 35 years ago. It was his passion for the sport, his ability to provide positive feedback, pinpoint my mistakes and motivate me to harness my go-for-broke approach to ski racing. And as I chased him down the hill, run after run, there was one characteristic that kept coming back to me. He was a humble, patient man that saw potential in others long before we saw it in ourselves.

Peter Gately (left) has been a mentor to Dan Egan (right) for over 35 years. The two lifelong friends know the recipe for enjoying a day on the slopes. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAN EGAN

Peter Gately, in the classroom, was my science teacher, on the slopes, he was my coach, and slowly in life, he became my mentor. His was a soft, gentle guiding voice of encouragement periodically through the years after graduation and well into my work life. His patience and ability to accept me for where I was at and nudge me to move forward is something I'll never be able to repay.

Coach Gately has high standards and even higher expectations for those he cares about. I never found those expectations or standards a burden; instead, they inspired me to match his intentions on and off the slopes. As a young ski racer from southern Massachusetts, I was a bit of a misfit racing against the kids in the northern woods of Maine. He found a way to get through to me, worked with my rough style, brought me to the edge and then backed off just enough so I could stand up for two runs in a row. And throughout it all, he taught me the lessons young men need to learn about manners, preparation, follow-through and punctuality.

As the afternoon wore on and we went for one more run, after one more run, I never tired of his company, the stories I had heard before or tales of the people from our past. Skiing with friends is like that; there is time and space in the mountains for repetition, laughter, memories, and dreams. It's a sport that pulls out emotions, breaks apart disappointments and glues together kindred spirits.

We could have been at any ski area that day; the weather would not have mattered, it was the company we were seeking—the shared experience of our past which manifested in the moment.

Standing in the lift corral for yet one more run, l looked over and said, "You're skiing great coach, soft on the edges, round in the arc and fast in the fall line."

He smiled—enjoying the compliment—and then replied, "Thanks, it just took you a little over 35 years to finally get the advice I was telling you when you were stepping into the starting gate as a kid." And we laughed the whole way up the lift for that one last run.

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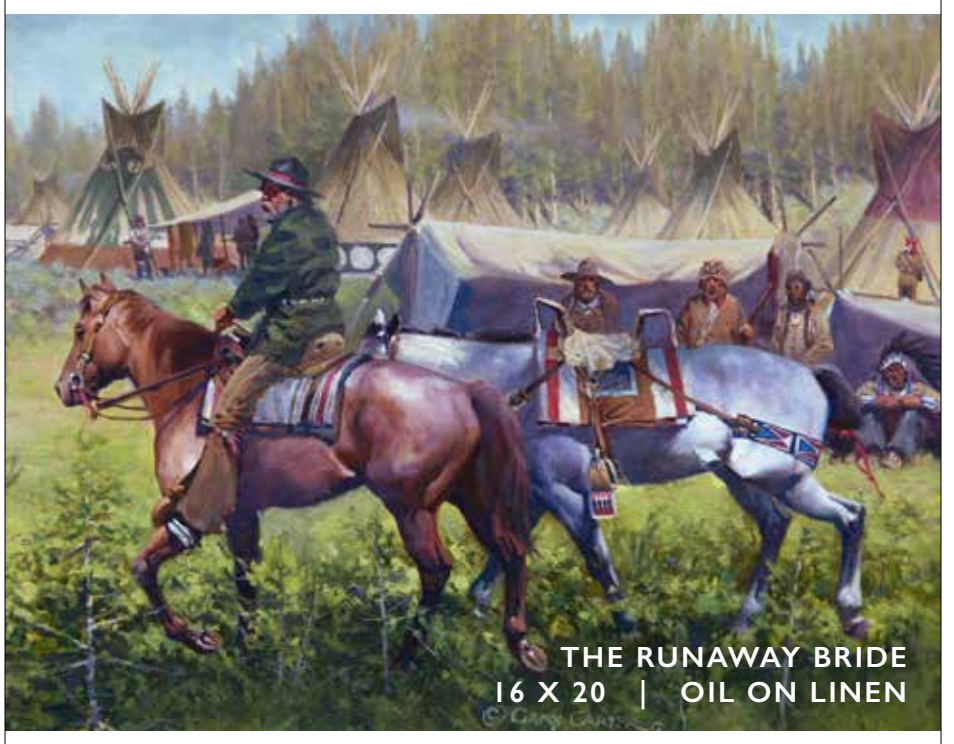

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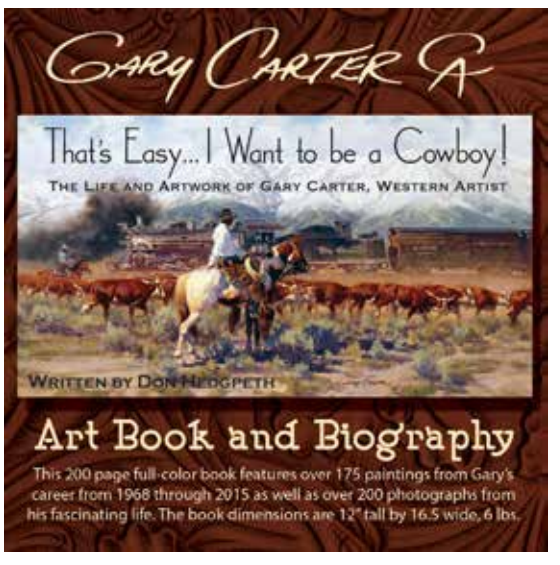

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BIG SKY TOWN RACE SERIES

Big Sky Town Series race results, Feb. 13

Big Sky Resort, in partnership with Outlaw Partners (publisher of EBS), hosted the fifth of seven Big Sky Town Series race days on Feb. 13. Locals and businesses assembled teams of four to six racers to go toe to toe on the resort's NASTAR course where Big Sky's fastest bunch will be determined.

OVERALL RANK	TEAM	SCORE	WEEKLY FINISH
1	Alpine Water	16.497	7
2	Big Sky Sotheby's	16.455	4
3	Ambulance Chasers	14.510	1
4	VerMontanans	11.975	2
5	Big Sky Mountain Sports	10.932	3
6	Lone Mtn. Sports	10.203	5
7	Scissorbill's	9.957	6
8	Lone Mountain Legends	9.820	10
9	Extras Extras	8.732	8
10	Outlaw Rippers	2.493	9

PHOTO BY CARIE BIRKMEIER

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Making it in Big Sky: Black Tie Ski Rentals

BY BAY STEPHENS
EBS STAFF WRITER

Seth Turner stands as one of many locals who talk about their living in Big Sky as something that was meant to be. For years, Turner had his "winter friends" in Big Sky while he spent summers elsewhere instructing kayaking, rafting and climbing. When friends finally convinced him to check out the area in the summer, he wondered why he ever left.

Turner worked for Big Sky Resort ski shop when a friend in Steamboat, Colorado, clued him in on a business idea that two other locals, Ian Prichard and Joe Sternberg, had begun delivering ski rental equipment to guests so they could hit the slopes sooner after flying or driving into town.

The company was brand new, but Turner could see the business model's promise for a place like Big Sky. Despite the owners' initial hesitation, he convinced them to let him open a licensed branch in Big Sky, which was born in November of 2004 from a two-car garage.

Black Tie Ski Rentals Big Sky branch owner Seth Turner, left, stands with his longest tenured employee, Kevin Callahan, outside the Meadow Village Center rental shop. Callahan has worked with Turner for 13 years. PHOTO BY BAY STEPHENS

Today, there are 15 licensed branches of Black Tie Ski Rentals in the West and the Big Sky branch employs 22 full- and six part-time employees out of its Meadow Village Center storefront. They deliver rental gear directly to clients' accommodations throughout Big Sky Resort, in the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club and Moonlight Basin, and sometimes in the Yellowstone Club.

As part of this ongoing series, Turner shared his thoughts on what it takes to make it as a small business owner in Big Sky.

Explore Big Sky: *What has been the key to your success?*

Seth Turner: I think that [timing] has been pretty key. … Looking at where Big Sky is now and where it's potentially headed, the thought of trying to start Black Tie right now would seem to me a much bigger undertaking than it was when we started 15 years ago. … Being able to grow with the community has been key. I also want to mention my incredible staff year after year and other local businesses who have paved the way after many years in Big Sky like Ken and Andrew from Grizzly Outfitters

EBS: *What are the biggest obstacles to operating a small business in Big Sky?*

S.T.: The biggest challenge I would say is employees. Getting a) the right staff, but b) enough staff. … It's hard to find places [for them] to live. I'm sure that's a common theme around here.

Trying to stay ahead of the game and differentiating yourself from other services. We're a ski rental shop, we don't sell retail. Often our clients need a new jacket or a new pair of pants, so often we'll tell them to go to Grizzly Outfitters or Lone Mountain Sports and say, "Hey when you're in there, tell them Black Tie Ski Rentals sent you." Being in a small community, we're all in it together.

EBS: *What is one of the most memorable moments you have had as a resident/business owner in Big Sky?*

S.T.: I've got a lot of those. As a business owner, my biggest standout is our 10th anniversary. Hitting that as a small business is huge. A lot of small businesses don't make it past two or three years. You make it past those first couple years and you feel like you're doing well, but it's still … tentative from five to seven years whether you're going to make it or not. Reaching that 10-year mark—anything can happen, it's not saying you're good forever—but hitting that 10 years, you feel fairly confident that what you're doing is going to continue to work. And now we're at 15 [years].

EBS: *What's the best business advice you've received?*

S.T.: I think the best was when I found out about Black Tie and went to my dad and said, "Hey, what do you think about this idea." … His first comment was, "Why didn't somebody do this 30 years ago when you guys were kids?" … Basically he said, "Go for it. Give it a shot. What's the worst thing that's going to happen? You either try and it doesn't work and you learn something from it, or you try it, it works and becomes successful." Had he not said [that] we wouldn't be here now.

EBS: *What advice would you give to small business owners just starting out in Big Sky?*

S.T.: Take the chance is really what it boils down to. Yeah, it might be scary but take the chance because you never know where you're going to wind up.

EBS: *What do you see as the most important areas of focus for Big Sky to thrive as it grows?*

S.T.: I think the whole concept of community is huge. … I think just Big Sky as a whole continuing to focus on [being] a community, not just a ski resort [is important]. … My mind goes there more and more now that I have kids. It's not just about what's important to me as an individual but, as my children grow up in Big Sky, it's not all about skiing. What else can they be involved in? … I'm not always so business focused. We're here for a reason outside of our businesses, which is just as important.

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SECTION 4:
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Wine & Dine **pg. 50**

Events Calendar **pg.52**

Backcountry Film Festival **pg. 61**

A vision in charcoal

Artist's drawings elicit 'mood and emotion' at Creighton Block

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – Doug Monson is a self-taught artist originally from Levan, Utah, who currently has large-scale charcoal drawings featured in Creighton Block Gallery in Big Sky.

As a contemporary Western artist, Monson's drawings stem mostly from images he's captured in the field in the Yellowstone region, greater Montana or in the Tetons, which helps unite his portfolio under a Western-themed umbrella.

"I can get a lot of mood and emotion from charcoal," Monson said in a phone call from his new home and studio space in Afton, Wyoming. "I also mainly keep a plain white background to help focus the composition and make my drawings stick out from more colorful works in modern galleries."

Monson has loved nature and art since he was a young boy and grew up drawing outdoor scenes he experienced and wildlife he saw in and around Levan. Although he's dabbled in oil painting, he ultimately felt pencil drawings and eventually charcoal were the most convenient medium for him to practice.

"I like to draw what I know and what I see," Monson said. "I think my art has a bit of uniqueness because I never received a formal art education or studied under a particular artist."

Monson originally contacted Creighton Block Gallery Director Courtney Collins, who works with gallery owner and purveyor Colin Mathews to curate art and artists in the gallery. "We're always actively searching for new artists to feature, but Doug sort of fell in our lap," Collins said. "I had been looking for a charcoal artist who creates large-scale pieces, and the fact that he uses a lot of negative space fit what we were looking for. Plus, Doug is very humble and wonderful to speak with."

Featured charcoal artist Doug Monson stands next to his final piece, "Winter Ready," in Creighton Block Gallery. PHOTO COURTESY OF DOUG MONSON

"Primal," a charcoal drawing by featured artist Doug Monson.
PHOTO COURTESY OF CREIGHTON BLOCK GALLERY AND DOUG MONSON

One quality that makes Monson's work attractive, according to Mathews, is the simplicity of black and white and Monson's ability to capture the personality of the animals he draws. "The character of animals is something we have an emotional connection to," Mathews said. "His art creates the moment of connection with the viewer."

That connection and the high caliber of Monson's work first drew Mathews to the artist. Mathews has been surrounded by a variety of quality art and artists throughout his life. After growing up outside San Francisco at the tail-end of the Beat Generation, he studied art history at Stanford University while focusing on art in Western civilization. As fate would have it, he and his wife, Paula Craver, along with Courtney Collins, now own and curate Creighton Block, which features contemporary and traditional Western-themed fine art.

After a career intertwined with law and D.C. politics, Mathews returned to his Western roots in 1997 by moving to Virginia City, Montana, a Gold Rush-era boomtown situated on the other side of Lone Mountain. In 1998, Mathews and Craver purchased a restaurant and later converted it to an art gallery. "Art is a passion of both my wife and I," Mathews said. "Plus, it was a glorious 75-foot-long space with stone walls, lots of surfaces and high copper ceilings. It was a beautiful gallery space."

In 2010, Creighton Block Gallery moved to Town Center after a request from the Simkins family, the founding property owners in the heart of Big Sky. Today, Mathews and Craver along with their staff share a love of Western-themed art in their current gallery spaces on Ousel Falls Road. One space focuses on contemporary work while the other focuses on traditional and representational work. Both spaces, however, have held or currently hold on their walls work from National Geographic photographers, Native American Smithsonian artists and up-and-coming local artists.

"Almost everyone has had the experience of standing in front of some painting or sculpture and having a powerful emotional response," said Mathews, referring to Monson's work. "We connect with works of art."

When viewing a Monson piece, it's easy to connect with the massive, curious-looking animals. The extreme detail, authenticity and bold contrast that comes with charcoal drawings will stop you in your tracks and leave your heart and mind soaring, almost as if you stumbled upon a live wolf or grizzly bear in the wild.

Annual Guild of Sommelier returns to Big Sky Resort

An intimate fine-dining evening brings new food and wine to small mountain town.

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – Dozens of resort guests and Montana locals attended Big Sky's annual Guild of Sommelier dinner on Saturday, Feb. 9 at the Summit Hotel's Peaks Restaurant. The intimate evening included fine-dining paired with quality wines, prepared by Google Global Program Chef Scott Giambastiani, ProStart culinary interns, and Master Sommelier Jay Fletcher.

Vine and Dine, which began as a summer event several years ago through collaboration among Chef Giambastiani, Sommeliers Fred Dame and Jay Fletcher, and Big Sky's Director of Beverage and Entertainment Steve Merlino, now carries into winter months under the guise of Guild of Sommelier Winter Dinner.

"Jay and I love to ski, so we wanted to see if we could come back in the winter and start the conversation earlier in the season when people are here who may not come in the summer," Chef Giambastiani said. "The summer event is hundreds of people, whereas this is 30 or 40."

Saturday night's eats began with an array of hors d'oeuvres. A well-trained staff passed out a baby vegetable tartlet, then transitioned into a scrumptious deviled egg topped with domestic caviar as well as a "DLT," or duck bacon, beet greens, tomato confit, foie gras mousse and brioche.

Chef Scott Giambastiani prepares hors d'oeuvres for Saturday's dinner. PHOTO BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

Many helping hands prepared Saturday's dinner. Here, line cooks put final touches on baby vegetable tartlets. PHOTO BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

"My favorite part about this event is learning new things under Chef Giambastiani," said ProStart intern Ayla Slate. "I learned how to make risotto and it was fun to throw things together quickly that turn out amazing."

The event is positive for the locals, too. Although it's a secluded event at the resort, the dinner brings new culture to a small mountain town. Further, "through Vine and Dine, Scott and the staff promote Big Sky, which is great for the community," said Big Sky local resident and event attendee Veronica Markham.

"There are a lot of places in the world that would love to have us host food and wine events, but we have the ability and the luxury to be very selective of where we like to go," Chef Giambastiani said. "We love to come to Big Sky because of the mountain's size, great weather, quality snow, and the intimacy of friendship and the Montana spirit in the people."

This summer's Vine and Dine culinary festival will take place in mid-August. The event will feature sommeliers, winemakers, and culinary specialists.

"I wanted the menu to showcase simple foods that highlighted what Montana has to offer, such as local game, while also mix-matching my plant-forward style," Chef Giambastiani said. "Jay and I collaborated to match the food with the wine, and [Summit Hotel] Executive Chef Eric Holup sourced the ingredients."

Sommelier Jay Fletcher carefully-selected wines from the Guild of Sommelier cellars, such as a 1998 Chateauneuf Du Pape and a 2004 Chateau Branaire. With each wine and food pairing, Sommelier Fletcher enthusiastically informed guests on the reasons for pairings and the history of each bottle.

Although the food and wine menu was delicious and world-class, community involvement is what made the 2019 Winter Guild Dinner unique. "A portion of the event's proceeds were donated to the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Guild of Sommeliers Education Foundation to help aspiring professional Sommeliers travel and learn more of the craft," said Somm Foundation administrator and Jay Fletcher's wife, Lynn Fletcher.

Additionally, Chef Giambastiani mentored ProStart interns, who helped prepare the evening's menu. ProStart is an advanced-culinary high school program which trains students in the classroom and experientially in the field. One student in the program who participated in a Vine and Dine event last year now works as a cook at Google's office in San Francisco.

A selection of carefully-selected wine by Sommelier Jay Fletcher from the Guild of Sommelier Cellars. PHOTO BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

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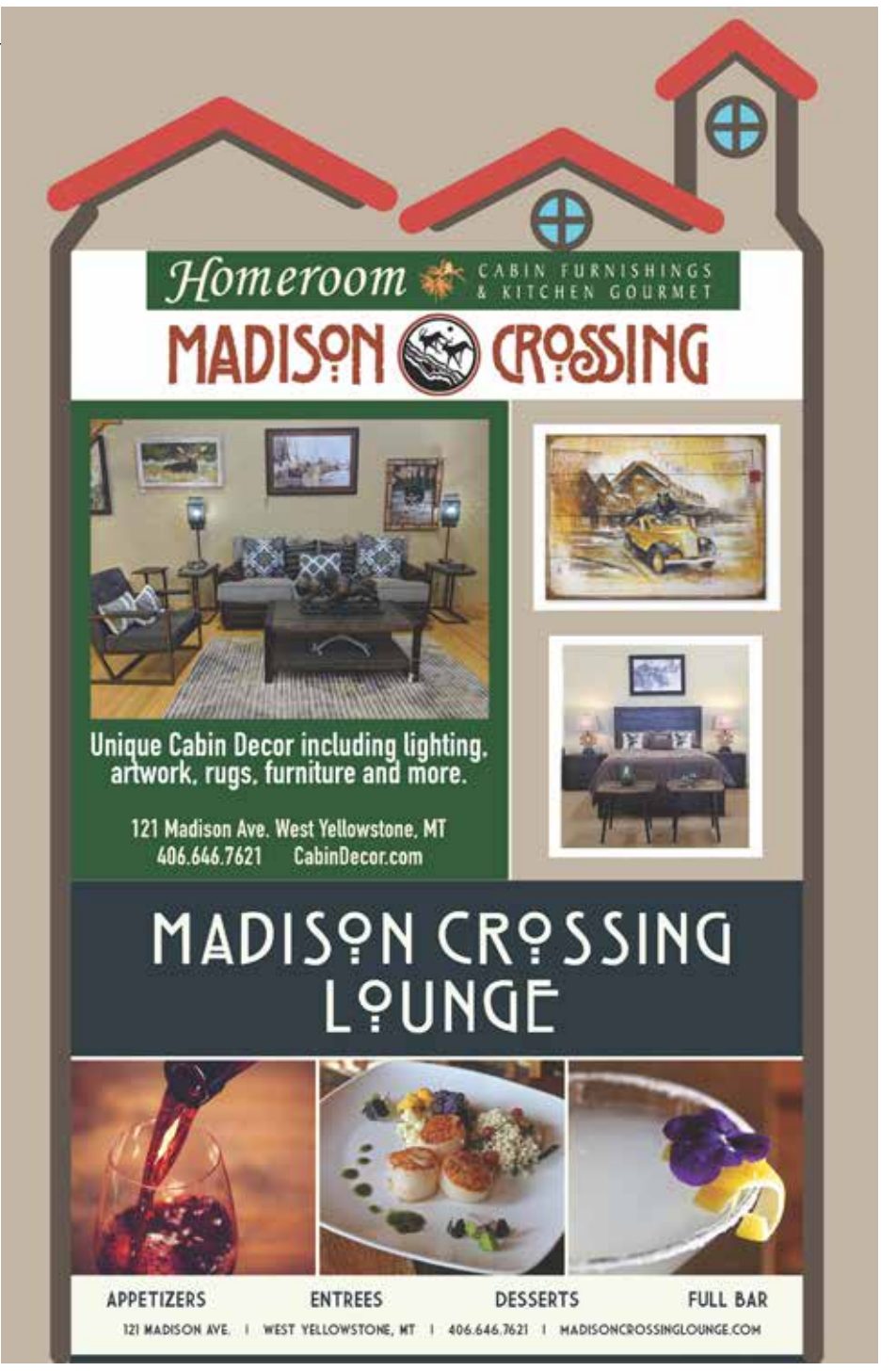

BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15 – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

If your event falls between March 1 and March 14, please submit it by February 20 by emailing media@outlaw.partners.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Curling League
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:00 p.m.

Live Music: New Age Affair
Choppers Grub & Pub, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, Noon

Live Music: Kent Johnson
Choppers Grub & Pub, 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Adult Drop-In Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

3 on 3 Hockey League
Town Center Ice Rink, 6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Rotary Club of Big Sky Meeting
Town Center Conference Room, 6:00 p.m.

Awareness Wednesday
Santosha Wellness Center, 7:00 p.m.

Dancing at Buck's T-4 Lodge
Buck's T-4 Lodge, 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

Adult Drop-in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

Visit Big Sky Board Meeting
Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Office, 8:30 a.m.

Alcoholics Anonymous can help if you think you might have a drinking problem. Call Alcoholics Anonymous 888-607-2000 to talk to a member of A.A. or go to aa.montana.org for meeting times and locations.

Tickets for **Big Sky PBR** will go on sale March 1 at 9:00 a.m. MST. Please refer to section one for more information about the event.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22

The Last Five Years: an off-Broadway Musical
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.

Curling League
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:00 p.m.

Live Music: Scavenger
Choppers Grub & Pub, 10:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

The Last Five Years: an off-Broadway Musical
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.

Backcountry Film Festival
Lone Peak Cinema, 7:00 p.m.

Live Music: Mathias
Choppers Grub & Pub, 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24

The Last Five Years: an off-Broadway Musical
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 5:30 p.m.

Adult Drop-in Hockey
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Special Olympics of Big Sky
Big Sky Resort, all day

Youth Hockey Clinic
Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

3 on 3 Hockey League
Town Center Ice Rink, 6 p.m.

Adult Broomball
Town Center Ice Rink, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Dancing at Buck's T-4 Lodge
Buck's T-4 Lodge, 7:00 p.m.

Open Skate
Town Center Ice Rink, 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Al-Anon Meeting
Big Sky Chapel, 4:00 p.m.

12 Step Group
Big Sky Chapel, 7:45 p.m.

WORTH THE DRIVE

BOZEMAN, MONTANA

Brews & the Big Sky: Montana Made, Montana Brewed

Museum of the Rockies | Tuesday, February 26, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Brews & the Big Sky explores the unique history of Montana paired with its brews. During this adults-only night, the museum becomes a lively venue for drinks and local history. A featured Montana brewery will offer beer samples while you enjoy light appetizers and wander through the museum's exhibitions. Michael Fox, the Curator of History, will present informal gallery talks at 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the Paugh History hall or the Changing Exhibit Gallery.

This event is only for individuals 21 and older and costs $12. The price of admission includes beer tasting, gallery talks, exhibits, and light appetizers. Space is limited, so be sure to register online before February 26 at 2:00 p.m. Please contact moroutreach@montana.edu with any questions or concerns regarding the event.

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REEL REVIEW

‘A Simple Favor’

BY ANNA HUSTED
EBS FILM CRITIC

Blake Lively plays a manipulative con-mom in Paul Feig’s thriller, “A Simple Favor.” PHOTO CREDIT LIONSGATE MEDIA

Paul Feig is one of my favorite directors. A master of directing comedy with such films as “Bridesmaids” and “Spy,” I was excited when I saw his name attached to the thriller, “A Simple Favor,” a film with arguably no protagonist and a whole lot of crazy.

“A Simple Favor” stars Anna Kendrick and Blake Lively as two very new best friends, but both in need of each other. Lively’s Emily and Kendrick’s Stephanie both have dark secrets they have shared only with each other, but Emily’s secret goes much deeper than what she reveals. After Emily goes missing on a work trip to Miami, Stephanie takes care of Emily’s son and husband, picking up the former from school and cooking both dinner. Stephanie’s intentions appear pure, but quickly transition into morbid as she dreams of moving in and fully replacing Emily.

Stephanie is an adult version of Kayla from the film “Eighth Grade:” She looks for friends in virtual places and never has a clue when she is truly liked or just being used. This obliviousness doesn’t seem to bother her because she is the perfect motherly and wifely image to the vlogosphere; she turns to her video blog subscribers when Emily is still not found and the pieces of her life don’t add up.

The costume design in “A Simple Favor” is by far the best part. Lively’s masculine pantsuits and her ability to walk elegantly in heels on a cobblestone sidewalk bring a sense of thrill and suspicion. We know we can’t trust her from the beginning due to this overt costume design.

Although “A Simple Favor” is simultaneously cultivated and fun, it loses the plot when the big twist is neither shocking nor cleverly revealed. Emily’s husband’s aloofness feels forced, and we have no one to root for after Stephanie shows her true nutty colors by moving into Emily’s house just weeks after her disappearance.

While “A Simple Favor” is a fun ride with fantastic costumes, Feig’s excellence is comedy. The few over-the-top crazy girl moments in the film are the best because they make us laugh. One of the wildest plot points is Stephanie’s incestual secret that unfolds in more detailed flashbacks while she is trying on Emily’s high-end shoes and dresses after having just buried her friend.

What doesn’t work, specifically at the end, is when a neighborhood dad comes to Stephanie’s rescue when he has no motive for helping her other than feeling sorry for her ignorance. This character had such a small role earlier in the film that it was surprising to see him return at the end.

The unsatisfying ending perhaps adds to the craziness of the film, but more likely “A Simple Favor” fell flat because, theoretically speaking, it introduced a gun in the first act without ever letting it go off in the third. While the film’s weaknesses are distracting, a runtime of less than two hours still had me curious for what the ending had in store. If you’re a Feig, Kendrick or Lively fan like I am, don’t miss this crazy movie. But if not, then this might be one to skip.

“A Simple Favor” is now available to rent on Amazon Prime, Google Play or YouTube.

Anna Husted has a master’s in film studies from New York University. In Big Sky, she can be found up on the hill or at the movies at Lone Peak Cinema. When not gazing at the silver screen or watching her new favorite TV show, she’s skiing, fishing or roughhousing with her cat, Indiana Jones.

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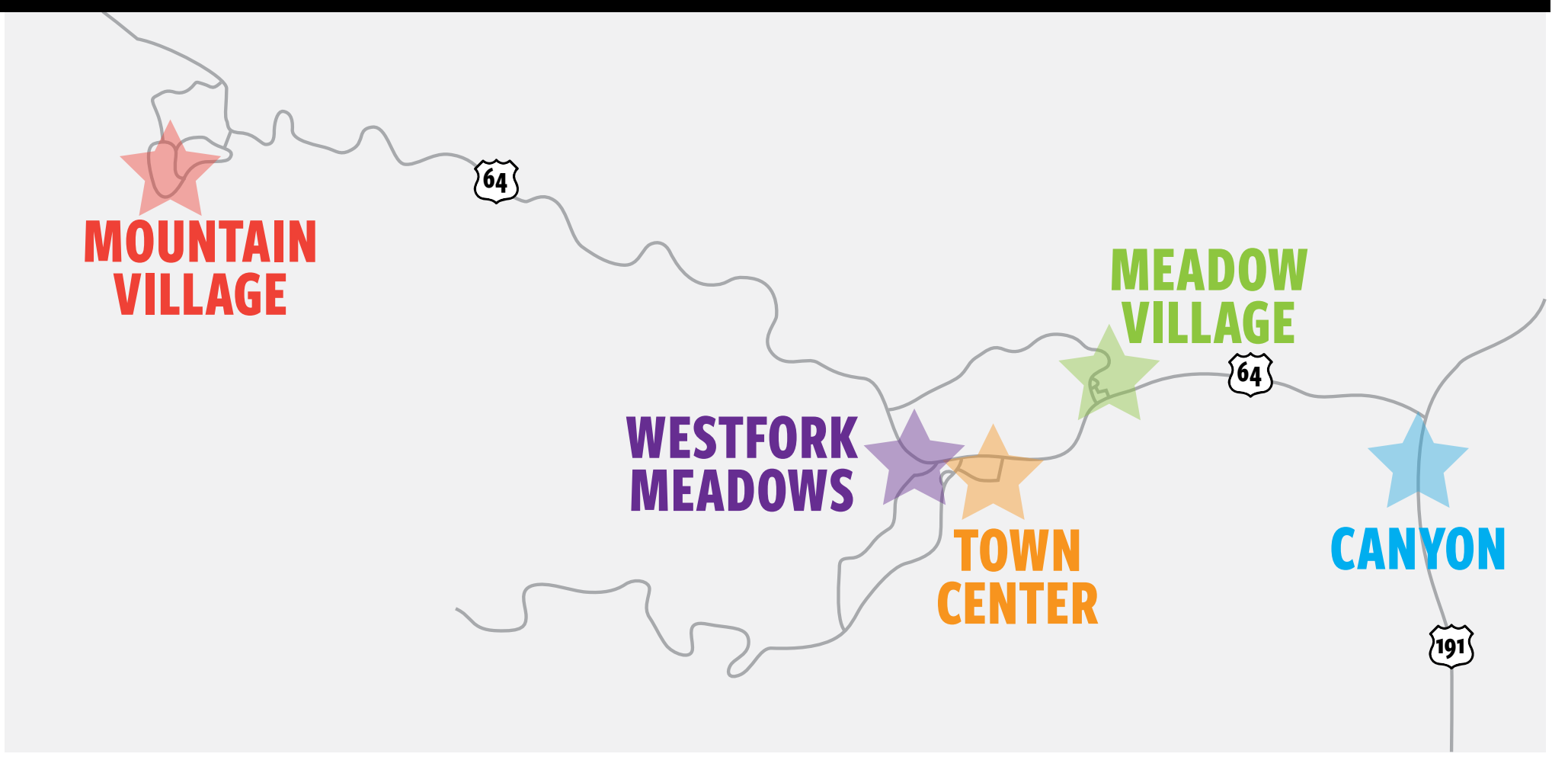

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WMPAC connects Big Sky locals to the arts

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Big Sky locals generally think of a night out as après drinks and dinner in town. For the weekend of Feb. 22-24, it can also include a Broadway theater experience. The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is bringing the cult favorite musical *The Last Five Years* to Big Sky for a limited three-performance run. The show will star Abby Mueller and Ben Jacoby, both of whom were most recently seen in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* on Broadway and are coming from New York for this production.

"Skiing is the lifeblood of Big Sky and we wouldn't have it any other way," ," Executive Director of WMPAC John Zirkle said. "But there are so many other opportunities for cultural activities here that people overlook."

According to Zirkle, many locals assume WMPAC is intended for out-of-towners or second homeowners and that they don't have the time or money to attend the theater. Zirkle wants to eradicate the notion that the artistic world and the ski world are mutually exclusive.

"We've worked extremely hard to keep these shows affordable and want to reiterate to Big Sky locals that WMPAC is designed for them," Zirkle said. "We're inspired by Warren Miller's spirit of combining ski culture with high quality art. We want people to come straight from the slopes and see a Broadway show."

Zirkle thinks that the performance will be the perfect respite for local employees between the chaos of Presidents' Day weekend and before the March spring break rush of tourists. *The Last Five Years* will be performed at WMPAC Friday, Feb. 22 at 7:30pm; Saturday, Feb. 23 at 7:30pm; and Sunday, Feb. 24 at 5:30pm.

Visit warrenmillerpac.org for more information.

Courtney Smith, set designer for "The Last Five Years," on set at WMPAC this week.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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Italy's Luca Stricagnoli headlines Guitar Night at WMPAC

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

For those who attended the last Big Sky performance of International Guitar Night in 2017, watching Luca Stricagnoli play was undoubtedly one of the highlights. This year, the young Italian sensation returns to host the event along with three other international players on Sunday, March 3, at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center.

Stricagnoli, born and raised in Italy, is an acoustic guitarist known for his unique style and innovative playing techniques. His original approach to music has garnered him over 100 million views on YouTube and sold-out shows around the world. Using up to five guitars in the same piece, modified capos, and self-conceived stratagems, Luca continually leaves his audiences in awe and wondering what's next for the up-and-coming guitarist. In addition to his musical abilities, Luca brings an enthusiastic energy to the stage that attracts concert requests from every corner of the world.

"Watching Luca play is nothing short of mind-blowing," said Arts Council of Big Sky Executive Director Brian Hurlbut. "It's truly a treat to be able to bring such an incredible artist here to Big Sky."

Italian progressive guitarist Luca Stricagnoli is one of four performers coming to Big Sky on March 3 for a stop on the International Guitar Night world tour. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

Stricagnoli's music has been featured in countless magazines and TV channels and has grabbed the attention of world-famous artists such as the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Walk Off the Earth. He recently released his new album, "What if?" in which he explores even more approaches to guitar playing. The first track of the album, featuring a new guitar invented by him and designed by Davide Serracini, obtained viral success with over 40 million views online and was published by magazines all over the world, such as *NME*, *Spiegel* and *La Repubblica*.

International Guitar Night is the world's premier touring guitar festival, each show bringing together the most interesting and innovative acoustic guitarists to exchange musical ideas in a public concert setting. In addition to Stricagnoli, this 19th year of the tour features two of France's acclaimed young prodigies—swing guitarist Antoine Boyer and Flamenco guitarist Samuelito. Also appearing will be the ground-breaking Turkish fretless guitarist, Cenk Erdoğan.

The evening will feature each artist playing individually, as well as duos, trios and the full quartet performing a fun and musically-diverse program. For more information or to purchase tickets please visit *bigskyarts.org*.

Free Wild and Scenic Film Festival comes to Bozeman

Pizza, drinks, and films with the community

GALLATIN WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION

The Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and Gallatin Wildlife Association are hosting the Wild & Scenic Film Festival at the Emerson Theater in Bozeman on Saturday, Feb. 16 at 6 p.m.

The festival features environmental films that highlight the beauties of the natural world, the challenges facing our planet, and the work communities and individuals are doing to protect the planet and wildlife. Featured films will include "A Letter to Congress," an award-winning film showcasing the importance of wilderness; "Sky Migrations," a film about backcountry scientists at the front lines of raptor conservation; "Brothers of Climbing," which highlights a group that aims to make the climbing community more welcoming; and "Irreparable Harm," a film that spotlights a native community and culture in southeast Alaska and the environmental threats it faces.

Information tables and representatives of local conservation groups will be present to discuss local environmental issues. There will be free beer and pizza and no fee is charged for the event. A raffle with prizes for local businesses will take place, with proceeds to benefit Gallatin Wildlife Association, an organization that promotes restoration, maintenance and perpetuation of wildlife and their habitat.

For more information contact Nancy Schultz at nancyanaconda@msn.com.

Montana Ballet Company premieres "The Little Mermaid"

Bozeman original features live orchestra and vocalists

MONTANA BALLET COMPANY

Montana Ballet Company announced the world premiere of "The Little Mermaid" on Saturday, Feb. 23 and Sunday, Feb. 24 at the Willson Auditorium in Bozeman.

"The Little Mermaid" is a new, original work inspired by the famous Hans Christian Andersen tale. Artistic Director Elizabeth DeFanti reinterprets the story, infusing messages of self-acceptance, self-truth and empowerment.

"Our Mermaid Marina initially believes her truth and contentment are found outside of herself," DeFanti said. "Through an important journey, she realizes everything she needs for fulfillment is already within her."

DeFanti said she's humbled by the exceptional and talented artists who have gathered to create "The Little Mermaid." Upon hearing DeFanti's "Mermaid" tale, MBC Music Director Stefan Stern composed an original orchestral score and led a group of local musicians and vocalists to realize it.

Also joining the team is Michael Hillenius, head of the Willson Auditorium, who is designing and building new sets, as well as devising lighting to portray magical worlds both under and above the sea. Newly-crafted costumes from Master Costume Designer Winthrop Corey, and MBC costume mistresses Melinda Delgado, Annette Piccirillo and Heidi Fry, will be showcased on stage. Artist Saskia Ewen Fox of Whole Art Inc. created original visual art for the piece, while Kristin Wimberg of Wimberg Productions has been filming "The Making of Mermaid" since the summer of 2018.

The cast of MBC dancers will bring "The Little Mermaid" to life, along with special guest artists Lily Loveland and Aaron Melendrez from Ballet Palm Beach, who will dance the principal roles of Mermaid Marina and Prince.

Visit montanaballet.org for tickets or more information.

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Montana Wilderness Association hosts 14th annual Backcountry Film Festival

Traveling film festival comes to Big Sky

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – The Madison-Gallatin Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association will be hosting the Backcountry Film Festival at Lone Peak Cinema on Saturday, Feb. 23, featuring films about human-powered winter recreation and highlighting the importance of snow safety and the beauty of winter landscapes.

Among other pictures, the festival will screen the Teton Gravity Research and Jeremy Jones film "Ode to Muir;" a DPS cinematic "The Abbey;" and a Camp4 Collective original "Surfer Dan."

The festival is produced each year by Winter Wildlands Alliance, a national nonprofit organization "dedicated to promoting and preserving winter wildlands and a quality human-powered snowsports experience on public lands through education, outreach and advocacy," according to its website. The Montana Wilderness Association hosts the film festival for a second time in Big Sky in partnership with the Winter Wildlands Alliance.

The Montana Wilderness Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is a grassroots environmental group which started in Bozeman in 1958 and is one of the oldest conservation associations in the western United States. The Madison-Gallatin Chapter has approximately 620 members in Gallatin, Madison and Park counties. The admission fee for the film festival will support the organization's conservation and education efforts, such as guided hikes throughout the year, trail maintenance, wilderness stewardship and other conservation initiatives.

Although the screening begins at 7 p.m., the Madison-Gallatin Chapter will host a meet-and-greet at Beehive Basin Brewery from 4-6 p.m.

"Our goal is to increase interest in and make people aware of the MWA," said Tom Ross, president

Human-powered recreation such as ski touring, which is featured in the Backcountry Film Festival, occurs in places like Beehive Basin in Big Sky. Beehive Basin is also a location that the Madison-Gallatin Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association aims to promote and protect through its conservation efforts. PHOTO BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

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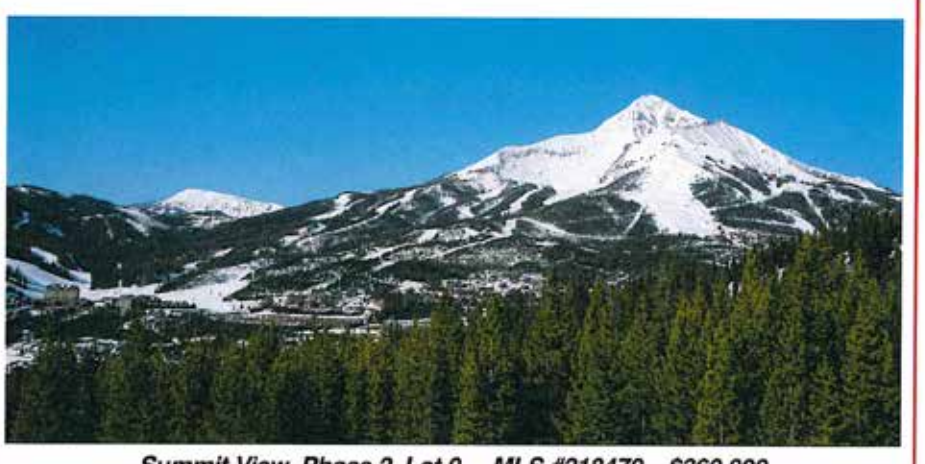

Summit View Phase 2, Lot 9 MLS #218470 $360,000

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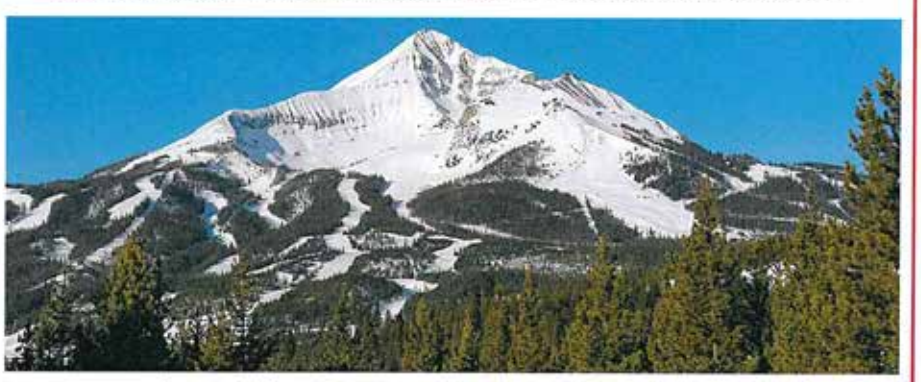

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American Life in Poetry: Column 722

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

Marge Saiser, who lives in Nebraska, is a fine and a very lucky poet. With the passing of each year her poems have gotten stronger and deeper. That's an enviable direction for a writer. This poem was published in The Briar Cliff Review and it looks back wisely and wistfully over a rich life. Saiser's most recent book is The Woman in the Moon from the Backwaters Press.

Weren't We Beautiful

growing into ourselves
earnest and funny we were
angels of some kind, smiling visitors
the light we lived in was gorgeous
we looked up and into the camera
the ordinary things we did with our hands
or how we turned and walked
or looked back we lifted the child
spooned food into his mouth
the camera held it, stayed it
there we are in our lives as if
we had all time
as if we would stand in that room
and wear that shirt those glasses
as if that light
without end
would shine on us
and from us.

We do not accept unsolicited submissions. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2017 by Richard Robbins, "Old Country Portraits," from "Body Turn to Rain," (Lynx House Press, 2017). Poem reprinted by permission of Richard Robbins and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 2019 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

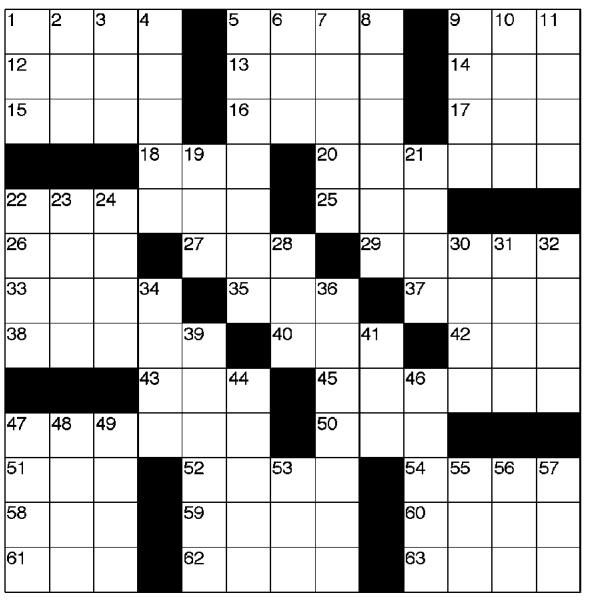
1 Subject (abbr.)
5 Killer of Castor
9 Agent (abbr.)
12 Eight (Lat.)
13 Informer: slang
14 Canon
15 Green Bay tribe
16 Silk (Fr.)
17 Master of Business Administration (abbr.)
18 Corrode
20 Equilibrium
22 Metal refuse
25 Outer (pref.)
26 Illumination unit
27 Recombinant letters
29 Murderer of Siegfried
33 Old Gr. coin
35 Youngster
37 Venetian traveler
38 Birthplace of Columbus
40 Atomic Energy Commission (abbr.)
42 Suitcase
43 Florida (abbr.)
45 Eric
47 Rom. shield
50 Adverb (abbr.)
51 Tablet
52 Irish assembly
54 Bedouin headband cord
58 Amer. Bar Assn. (abbr.)
59 Son of Isaac
60 Achy
61 Arabic letter
62 Narrow street
63 Plunder

DOWN

1 Distress signal
2 Fiddler crab genus
3 British thermal unit (abbr.)
4 Wag
5 Wink
6 Burmese knife
7 Appear
8 Outline
9 Charity
10 Taro
11 Poetic contraction
19 Succor
21 Nipa palm
22 Trudge
23 Geometric solid
24 Oxford
28 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
30 Asian desert
31 Dash
32 Strong ale
34 Warehouse area
36 Reduce
39 Chemist's pot
41 Sp. hero
44 David's commander
46 Weak Russ. beer
47 Fr. plane
48 Woman's work basket
49 Hereditary property
53 John, Gaelic
55 Tibetan gazelle
56 Amer. Red Cross (abbr.)
57 Grouse's courtship area

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

G	A	R	B	■	T	A	S	S	■	T	A	V
A	C	H	E	■	A	S	C	I	■	O	B	E
R	H	E	A	■	R	E	A	M	■	N	B	E
■	■	■	D	O	T	■	D	A	M	I	E	R
G	I	S	■	L	A	C	■	L	A	C	■	■
U	C	A	■	I	R	A	S	■	P	H	O	N
T	A	M	■	G	U	L	A	R	■	E	L	Y
S	L	E	D	■	S	I	T	A	■	R	E	E
■	■	A	A	M	■	N	U	N	■	B	A	T
R	A	G	O	U	T	■	R	A	S	■	■	■
A	B	A	■	C	A	N	A	■	H	A	A	B
A	B	I	■	H	E	A	T	■	A	A	R	E
D	A	N	■	O	L	P	E	■	D	A	C	E



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WHERE BIG SKY COMES TOGETHER

walkability • connectivity • mixed-use and diversity • distinctive architecture and urban design
traditional neighborhood structure • quality of life • smart transportation
increased density • sustainability • local businesses and services

Bozeman natives, the Simkins family has been responsibly guiding the planning and development of the Town Center neighborhood for over 20 years, always supporting their commitment to leave a legacy of which the community and their family can be proud. They have owned land in Big Sky since 1970.

ANNOUNCING BIG SKY'S NEWEST PUBLIC SPACE - TOWN CENTER PLAZA

The Plaza is designed to be an incredible, warm, comfortable, welcoming public space for events, festivals, après, gathering with friends and family, and much more. Amenities include the "Big Lawn," fire pits, public art sculptures, charging ports, incredible sound system, kids play equipment, bike repair station, drinking fountain, signature Christmas tree, concession kiosk, push-button overhead heaters, patio seating with overhead lights, etc. The Town Center Plaza was completed this summer in the curve of Town Center Avenue, in front of the new Wilson Hotel.

Many thanks to the local contractors and design professionals who made this incredible public space a reality.

MAP OF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AVAILABLE (soon)
Lot 3 Block 4, 16,800sf, shared parking provided. Commercial or mixed-use.

AVAILABLE (now)
Lots 11, 12 & 13 in Block 3, 13,400sf, shared parking provided. Commercial or mixed-use.

AVAILABLE (now)
Lots 7, 9, & 10 in Block 3, 20,700sf, shared parking provided. Commercial or mixed-use.

AVAILABLE (now)
Lot 5A in Block 3, 12,800sf, shared parking provided. Commercial.

LEGEND

~55% Built-Out

60+ Businesses!

A. First Security Bank
B. Market Place Building
C. RJS Tower Building
D. Goode Place Building
E. Clock Tower Building
F. Lone Peak Cinema Building
G. Buildings 32 & 44
H. Lone Mountain Land Building
I. Building 47
J. Plaza Lofts Building (under construction)
K. Wilson Hotel (under construction)
L. AVAILABLE - Lots 11, 12 & 13 in Block 3
M. AVAILABLE - Lots 7, 9, 10 in Block 3
N. Willie's Distillery (under construction)
O. AVAILABLE - Lot 5A in Block 3
P. Parking
Q. Roxy's Market
R. Big Sky Medical Center
S. Peaks Building
T. The Cave Building
U. Future Mixed-Use Building
V. Future Hotel
W. Future Drive-Through Building
X. Future Development (likely residential)
Y. AVAILABLE - Lot 3 of Block 4
Z. Under Contract - Mixed-use Buildings