

ExploreTM

Life and land from the heart of the Yellowstone Region

FREE

Big Sky

November 8 - 21, 2019
Volume 10 // Issue #23

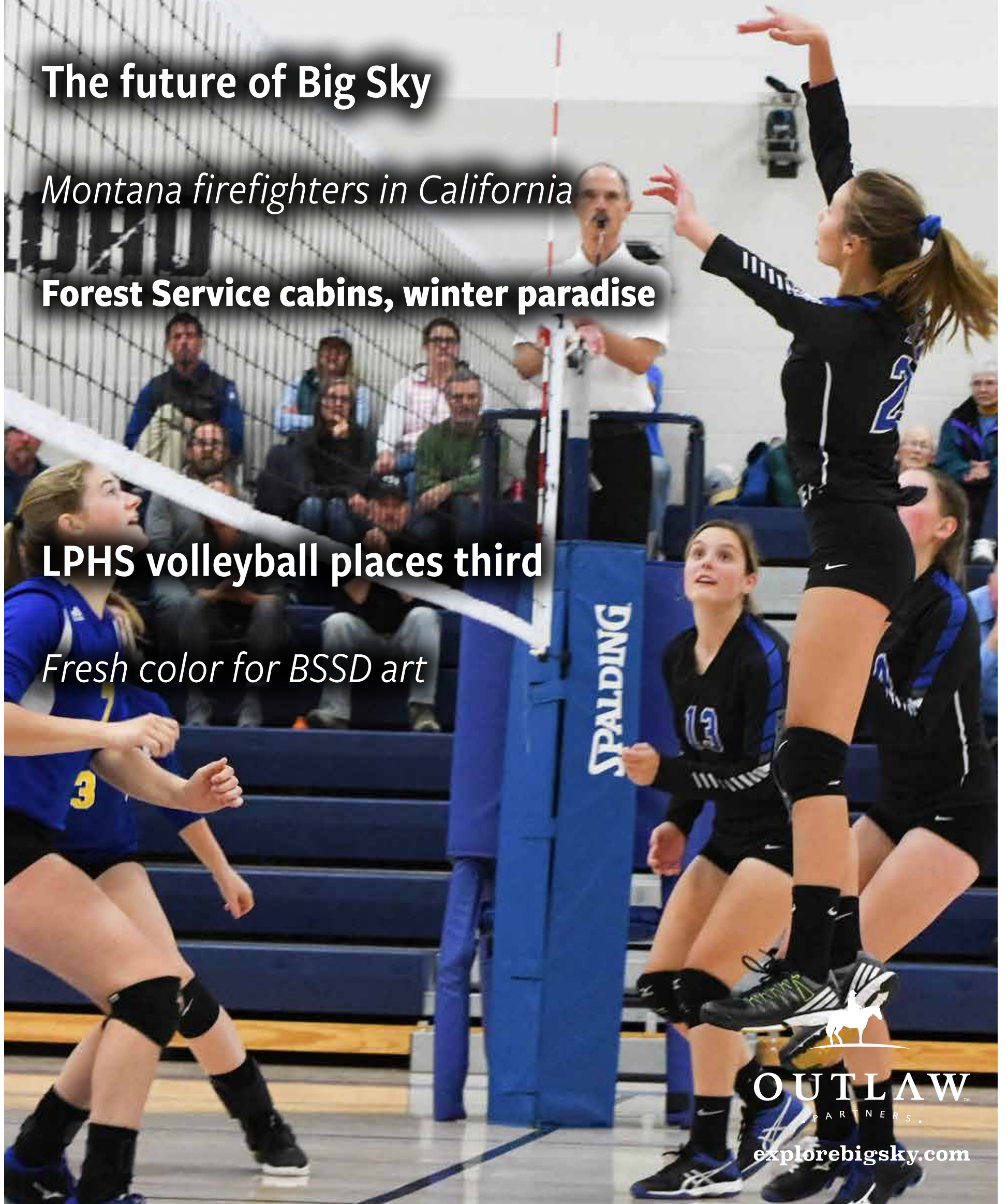
The future of Big Sky

Montana firefighters in California

Forest Service cabins, winter paradise

LPHS volleyball places third

Fresh color for BSSD art



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PUBLISHER

Eric Ladd | eric@theoutlawpartners.com

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, VP MEDIA

Joseph T. O'Connor | joe@theoutlawpartners.com

DIGITAL EDITOR, STAFF WRITER

Michael Somerby | michael@theoutlawpartners.com

SPORTS EDITOR / DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR

Doug Hare | doug@theoutlawpartners.com

ENVIRONMENTAL & OUTDOORS EDITOR

Jessianne Castle | media@theoutlawpartners.com

STAFF WRITER, DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR

Brandon Walker

DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR, SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT

Kirby Grubaugh

CREATIVE

LEAD DESIGNER

Marisa Specht

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

ME Brown

SENIOR VIDEO EDITOR

Ryan Weaver

LEAD VIDEOGRAPHER

Jennings Barmore

SALES AND OPERATIONS

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Megan Paulson | megan@theoutlawpartners.com

VP, SALES AND MARKETING

EJ Daws | ej@theoutlawpartners.com

VP OF EVENTS

Ennion Williams | ennion@theoutlawpartners.com

MEDIA AND EVENTS DIRECTOR

Ersin Ozer | ersin@theoutlawpartners.com

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LEAD

Sam Brooks | sam@theoutlawpartners.com

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Blythe Beaubien | blythe@theoutlawpartners.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Arnold, Kathy Bouchard, Zach Brown, Anne Cantrell, Karen Filipovich, Alicia Harvey, Andrew Hermance, Anna Husted, Kris Inman, Ted Kooser, Scott Mechura, Carol Schmidt, Todd Wilkinson, Emily Stifler Wolfe

ON THE COVER:

LPHS sophomore TJ Nordahl (in air) and the rest of the Lady Big Horns finished the regular season strong on a five-match winning streak. Lone Peak concluded their season with a third-place finish at the district tournament. For full story see page 33. PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL BOUGH

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The future of Big Sky

On Nov. 6, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce hosted their biannual Eggs and Issues Community Discussion meeting along with the Gallatin-Madison Joint County Commission Meeting. The two meetings unveiled and facilitated discussions of significant future initiatives within Big Sky's burgeoning community boundaries.

9

Montana firefighters in California

Firefighters from across Montana, including Big Sky, have been deployed to assist in fighting the wildfires ravaging much of California. Over 70 firefighters have been called into action and will each be there for roughly two weeks before returning home to The Treasure State.

17

Forest Service cabins, winter paradise

There are more than 20 U.S. Forest Service cabins in the Custer Gallatin National Forest—all of which are available to the public. The cabins allow visitors to get away from everyday life and enjoy a rustic, cozy stay in the midst of mother winter's harshest conditions.

33

LPHS volleyball places third

Lone Peak volleyball ended their regular season on an impressive streak, winning their final five matches. The Lady Big Horns concluded their year by finishing third at the double elimination district tournament in Manhattan.

45

Fresh color for BSSD art

BSSD's newest art teacher DJ Soikkeli, 25, is bringing fresh perspective to the 6th through 12th grade position. It goes beyond his remodeling of the classroom so that it lends itself better to creative processes—he hopes to instill the notion that lessons learned in art class extend far beyond the classroom walls.



With winter fast approaching bears are increasingly active leading to more encounters and sightings, especially around populated areas. This black bear recently paid a visit to Black Tie Ski Rentals. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN MARSHALL

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OUTLAW PARTNERS & EXPLORE BIG SKY

P.O. Box 160250, Big Sky, MT 59716 (406) 995-2055 • media@outlaw.partners

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@explorebigsky

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MARTHA JOHNSON
VP OF SALES, FOUNDING BROKER
MARTHA@BIGSKY.COM
406.580.5891



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Non-stop flights to Minneapolis coming this summer

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – The Bozeman-Yellowstone International (BZN) airport is expanding its offerings this summer. Non-stop flights to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) will be available two times each week. Sun Country Airlines, a Minneapolis-based airline, will fly the route on Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the summer months.

The new flights will be available starting in June and ticket fares are expected to be as low as \$89 in either direction. Sun Country will become the eighth airline that services the Bozeman-Yellowstone International airport.

The flights departing from Minneapolis and arriving to Bozeman will leave around 8 a.m. Those going from Bozeman to Minneapolis can expect to leave mid-morning, shortly after 10 a.m.

‘Shoulder season’ coming to a close

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – It came and then left just as fast.

“Shoulder Season” is a period of lethargy experienced in resort towns the world over, and Big Sky’s is easily defined by the quiet weeks between the hum ski season and when out-of-town summer masses gather in Big Sky Town Center for events such as Big Sky PBR and the Music in The Mountains concert series, or on a pit stop between Bozeman and Yellowstone National Park.

Two editions ago, Explore Big Sky published a brief that at once celebrated the time to relax with fellow locals, family and friends, but also belabored the difficulties in catching a bite with many restaurant owners shuttering doors to catch their breaths after the hysteria of tourism leaves them and their staffs fatigued.

But that period is coming to a close, with restaurants and businesses around the community awaking from “Shoulder Season” slumbers, refreshed and ready for the hordes to come.

Still, many businesses will stagger back to life, so be sure to reference the working list of restaurant hours set out in early October before packing the kids into the car and heading to your favorite Big Sky gastro pub.

Visit explorebigsky.com/shoulderseason2019 for a working list of restaurants’ hours. Did we miss something? Feel free to reach us at media@theoutlawpartners.com for updates, questions or concerns.

LPHS National Honor Society gathering donations for Thanksgiving

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – With Thanksgiving right around the corner, Lone Peak High School’s chapter of the National Honor Society is doing their part to ensure everyone has a hearty meal this holiday season. The students began collecting food on Oct. 21 and will continue to do so until Nov. 21.

Kate Eisele, faculty advisor for NHS as well as a middle and high school science teacher for Big Sky School District, hopes that the food drive will become an annual event: “This is the first time NHS has done a fall food drive and we’re hoping to kind of make it an annual tradition.”

All donations from the food drive, entitled “Thanksgiving in a Bag,” will be sent to the Big Sky Community Food Bank. On Nov. 22, students from LPHS will collect and deliver the donations to the food bank.

The food drive has also brought about some friendly competition between LPHS students to see which grade level can compile the largest amount of donations. After an initial count, the seniors are leading throughout the middle and high school, while the second graders appear to have the largest total in the elementary school.

Donations can be left at Lone Peak High School, outside of the main office, as well as at the Big Sky Visitor’s Center, Lone Peak Cinema and the Hungry Moose Market & Deli.

Big Sky Resort gets over 50” of snow in October

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Winter arrived early in Big Sky. With over 51” of snow falling on Lone Mountain in October, the resort reported nearly 250 percent above average snowfall for the month. Those numbers made this past month the third snowiest October of the last two decades.

Colder temperatures also allowed the resort to fire up snow machines for over 100 hours, blanketing the lower mountain with “snow whales,” or large piles of snow used to maintain a thicker snowpack at lower elevations.

Less than a month away from Opening Day on Nov. 28, resort crews are busy finishing up the remodel of the Mountain Mall in the base area, which is slated to open as soon as the lifts start spinning.

With above-average backcountry powder skiing conditions, many locals have already gotten their first turns of the season in, especially venturing out from the Beehive Basin trailhead.

For information on the latest backcountry snow conditions, visit mtavalanche.com.

Resort Tax ordinance approved through unanimous vote

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – Closing out a process that took more than six months to finalize, the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board and staff celebrated a significant and hard-wrought achievement at their Oct. 25 open board meeting: the unanimous approval of Ordinance 98-01.

The ordinance in question, the latest in a string put into effect by BSRAD since its inception in 1992, tightened protocol as to when and where a 3 percent resort tax is levied. Collections from said resort tax are then doled out annually in the form of appropriations to various community organizations and projects.

Specifically, this current board and staff sought to clarify language that has, in the past, allowed for businesses to skirt compliance piecemeal or altogether, whether unintentionally or through purposeful exercising of a vaguely defined lexicon specific to the resort tax.

In particular, looseness in the definitions of “Goods and Services,” “Luxuries,” “Necessities of Life” and “Enumerated Establishments” provided wiggle room for inconsistencies in resort tax collections.

According to District Manager Daniel Bierschwale, as quoted by a BSRAD press release, “The district strives for impactful management of funds working to create a legacy for future generations in Big Sky. We believe this ordinance is not only clear but also fair and equitable by helping to aid businesses with compliance and in turn investing in Big Sky’s future.”

Along with introducing the “3Rs,” “Rules, Regulations and Registrations,” the ordinance will most significantly impact businesses that sell alcohol and tobacco and businesses with an enumerated component.

Alcohol and tobacco are now, without deviation, blanketed by the “Luxuries” denomination, meaning that wherever sold, in whatever form, the two items will always be taxed; businesses with an enumerated component, such as the Hungry Moose Market and Deli, will now be able to differentiate taxing their prepared and served food services, while exempting “Necessities of Life” from taxation, such as unprepared and unserved food, personal hygiene products and medicine, among other items laid out by the ordinance.



BSRAD Chairperson Kevin Germain signing the ordinance on Oct. 25. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

The latter is intended to lessen the impact of the resort tax on locals and members of the workforce.

“We do not want to continue to propagate a higher cost of living for our locals and our workforce, and so by adding some language that says if a business is actually doing something that is a necessity of life, even though they’re an enumerated establishment, we want to exempt that,” said Chairperson Kevin Germain after the close of the meeting.

All businesses operating within the district are required to register by Dec. 31 of this year, a measure intended to increase proactive compliance measures, and the ordinance goes into effect on Nov. 25.

The road to approval was not without select community and business owner pushback. However, as a testament to the measures of outreach and due diligence carried out by BSRAD in crafting a community-backed ordinance, no one in attendance of the meeting was in opposition to the draft before it was approved and signed.

Visit resorttax.org for additional information regarding the ordinance, training sessions, definitions and the registration process.

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The Wilson hosts Eggs and Issues and county commissioners

Two significant meetings reveal potential futures for Big Sky

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – On the morning of Nov. 6, roughly 100 Big Sky residents, various board representatives and members of the business community gathered in The Wilson Hotel Residence Inn Ballroom for back-to-back meetings hosted by the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce: the biannual “Eggs and Issues” community discussion meeting and Gallatin-Madison Joint County Commission Meeting.

Launching at 8:30 a.m., once attendees had secured heaping plates of eggs, bacon, sausage, fruit, breads and yogurt, this latest Eggs and Issues presentation focused solely on the Big Sky Resort Area District’s official unveiling of their commissioned Our Big Sky Community Visioning Strategy.

The BSRAD tax board annually allocates funds collected via a 3 percent resort tax levied on “Goods and Services” and “Luxuries” to various Big Sky organizations and projects. In hopes of better informing allocation decision-making, the board tapped consulting firm Logan Simpson to spearhead a survey process that highlighted community values.

Logan Simpson subsequently created a 48-page report that, among other items, broke down four key “Visioning Strategies” based on responses and feedback collected since February when the Community Visioning Strategy was officially launched. These categories are “Our People,” “Our Character,” “Our Recreation” and “Our Natural Environment.”

“I’m just so encouraged Big Sky has finally decided to do this, after being here for decades,” said former BSRAD Assistant Manager Whitney Brunner, now a project manager for Logan Simpson. “This is a tipping point for the community ... something is different about this time in Big Sky.”

A bucket of cold water: Logan Simpson’s study estimated rough costs associated with carrying out the 7-to-10 initiatives listed underneath each “Visioning Strategies” heading—“Our People” alone will consume an estimated \$82 million, with “Our Recreation” requiring an estimated \$57 million over the next decade or so.

For context, since its 1992 inception, BSRAD has allocated some \$70 million.

Brunner acknowledged the disparity, but also noted the impressive rates of growth experienced by Big Sky; looking at allocations from



Madison County Commissioner Jim Hart speaking at the Gallatin-Madison Joint County Commission Meeting. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY



Whitney Brunner and Megan Moore of Logan Simpson presenting at ‘Eggs and Issues’ in front of a packed Wilson Hotel Residence Inn Ballroom. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

the past 27 years poorly represents the quantity that will be collected and then allocated over the next 27 years.

“There were a lot of initiatives unveiled today, pretty broad strokes that identify the needs of the community. Now the question becomes how are we going to dissect those and really begin to move the needle on addressing those strategies within the community,” said BSRAD District Manager Daniel Bierschwale. “I think Logan Simpson has above and beyond engaged the community, so I feel good with the data we have.”

The plan will be reviewed by the BSRAD for final amendments and approval at their next open board meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 13.

Eggs and Issues finished with time to spare, around 9:20 a.m., allowing attendees to stretch their legs and re-up on food provided by the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce via funding from their sponsors, before returning to their seats at 10 a.m. for the start of the Gallatin-Madison Joint County Commission Meeting.

Before a panel composed of Commissioners Joe Skinner and Don Seifert of Gallatin County and Commissioners Dan Allhands and Jim Hart of Madison County, various members of Big Sky and surrounding communities voiced progress and concerns on a host of topics, ranging from Real ID registration, to 911 radios feasibility, to fiber optic internet infrastructure and preparing for the 2020 census, among other topics.

Initiating with a public comment session, Big Sky Community Organization CEO Ciara Wolfe took the podium, representing the advisory committee that helped oversee the Community Visioning Strategy. She urged the commissioners to consider their role in facilitating implementation and resource gathering for a community that, while relatively small in terms of permanent residency, constitutes a relatively large economic contributor for both counties.

First on the agenda was the discussion of building out the Madison County portion of Jack Creek Road, led by Madison County Commissioner Hart and BSRAD Chairperson and Moonlight Basin vice president Kevin Germain, so that should the road be used as an egress in the event of a disaster, there isn’t a bottleneck effect on the 3 miles under Madison County jurisdiction.

“I have worries not only about the physical viability but also about the financial viability,” Hart said. “We’re not gonna get her done tomorrow, and I’m sure you realize that. It’s going to be a minimum of five years, and \$15 million dollars. That’s an educated guess ... There’s some challenges.”

“There are a lot of tax dollars from here going to Madison County that can help fund it,” Germain rebutted to applause from the crowd.

Next, Tim Kent, chair of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust, filled in for housing trust program director Laura Seyfang.

Kent detailed efforts by the housing trust to bring affordable housing to Big Sky, noting the solid progress made with projects like the Meadowview Condominiums, Big Sky’s first deed-restricted workforce housing project, and with building out a platform that encourages the proliferation of long-term rentals in town.

Among other presentations, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Programming and Events Manager Caitlin Quisenberry, filling in for chamber CEO Candace Carr Strauss, spoke to the importance of the upcoming 2020 census.

“Starting this March, [the U.S. Census Bureau] will be sending out the census documents, and it’s very important [to participate] as far as federal funding goes for our community,” Quisenberry said.

Commissioner Seifert echoed her request, adding, “If you employ [seasonal] people, please urge them to call this [Big Sky] home.”

Visit Big Sky Board Chairman Timothy Drain, also filling in for Carr Strauss but this time in her role as CEO of Visit Big Sky, followed,

speaking to the launch of the new Big Sky Sustainability Committee, a group seeking sustainable options for Big Sky’s future in the face of mounting evidence of climate change. He also touched upon the importance of urging constituents and Big Sky residents to begin to work toward obtaining REAL ID certification, necessary for all domestic travel, among other federal uses, effective Oct. 1, 2020.

Drain noted that Department of Motor Vehicle offices across the region are already booked out months in advance as citizens nationwide rush to obtain a REAL ID before the deadline.

Last, AE2S Senior Project Manager Scott Buecker spoke to Big Sky Water and Sewer wastewater treatment plant upgrades, lauding the district’s ability in never discharging into a waterway, something he aspires to maintain as the community grows through the construction of a larger facility.

Currently, BSWSD is in talks with BSRAD to invoke the additional 1 percent option, used solely for infrastructure projects, that has yet to be levied in Big Sky. Other sources of funding that might be possible include a Clean Water Act State Revolving Fund loan or minor grant, and a general obligation or revenue bond.

Buecker was later joined by Gallatin River Task Force Executive Director Kristin Gardner, who spoke to the Gallatin Canyon Area Sewer Study. Funded by the resort tax, the study looks at the feasibility and costs associated with treating wastewater from residents in the canyon and whether a centralized or hybridized approach will best service that growing area of the Big Sky community.



EPA plan part of Superfund oversight transfer to Montana

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MISSOULA – The Environmental Protection Agency has released the first of two plans intended to transfer oversight of Superfund units to Montana.

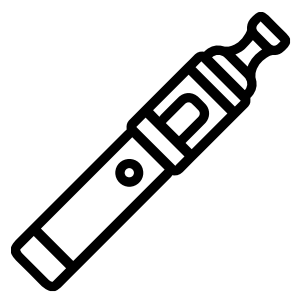
Montana Public Radio reported the Institutional Control Implementation and Assurance Plan outlines how the state should mitigate the spread of remaining contamination in Libby and Troy, which account for two of eight units in the Libby Asbestos Superfund Site.

The EPA has removed asbestos and vermiculite from more than 2,600 private and industrial properties in the area since 1999.

The plan aimed at preventing further contamination spread precedes the EPA giving site control to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

Pediatrician: Flavored vaping ban gives time to evaluate

ASSOCIATED PRESS



HAMILTON – Montana's proposed ban on the sale of flavored vaping juices is reasonable to allow time for scientists to determine the cause of a nationwide outbreak of lung illnesses and deaths tied to vaping, according to pediatrician Robert Jackler, who is on faculty at Stanford.

Jackler testified Nov. 1 on behalf of the state after vape shop owners challenged the proposed 120-day ban, saying adults use flavored vaping products and the ban on such sales

would put them out of business.

Gov. Steve Bullock proposed the ban on Oct. 8, saying it was needed as scientists determine the cause of the illnesses and deaths and needed to stem increased use by youth. District Judge Jennifer Lint of Hamilton issued a temporary restraining order blocking the ban until she could hold a hearing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 1,888 cases of lung injury and 37 deaths nationwide, with most patients reporting a history of using vaping products containing THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Montana has one reported death and four illnesses and has other cases under investigation.

Montana transportation department spent \$2M on snow plowing

ASSOCIATED PRESS



CC PHOTO

HELENA – The state of Montana has spent more than \$2 million on snow plowing so far this year surpassing what costs were this time over the last two years.

The "Independent Record" reported Oct. 29 that snow plowing costs for the state Department of Transportation increased by more than 250 percent since last year.

Department officials say they spent \$575,577 from July 1 to Oct. 28 last year, and \$544,872 during the same period in 2017. The costs include labor, operating equipment and materials.

Record snowstorms have hit large regions just days into the fall season, breaking decades-long snowfall records in cities like Great Falls. Officials say about 277,800 miles have been plowed so far this season. Only a quarter of that was plowed this time last year.

5 Montana hospitals settle employee insurance

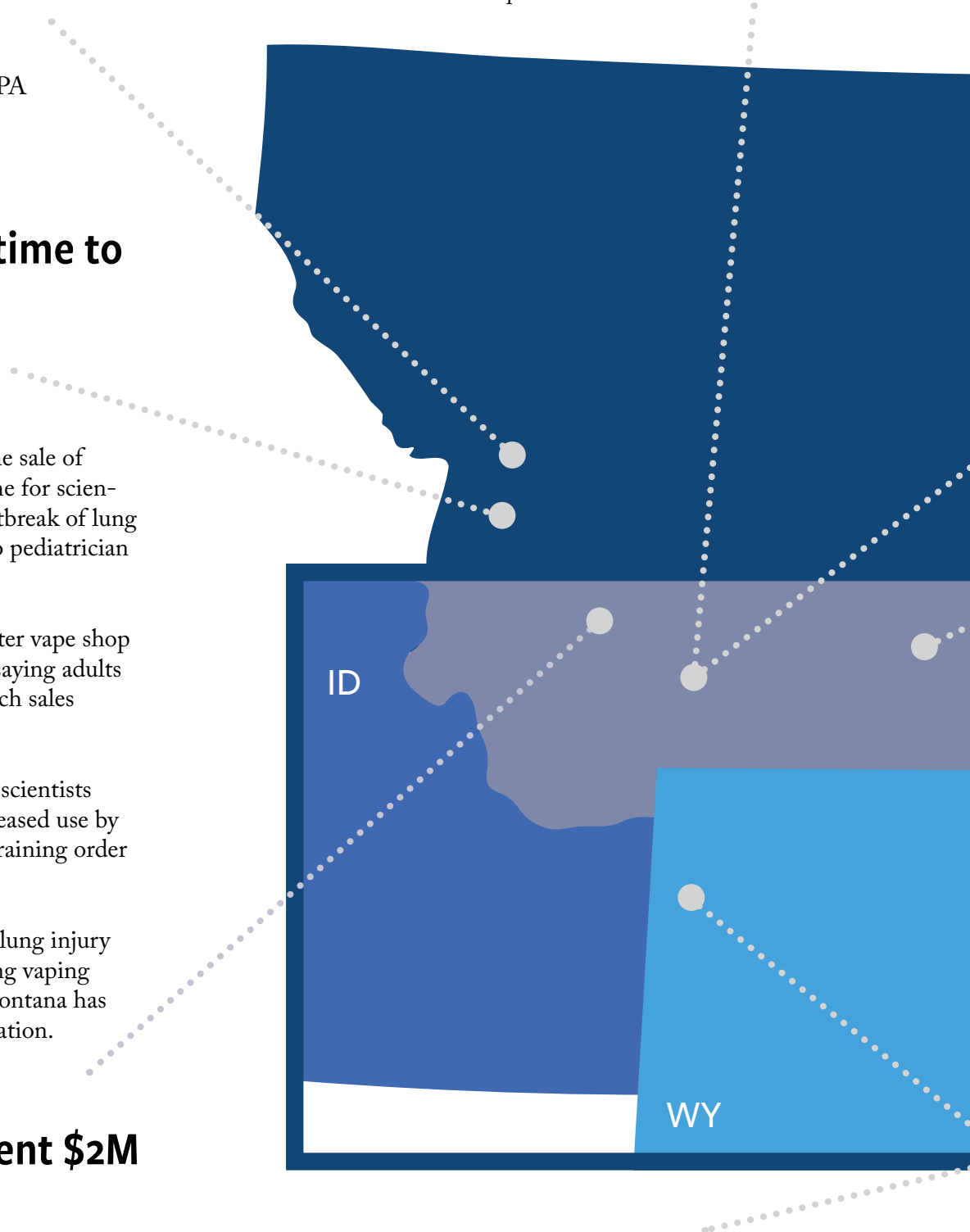
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOZEMAN – Five Montana hospitals are settling a lawsuit that claimed they made a deal with an insurer for inflated prices in return for \$26 million.

The hospitals, which deny wrongdoing, agreed to pay \$6.9 million to employees to resolve the lawsuit on Nov. 2. A U.S. District Court judge in Great Falls preliminarily approved the settlement for employees who could be entitled to the money.

The complaint says the hospitals agreed in 2012 to exclusively buy employee health insurance for six years in exchange for about \$26 million and two seats on the insurer's board of directors.

The hospitals involved include Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital, Billings Clinic, St. Vincent's in Missoula and Northern Montana Hospital in Havre.



Wyoming students test above national average

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHEYENNE, Wyo. – Wyoming students have scored higher than national averages on standardized reading and math tests.

The "Wyoming Tribune Eagle" reports that the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress released Oct. 29 reflects the academic proficiency scores of about 8,900 Wyoming students across about 210 schools.

School officials say Wyoming students outperformed its six neighboring states in fourth-grade math recording 87 percent of scores were at or above the basic achievement level. Officials say the state tied its neighbors in fourth-grade reading, eighth-grade reading and eighth-grade math.

Officials say state score averages for special education students also surpassed national averages and that data from the nationwide assessment was also categorized by geographic lines showing Wyoming students outscored national averages in city and rural regions.

the lawsuit

deal with an insurer to inflate employee health coverage

olve the case, "The Bozeman Daily Chronicle" reported at Oct. 17, and notices were sent to thousands of hospital

urance plans from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana for ctors.

St. Peter's Health in Helena, Community Medical Center in

Path to the M now open

EBS STAFF



PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY LAND TRUST

BOZEMAN – The Path to the M and Drinking Horse officially opened on Oct. 26, constituting an important connection between the town of Bozeman and the area's northern public lands. A ribbon cutting was held in celebration of the new trail.

The opening marks the culmination of the Gallatin Valley Land Trust's application for a grant in 2013 through the Federal Lands Access Program to fund development of the path, which now serves as a bicycle and pedestrian trail connecting Bozeman to the Bridger Mountains by way of a 2.1-mile route. The grant awarded \$3.4 million for construction and an additional \$675,000 was granted through the Trails, Open Space and Parks Bond.

Montana highway known for deadly wrecks gets new speed limit

ASSOCIATED PRESS



BILLINGS – The speed limit on a deadly stretch of U.S. 212 in southeast Montana has been reduced to 65 mph.

The "Billings Gazette" reports that the Montana Department of Transportation lowered the speed limit Oct. 1 on the highway's corridor that passes through both the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations and four counties: Big Horn, Rosebud, Powder River and Carter.

MDOT Traffic and Safety Bureau chief Gabe Priebe says statistics show the stretch is the deadliest highway in Montana.

Montana sending 72 firefighters to fight California fires

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTANA – With snow on the ground in Montana, fire agencies around the state are sending 20 engines and 72 firefighters to California to help battle wildfires there.

Gov. Steve Bullock approved sending crews as part of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. About 18 agencies are sending personnel and equipment for 14-day deployments.

Blazes fanned by strong winds are burning in both northern and southern California, destroying homes and threatening others, forcing thousands of people to evacuate.



Annual Grand Teton elk hunt begins

ASSOCIATED PRESS



CC PHOTO

MOOSE, Wyo. – An annual elk hunt has just begun in Grand Teton National Park.

Wildlife managers have authorized 375 permits for this year's hunt, which began Nov. 2.

They will allow hunting in an area mainly east of U.S. Highway 89 in the southeast part of Grand Teton in western Wyoming. Hunting in two different portions of the hunt area will end on Nov. 25 and Dec. 8.

Hunting typically isn't allowed in national parks but the 1950 law authorizing Grand Teton allows elk hunting in the park. Park officials call the hunt an "elk reduction program" intended to cull animals in the Jackson elk herd.

Hunters must abide by several rules that often don't apply outside the park. They include requirements to carry bear spray and use non-lead ammunition.



What are your Thanksgiving traditions?



Jordan Erickson
Big Sky, MT

"I guess it's pretty traditional. We just do the family thing. We usually travel down to Sioux Falls. We usually have a couple Thanksgiving dinners just at the separate families. I'm kind of by myself out here; I don't celebrate. I have some brothers that live near-by. But back in Minnesota we just hang out with family, it's not really about Thanksgiving so much, it's just about the family."



Lorelei Bergman
Minneapolis, MN

"We get together with our family and have a huge Thanksgiving dinner in our cabin in Northern Wisconsin."



Kristin Kaufman
Big Sky, MT

"Family tradition would be everyone coming together, like everyone under one roof; everyone's cooking a part of the meal, so it all becomes one. Then after, everyone in the kitchen, cleaning up, doing a sing along [or] karaoke."



Tory Tye
Big Sky, MT

"As a family we go over to my Aunt's house every year, which is what I'm going to be doing this year. We usually have turkey, ham, [and] as many sides as can fit on the three tables throughout the house. We go there around 11 a.m. and just eat all the food."

Big and dark skies

BY KATHY BOUCHARD
ROTARY CLUB OF BIG SKY

On an August evening in 1997, I grabbed a pillow, pulled open my bedroom window and crawled onto the roof of my Midwest suburban home. A soft wind whispered fragments of family conversations from round the neighborhood. The tang of barbecue scented the air. Peering beyond the arching elm branches, I counted the stars above, all seven of them.

Four months later, my sister-in-law helped me drag a rollaway mattress through sixteen inches of snow through my parents' Montana yard. Bundled in wool and down, we flopped onto the mattress to gaze at the night sky and would almost forget to breathe. Above us, the Milky Way, sharp and majestic and threaded with impenetrable mystery. In a matter of moments, we'd counted shooting stars and watched satellites crawl across the sky like determined, unblinking fireflies. Seeing Montana's stars for the first time remained with me as an unforgettable awakening, as it does for all of us that experience it.

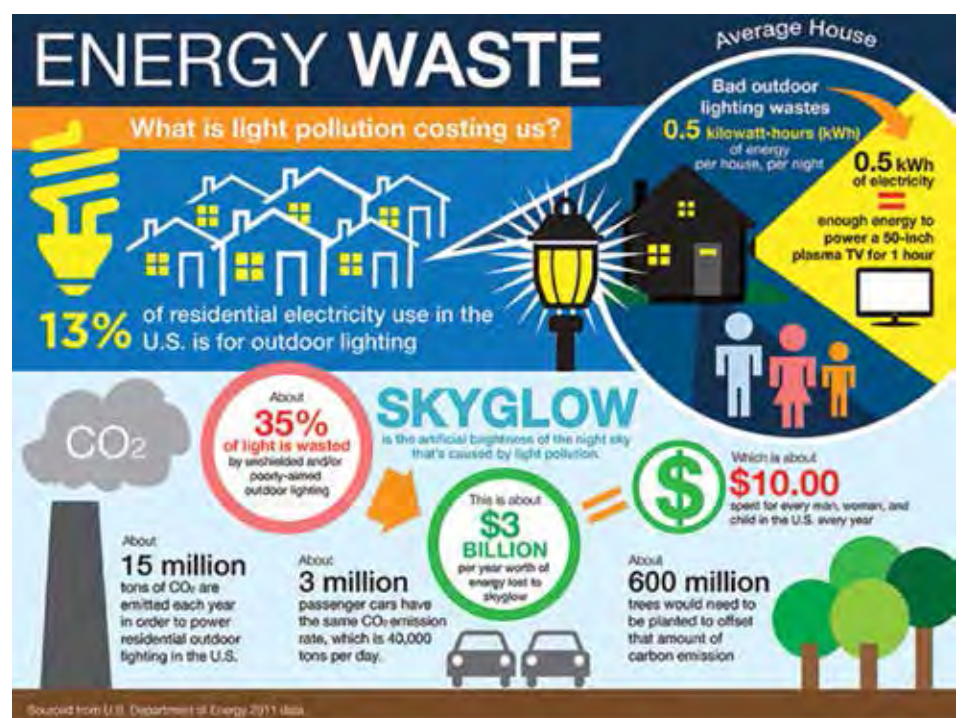
By 1999, I'd moved to a condominium complex in the meadow of Big Sky. One evening, while driving from Lone Mountain, I tried to find where I lived. It wasn't hard—the place glittered like Disneyland. This observation was made at our next HOA meeting. The idea that, for most of the residents, being able to view the stars was a primary benefit of living in Big Sky resulted in the removal of several security lights behind the complex. The property managers replaced all the 100-watt bulbs on porches and garages with 50s, and still found residents wanted less wattage.

The Sustainability Committee of the Rotary Club of Big Sky is seeking to reduce light pollution in Big Sky to quit losing the dark. The BSOA has been Dark Sky compliant for years now.

"They're very strict", said Rotarian Grant Hilton.

We are hoping to bring the benefits of Dark Skies to all of Big Sky.

As it happens, there's a source for that: The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) has been fighting light pollution, needless energy consumption and the



ill effects of nightglow (generated by artificial light) on wildlife and humans since 1988. Their well organized website, darksky.org, describes the adverse effects of unnecessary artificial lighting on wildlife and humans, how to reduce energy consumption by selecting appropriate lighting solutions and highlights resources available to interested parties.

The concepts are simple and implementation is a matter of thoughtful choices, not increased cost. For example; light what you need, when you need it; not brighter than necessary; fully shielded to point downward, among others.

The IDA also designates regions of the world, from city parks to parts of states, as places of distinction in their accomplishment of preserving the night sky. Locals, visitors, wildlife and energy bills in Big Sky could all benefit from implementing Dark Sky practices and undoubtedly businesses promoting visitors could use the addition of the IDA designation. Why not go for it?

The Montana Master Hunter Program: A creative solution for wildlife management

BY ZACH BROWN

In 2018, One Montana started the Montana Master Hunter Program on a hypothesis: That there would be a demand for advanced education opportunities within Montana’s hunting community, and that more than a few landowners would be excited to work with respectful, highly skilled and vetted hunters. A year and a half later, we are excited to report that our bets were right on; in fact, we hit the jackpot.

We have graduated 90 Master Hunters through our rigorous program. Our class requires our students to dedicate over 50 hours toward classroom study, lectures, readings and skills training. At the end of our course, we require a 75 percent passing score on a 100-point written exam, and passage of a rifle-accuracy certification led by our partners at 406 Precision. The program requires hunters to engage at a level above and beyond any other American hunting certification out there. Our Master Hunters truly earn their title.

Cascade rancher Scott Hibbard helped jump start this project as a contractor to One Montana in 2015, when this program was still just an idea in the mind of a few.

Scott spent the better part of six months on the phone and on the road, meeting with landowners and hunters across Montana. He asked dozens of folks what it would take to improve hunting access and wildlife in Montana, and how we can improve relations between our state’s landowner and hunting communities.

His answers to those questions became the curriculum framework behind our course. Additionally, Scott’s focus on landowner perspectives, including agricultural economics and private land stewardship, helped us solidify the buy-in of landowner groups such as the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Grain Growers Association and the Western Landowners Alliance. That focus, mak-

ing sure that everything about our program is landowner driven, has become the heart and soul of our program.

After our hunters graduate, One Montana’s staff works hard to find them places to hunt. We reach out to thoughtful landowners who might be looking for help managing their wildlife populations, but are hesitant to just let any random person onto their property. In one case, we have a ranch partner that is offering a service-for-access agreement. If a Master Hunter agrees to spend one Saturday lopping encroaching conifers—a task that improves wildlife habitat as well as cattle grazing conditions—they can earn a two-day cow elk hunt. And for two full days of lopping, a Master Hunter can earn the privilege of crossing private land to access landlocked public land for three days of archery bull elk hunting.

In another example, a rancher is allowing our Master Hunters to hunt white-tailed deer, an opportunity he has not allowed for many years because the deer spend time near ranch buildings and cattle. But he sees a need for management, and trusts that our vetted hunters will make safe, ethical shots near his valuable property.

Ultimately, Master Hunters are actively improving hunting access and wildlife management in Montana. Working with these hunters and the stewardship-oriented landowners who invite them onto their land is enough to give a person hope. These Montanans are breaking down barriers between rural and urban communities, and building relationships that will serve Montana’s people and wildlife for many years to come.

Master Hunters are community builders and ambassadors for Montana’s proud hunting tradition. Does that sound like you?

Visit mtmasterhunter.com for more information.



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MSU collaborates with Native communities to launch equitable research partnerships

BY CAROL SCHMIDT
MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN – Montana State University has launched a planning initiative that will involve Montana tribes in an equitable partnership during every step of research involving Native entities.

The university began the collaboration recently during the inaugural MSU Tribal Partnership planning meeting where more than 100 tribal representatives and university administrators, faculty, staff and students involved in research, education and outreach attended.

“The meeting was really historic,” said Walter Fleming, director of MSU’s Department of Native American Studies.

Fleming explained that, very often, researchers, many of whom may be well meaning, plan projects that involve Montana tribal members without asking for the tribe’s permission or seeking their feedback. After the research is finished, the tribes may not receive the results, much less integrate those findings to improve lives in the community. As a result, tribes often mistrust researchers, he said.

However, MSU is working to involve tribes from the beginning and strives for more balanced partnerships.

Fleming said tribal representatives at the meeting recommended several changes. First, they said that members of the tribal communities need to be co-principal investigators from the beginning of a research proposal. Also, resources, including funding, need to be shared.

“There needs to be a true partnership, and we think that’s going to be a major improvement to business as usual,” Fleming said. “[MSU has] great programs

and [is] doing great things. However, our mission is to do even better.”

The MSU Tribal Partnership planning meeting was facilitated by Loren BirdRattler, a member of the Blackfeet Nation who was recently appointed Katz Endowed Chair in Native American Studies at MSU. His mandate in the professorship is to lead the tribal partnership initiative statewide and nationally.

BirdRattler said that about \$25 million of MSU’s annual research dollars come from Native-based projects. An equitable relationship between university and tribal communities has the possibility of “raising everyone up,” both Native communities and MSU, he said.

BirdRattler said the next step in the process will be to share information gathered from the meeting with all participants and then create an advisory group to continue the work.

“I think we made great progress in getting faculty to the table to listen to what meaningful partnerships look like from tribal partners and their perspective,” BirdRattler said. “I think we also were successful in getting interested faculty members to share their ideas on the same topic as well.”

MSU President Waded Cruzado told the group that increasing mutually-beneficial collaborations with tribal nations and partners was a goal expressed in MSU’s new strategic plan. “MSU puts tremendous importance on our partnerships with tribal nations,” she said. “So, when we wrote MSU’s new strategic plan, we carefully considered where we as an institution wanted to go.”

Fleming said he is optimistic that MSU can be a national leader in fashioning this new approach.

“I think we can communicate to our tribal partners that this is our mission as a land-grant institution and that our commitment is committing the university as a whole,” Fleming said.



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OUTLAW

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners



PHOTO BY ANDY WATSON / BULL STOCK MEDIA

Outlaw Partners in the running to win 7X PBR Event of the Year

EBS STAFF

For the past seven years, Outlaw Partners has sent representatives down to the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas to attend the PBR World Finals, five days of intense bull riding action with the top 35 bull riders in the world competing for a chance to win the coveted World Champion golden buckle.

For six years in a row (2013-2018), the Big Sky PBR has won the Event of the Year, which is decided by a vote from the top PBR bull riders. Once again in 2019, Outlaw Partners, along with Andy and Jacey Watson of Firestone Productions, are in the running to win the award for an unprecedented seventh time in a row.

Dalton Kasel, who won the Big Sky PBR this summer, has been on a tear since he exploded on the scene beating much more experienced cowboys, including then-ranked world No. 1 Chase Outlaw. Currently ranked No. 7 in the world, Kasel is the odds on favorite to win Rookie of the Year honors, currently leading Daylon Swearingen and Mason Taylor by 410.41 and 498.75 points, respectively.

Montana will be represented by two bull riders at the 2019 World Finals: Columbia Falls-based Matt Triplett and Volburg-native Jess Lockwood, who is currently ranked No. 2 in the world standings. Since coming back from injury, the 2017 PBR World Champion Lockwood put up the highest-marked ride of the season, scoring a colossal 93.75 points after riding Heartbreak Kid and snapping the bull's 38-out premier series buck off record.

Outlaw Partners CEO Eric Ladd will be keeping a close eye on 51 Viper (pictured) who he co-owns along with other Big Sky locals. Last year, Viper won the Wild Card Classic at the World Finals, and this year he looks to make his mark competing against the rankest bulls in the world. Longtime bull rider Cord McCoy, who raised Viper on his ranch in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has called the almost four-year-old bovine "the Michael Jordan of bulls."

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As the Outlaw Partners editorial department nears the release of the Winter 2020 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine, we at EBS look to share some of the best stories from that cherished sister publication as it heads into a celebratory phase—10 years running, and strong. Enjoy. —EBS Staff

Montana native seeking second PBR World Championship

BY DOUG HARE

The 2019 PBR Unleash The Beast World Finals, slated to take over T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas from Nov. 6-10, is shaping up to be one of the most fiercely contested World Championship races in PBR history.

The 2019 Professional Bull Riders season unfolded dramatically, with each of the top three ranked bull riders having held the world No. 1 ranking throughout the 26-week season. As the top bull riders in the world take to the dirt to challenge the rankest bulls on the planet, who will win the coveted golden buckle and \$1 million prize?

Historically, any rider within 2,000 world points of the world No. 1 ranking at the start of the World Finals is a legitimate contender for the season's World Championship. With 3,300 points available across the five days of competition, the championship is truly up for grabs among this year's top three PBR cowboys.

The field is led by No. 1 Jose Vitor Leme, recording an elite tour best 18 round wins. Hot on Leme's heels is Montana-native Jess Lockwood, trailing the 23-year-old Brazilian by a slim 749.16 points. Lockwood leads No. 3 Chase Outlaw by 703.33 points. Illustrative of the trio's dominance in 2019, each of the top-three-ranked riders won a league-best four regular-season, premier series event titles.

Jose Vitor Leme might have better odds to win because of his lead, and you can never count out Chase Outlaw, who is considered by other riders as the toughest cowboy on tour. But Jess Lockwood is the crown prince of professional bull riding, and his coronation came in Las Vegas at the 2017 PBR World Finals.

In front of a raucous crowd, jolting pyrotechnic displays, and lasers beaming from the rafters onto the shimmering dirt of T-Mobile Arena, Lockwood won the first three rounds of six in the world finals, the first rider ever to do so. The performance helped him close a 655-point deficit to earn him a championship golden buckle and the accompanying \$1 million prize.

At 20 years old, Lockwood became the youngest world champion in PBR's 24-year history, and just the second bull rider—after Silvano Alves in 2011—to capture the title a season after being named Rookie of the Year.

That feat is all the more impressive considering the spate of injuries that Lockwood endured during the 2017 season. Early on, a torn groin muscle kept him out of competition for five weeks, only to get knocked unconscious by a notorious bull named Sweet-Pro's Bruiser shortly after his return.

Bull riding is often called the most dangerous sport on dirt, but that might be an understatement. It's hard to find a competition on any surface resulting in more injuries, and where the prospect of death is ever-present. A common refrain from the sport's athletes is: "It's not 'if' you get hurt, it's 'when.'"

The possible outcomes of a bull ride are many, but the rules of the sport are relatively few. If a rider can keep his mount for eight seconds, keep one arm on the bull rope wrapped around the animal's chest—without allowing his free hand to make contact with the animal—his ride qualifies for a score.

Qualifying rides are scored by four judges, two awarding points for the rider's skill and two judging the quality of the bull's fight. The harder the bull bucks and rolls—the "ranker" the bull—the more points the rider earns.

Five weeks before his Las Vegas performance, after getting bucked off and stomped by Blue Magic, Lockwood suffered four broken ribs, a punctured lung, and a lacerated kidney at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale, New York. After leaving a Long Island hospital, he came down with pneumonia on a cross-country road trip to North Dakota. Three weeks later he was competing again.

"[The injury] wasn't fun, but coming down with pneumonia was probably worse. And when I did come back, I wasn't in good form," Lockwood said. "That's part of bull riding though—dealing with the slumps, pushing on, being tough through it all. Grit, I guess."

Lockwood grew up in the small southeastern Montana town of Volborg, the son of a rancher. When he reminisces about his hometown as being little more than "a post office and a few buildings," you get a sense of the quiet pride he has for the place where he was raised.

"Not only do you know everyone in the school, you know everyone in the community," he said. Remaining in touch with his roots seems to temper a hard-won confidence in his athletic prowess, with a humility that keeps him striving to improve even after reaching the top echelon of his sport.

Like most of the cowboys on the PBR circuit, Lockwood started riding stock when he was young, mounting a calf for the first time at just 2 years old. His father, Ed, was a former saddle bronc champion and his mother, Angie, was a competitive barrel racer. His parents know one of the most beloved characters in bull riding, entertainer Flint Rasmussen.



Heading into the 2019 PBR World Championships, Jess Lockwood is sitting in second place and will look to overtake Jose Vitor Leme's lead over five days of bull riding action in order to win his second golden buckle. PHOTO BY ANDY WATSON / BULL STOCK MEDIA

"We forget Jess is just a kid. Think about what we were doing at 19 or 20," Rasmussen said. "He handles more media in a weekend than most Montanans will in a lifetime. ... And he is still just a ranch kid from eastern Montana."

Jess and his younger brother Jake went to high school in the nearby town of Broadus where Lockwood excelled in wrestling, earning a high school state championship at 98 pounds during his freshman year. "That's where I got my dedication and mindset that help me out so much with riding bulls," he said. "You can't rely on teammates—it's all on you."

Lockwood left school after his sophomore year to pursue his passion full time, while taking online courses in his spare time. After winning two Northern Rodeo Association titles and three Montana high school state championships, he joined the PBR on September 27, 2015, the day he turned 18.

Lockwood's eyes have a quiet intensity. He wears a 100-watt smile most of the time, stands 5-feet 5-inches and weighs only 130 pounds. "Skinny, light, strong," said the wiry world champ about his ideal physique. "I try to stay as strong as I can without getting too bulky."

His rancher work ethic is evident in his training regimen. "I run a lot. I do core and back strengthening exercises. And I train to improve my balance. Bull riding—it's mostly about balance."

When describing how it feels to climb on top of a one-ton steer, Lockwood said, "There is no adrenalin rush like it, I don't believe. There aren't too many sports where death is a possibility in an instant." To manage the fear and excitement before bursting out of the chute, Lockwood describes a flow-like state where instinct and muscle memory take over.

"You don't want to be thinking too much when you're in the chute, too many things could potentially go wrong," he said. "I'm just trying to clear my mind and let my body takeover."

The spectacle of bull riding is a distilled display of man versus beast, one deeply rooted in the culture of heartland America. To the ever-increasing number of PBR fans, bull riders exemplify the stoic cowboy, the fearless gladiator, the rock star, and the elite athlete wrapped up in one package.

The consensus on the tour is that Lockwood has yet to reach his full potential, and he has no shortage of ambition. "In a perfect world, I would win the next five world titles, and hopefully retire by 27 years old—and be smart with my money and buy more cattle," he said.

The record for the most PBR world championship titles is three, shared by Brazilians Adriano Moraes and Silvano Alves. Even the legendary J.B. Mauney, the all-time career money earner in bull riding, has only two championship buckles to his name.

Listening to a kid who can't legally buy a beer talk about retiring might sound strange, but bull riding is one sport where it's best to go out on top. With Lockwood's determination and preternatural abilities, it will take more than a few broken ribs and a cough to keep the heir apparent to bull-riding royalty from achieving his ambitious goals. If Lockwood can ride like he has when healthy this season, there's a good chance he could come away as a two-time PBR World Champion.

A version of this article originally appeared in the Summer 2018 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.

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SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS



Otters: The playful river carnivore
pg. 20



Yellowstone's winter wonderland
pg. 23-24



Hooked on whitetails pg. 31

Shelter from the cold Camping in a USFS cabin

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

LIVINGSTON – A night spent in a Montana winter is a unique experience not to be missed. Cool temperatures and snowy trails are often humbling and provide for opportunities of self-discovery and adventure. And while winter camping can certainly be a study of survival, a stay in a U.S. Forest Service cabin means a roof over your head and a warm-up by the fire.

The Forest Service offers 23 cabins that are available for the public to rent within the Custer Gallatin National Forest, all of which provide the basic staples of four walls, a roof and a wood stove, but still require at least a bit of adventure to reach.

Maxey Cabin

Nestled in the popular Hyalite Canyon, Maxey Cabin is quaint, cozy and serene. The main cabin sleeps four people and its wood stove provides ample reprieve from the winter conditions outside. An unheated smaller cabin attached to Maxey's porch is closed for the winter season, but can accommodate two more travelers in the summertime.

With blankets of snow, timbered trails and frozen waterfalls, Hyalite Canyon is a vast expanse to explore. Enjoy skiing along several groomed trails, carve turns in fresh powder on one of the area's not-so-distant slopes, or check out one of more than 150 ice routes.

To get to Maxey, head south from Bozeman on Hyalite Canyon Road for about 11 miles. The cabin's access road is gated but upon reservation you'll receive the combination to unlock the gate. From December to March, park at the access road just off Hyalite Canyon Road and ski, snowshoe or hike the final 2/3 mile to the cabin.

Battle Ridge Cabin

The 80-year-old Battle Ridge Cabin sits within the Bridger Mountain range southeast of Bozeman. Tucked back from a meadow and flanked with evergreen trees, this rustic dwelling is just 5 miles south of Bridger Bowl Ski Area, as well as several cross-country ski trails. It also boasts a moderate sledding hill that's just steps from the cabin front door.

In the wintertime, you can access Battle Ridge Cabin by travelling 20 miles from Bozeman on Bridger Canyon Drive. Winter parking is available at the Battle Ridge Trailhead and from there you can ski, walk or snowmobile a half mile to the cabin.

Big Creek Cabin

Paradise Valley's Big Creek Cabin is the largest dwelling in the Yellowstone District, and with five rooms and two porches spanning the 28-by-40-foot log structure, there's room for 11 people to stay. The original Big Creek Cabin, which still stands nearby, was built in 1907, and the current cabin available for rent was constructed in 1925 as a guard station for the Forest Service.

The cabin rests along the Big Creek riverbed on the eastern side of the Gallatin Range and visitors can cross-country ski right out the front door.

To stay at the Big Creek Cabin, travel on U.S. Highway 89 south of Livingston for about 34 miles. Turn west onto Big Creek Road and continue for 5 miles. Parking is available about a half mile from the cabin.

Porcupine Cabin

Porcupine Cabin is somewhat unique among the many Forest Service cabins



A view of Porcupine Cabin in the Crazy Mountains as dusk gathers in the sky. PHOTO BY BAY STEPHENS

in Montana: as opposed to logs and chinking, it's built like a house. The three-room frame structure can sleep eight people.

Located in the Crazy Mountains overlooking the Shields Valley, Porcupine Cabin is surrounded by stunning views. To the west, visitors can see the Bridger range, while the jagged peaks of the Crazies stand tall in the remaining three directions. The area offers a quiet retreat, with snowshoe and ski trails galore.

From Livingston, travel north on Highway 89 to Wilsall then turn northeast onto Shields River Road. Continue for 8 miles before turning onto Porcupine Road and travelling another 6 miles. The last 2 miles are not plowed so plan to walk, ski or snowmobile to the cabin.

Fourmile Cabin

While Fourmile Cabin in the Boulder River drainage is certainly a rustic mountain stay, it boasts a touch of luxury with an electric cook stove and lights. A wood stove remains the cabin's only source of heat, and twin beds can sleep four.

With Fourmile Creek and the Boulder River nearby, the peaks of The Needles, Carbonate Mountain and Hawley Mountain in the Absaroka Range are tall and commanding on all sides of the little cabin, and visitors will enjoy scenic cross-country skiing, snowshoeing or snowmobiling.

To access Fourmile Cabin travel 25 miles south of Big Timber on Highway 298. The road turns into a graveled Main Boulder Road. Continue for about 17 miles to the cabin. Depending on snow conditions, cabin-goers may need to walk or snowmobile variable distances to the cabin. Call the Yellowstone Ranger District for details.

If You Go

A stay in any Forest Service cabin will be a rustic experience. There usually isn't cell phone service and you should be prepared for a chilly walk to the outhouse, to name just a few bucolic attributes. Also remember that winter conditions change quickly in Montana—check avalanche reports and call the Ranger District office for details.

These cabins are rented through an online reservation system and it's not uncommon for the most popular ones to book out six months in advance.

Visit recreation.gov to check reservations or find out more on a specific cabin.

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Think about how language shapes the way we regard our relationship with the land.

Richard Louv, the American writer who helped bring the term “nature-deficit disorder” into modern consciousness, has a brand-new book, this one focused on the benefits that come from humans sharing company and having interactions with animals.

“Our Wild Calling” is a journey of discovery, with Louv serving as interpreter, into the rapidly-growing body of scientific evidence showing how nonhuman beings possess not only intelligence but a range of emotions. As he notes, the most compelling proof comes from observing the dogs, cats, horses and other animals we share space with.

The book is an entertaining read that stays with you and prompts one to reconsider our own place in nature.

Louv, who is now on a national book tour and considers Greater Yellowstone one of his favorite regions, recently agreed to answer a few questions.

Todd Wilkinson: What are a few of the things you learned while doing research that previously you were unaware of?

Richard Louv: Research into animal communication within and between species is growing quickly. I learned that horses have more facial expressions than dogs, and are surprisingly similar to the signals that human faces send, but happen in micromovements difficult for most people to detect. Communication among animals is occurring around us all the time, in a kind of animal extranet. Male alligators attract females by emitting low-frequency sounds that bounce droplets of water on their backs. Try that on your next date. Birds do more than tweet.

TW: Elaborate on that.

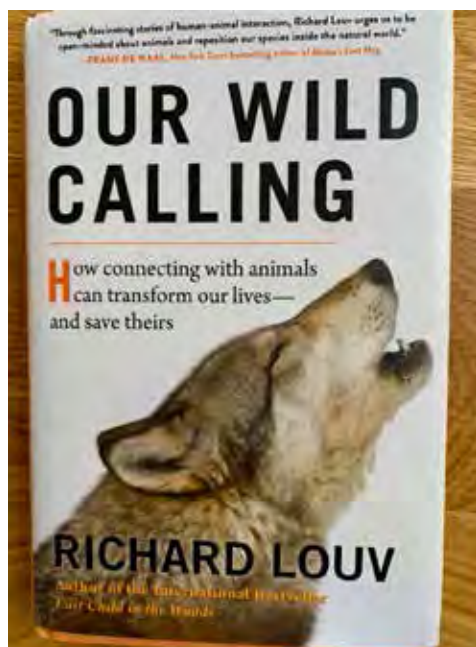
RL: One of the people I profiled in the book is Jon Young, the founder of several nature connection programs, including 8 Shields and the Wilderness Awareness School in Duvall, Washington. He has taught hundreds of people how to communicate with, or at least understand, birds.

“Deep bird language,” as he defines it, refers to the specifics of bird life but is also about a different frame of mind and awareness. Humans and other animals have modes, gestures, sounds, bleeps and blurts—identifiable patterns that precede human language.

Young has noted that people who learn bird language often apply what they have learned to how they communicate with their spouses, children or even their boss. And their lives improve. This is the Oldest Language, its origins older than most species living today.

TW: How do you think that having more empathy/sympathy for other life forms leads to a better society?

RL: One of the central themes in “Our Wild Calling” is the growth of human loneliness; they suggest that isolation is equal to or will soon exceed other risk factors for early death, such as obesity. I make the case that this loneliness is not only aggravated by anti-social media, but



Richard Louv's new book “Our Wild Calling” is a journey into the rapidly-growing body of scientific evidence showing how nonhuman beings possess not only intelligence but a range of emotions. PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD LOUV

Louv's ‘Our Wild Calling’ probes the deep human bond with animals



Richard Louv, an American writer whose recent release of “Our Wild Calling” explores the benefits that come from spending time with animals. PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD LOUV

is rooted in a deeper species loneliness: a growing disconnect with the greater living family.

Research shows that the urban parks that have the best impact on human psychological health are the parks with the highest biodiversity, the widest array of animal and plant species. I don't believe that's an accident. As a species we are desperate to know that we are not alone in the universe. But intimacy is all around us. The number of dogs in the United States, proportionate to the human population, is higher than ever.

TW: Here's a question related to your momentous book, “Last Child in the Woods,” and it has a link to this book: What do you think is the triggering mechanism by which a user of nature is converted or transformed into being a defender of nature and the other beings inhabiting it?

RL: One morning, during my own close encounter with two golden eagles on a lake shore, I became intensely aware of the reality that existed between them and me. Even if that reality existed in my imagination, what I sensed had meaning. I felt a change. I told this story to my son—this is the son who has the fishing gene; when he was three, I caught him fishing in the humidifier.

I told him: “Matthew, whoever I say I am, I'm not. Who I was in those moments is who I really am, and I don't have the words to explain this.” In searching for those words, I came to this conclusion: We live in two natural habitats. One habitat is the physical environment that we work hard to protect from ourselves. The other is the habitat of the heart, which exists between us and other animals, including other humans. We often undervalue and fail to protect that second habitat. If one of those habitats dies, so does the other.

The human need to connect with other animals, and to find and express meaning through them, is baked deep within our psyches. Once, we told our stories around campfires. Physically acting out the experience, we became the bear. Now we do this around the electric campfire (YouTube) or, preferably, a dining room table, a front porch, a classroom. I'll bet many of your readers have their own stories to tell.

Todd Wilkinson is the founder of Bozeman-based “Mountain Journal” and is a correspondent for “National Geographic.” He's also the author of “Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek” about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399.



BEAR BASICS WITH BERNADETTE

DO YOUR PART, BE BEAR SMART

A ritual of survival

BY KRIS INMAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Watching the World Series, it is easy to see each player has a ritual, looking up to the sky before pitching, loosening and tightening their batting gloves, rocking back and forth before the pitch comes in, a batting stance that defies odds of comfort. These rituals help each ballplayer focus on the job they need to do and helped bring them to the World Series.

If a baseball player gets their rituals practiced, it can mean all the difference in the outcome of the game. Beyond ritual and practice, there is also a strong amount of desire to do their best. The third baseman that dives and stretches, sliding across the dirt but misses a line drive doesn't go home wishing he tried harder. Each of these three elements, ritual, practice and drive, determines how well they leave the game.

Bears also have their rituals, ones that move with the seasons and are driven by the need to acquire food. This time of year, their rituals get them ready for the winter and the denning season when they give birth. After the bears emerge from the dens in March, they begin the practice of slowly resetting their metabolic clock. These periods are critical for a bear's survival and reproduction.

"What a female bear gains in food from den emergence in the spring to den entrance in the winter determines if she will produce young," said Interagency Grizzly Bear Study team leader Frank van Manen. He added that, in order to reproduce, females generally need to have at least 20 percent body fat by the time they enter their winter den.

Grizzly bears and black bears undergo what is called delayed implantation. That means that after a female bear breeds in the spring, her fertilized eggs only develop to an early stage, called a blastocyst, which does not implant in the uterus until late fall. This is why the true period of pregnancy is only about eight to 10 weeks and why bear cubs are so

small at birth, only a little over a pound. Females with more fat reserves tend to have cubs that are born earlier and grow faster compared with leaner females.

The ritual of the seasons was easy to see last year with some extreme weather patterns that shaped natural food availability. The hard winter led to significant losses of ungulates that contributed to an unusual level and welcomed food source when bears awoke from their dens. The wet spring and summer led to an abundance of grasses, berries and other natural foods. For the most part, in the lands around Yellowstone National Park, conflicts were down. In Big Sky, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks bear specialist Kevin Frey reports this was true as well, except for those bears that had received human food rewards and were already conditioned to trash—the abundance of natural foods made little difference for them.

To ensure bears are behaving naturally, the practice of ordering a bear-resistant trash can, securing the lid properly, keeping garage doors closed and closing house windows when you leave are some of the most important steps you can take to break the cycle of food conditioning bears.

It will take our willingness to start new rituals, that with practice and no shortage of drive to do the right thing—either for the bear, your property or your safety—will change the course of conflicts in Big Sky.


Do your part and become an actor in Big Sky's movement toward making bear-smart actions a natural part of this mountain community's culture.

Remember to follow Bernadette Bear on social media @bearsmartbigsky to learn how to make Big Sky's story a positive one for bears, people and wild places.


Kris Inman manages the Partnerships and Engagement Program for the Wildlife Conservation Society and oversees the Bear Smart Big Sky campaign.


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When Rosalys Peel's husband Mike was stricken with Alzheimers, she had many fears and searched the bookshelves for a "couples guide" that would show them how to deal with Mike's illness at home. Unable to find that book, she decided to write the book herself after Mike died from Alzheimers.

Rosalys is a Registered Nurse, a Lamaze-certified childbirth educator, and a Gottman Certified couple's relationship facilitator. She taught classes at the Swedish Medical Center in Seattle for over 20 years, and has been featured on NPR and the Today Show.

Join Big Sky Rotary on November 13th at 6:00PM for a guest lecture and book signing with Rosalys Peel.

33 Lone Peak Drive, Big Sky, MT above the Rocks Restaurant
www.bigskyrotary.com

<https://www.facebook.com/bigskyrotary/>

Water Wisdom

Otters The playful river carnivore

BY KAREN FILIPOVICH
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

First the slinky motion catches your eye. Perhaps a brown head breaks the water's surface as you glide by or you see that classic undulating motion as they bounce along the river bank and plunge into the water. You've spotted northern river otters.

The northern river otters are semi-aquatic relatives of wolverines and weasels. They appear relatively abundant in southwest Montana, according to Kerry Foresman, professor emeritus at the University of Montana's wild-life biology department.

"[Otters need] clean water, good vegetation along the bank and minimal amounts of trash collecting in the river and backwaters," he said. Otters are sensitive to water pollution, especially if it starts to eliminate streamside vegetation as it did on the Clark Fork River.

Otters typically raise their young, called pups, in dens vacated by muskrats or beavers. Otters are active year-round, but since pups are typically born during spring, families can be seen in summer and fall. Groups are most frequently a mother with her pups, but siblings often stick together after leaving their mom.

Suckers and whitefish are an otter's preferred fish. "They prefer the slower swimming sucker to a trout that they have to expend a lot of energy chasing," Foresman said. Crayfish, other aquatic invertebrates and even muskrats round out their diet according to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks field guide.

Otters can handle quite a bit of human company as long as they have healthy riparian areas and clean water. In cases where homes were built near rivers, Foresman says, "a riparian buffer would suffice to allow otters to continue to frequent an area." Similarly, he noted that otters seem unaffected by nonmotorized boating.

Kristin Gardner and Valerie Bednarski from the Gallatin River Task Force saw three otters while monitoring water quality on the Gallatin River near the Yellowstone Park boundary in August. They watched the playful carnivores dive in and out of the water, a somewhat rare treat.



A family of otters swimming in the Gallatin River near Highway 191. NPS PHOTO

Otters live in the Gallatin, but are not always easy to spot. Gardner says that she hadn't seen a river otter in that spot in over ten years.

According to Mike Donaldson of Gallatin River Guides, whose fly-fishing guides are on the river most days throughout the fishing season, the guides often spot otters down in the canyon, while he's personally watched them at the stretch of river at Karst.

Foresman advised otter-seekers should check areas with braided channels and logjams. In winter, their tracks are easy to spot along the snow. He said to look for "latrines" that the otters use to mark areas with scent.

If you'd like to see more northern river otters up close, the Bear and Wolf Discovery Center in West Yellowstone recently opened an exhibit that shows river otters in the context of Yellowstone's riparian areas.

Enjoy the playful otters when you see them and remember Donaldson's advice if you are fishing: "The rule of guiding is if you see an otter in the area you are fishing go find another area!"

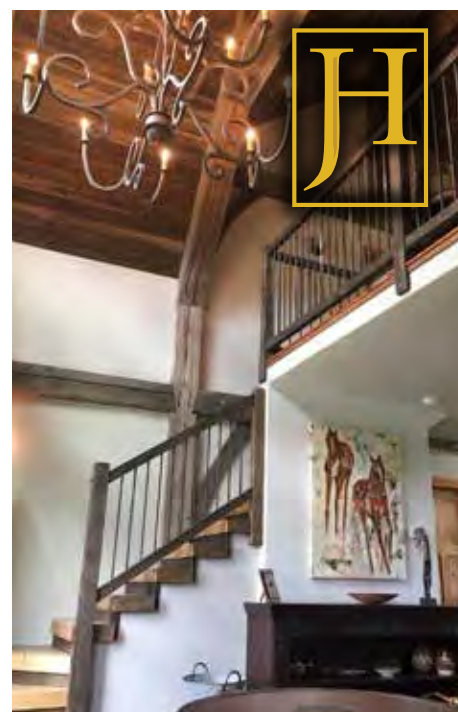
Karen Filipovich is a facilitator and consultant in the Bozeman area.

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INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Yellowstone's winter Wonderland

EBS STAFF

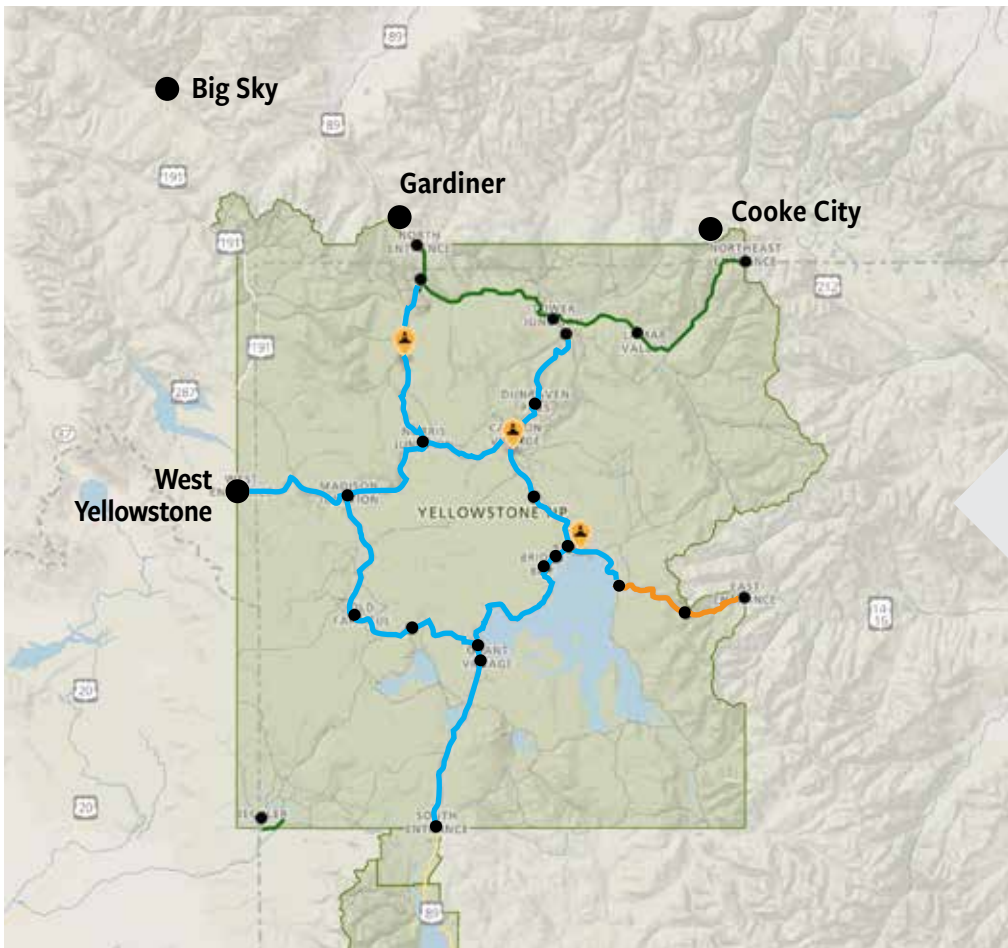
In the stillness of a frigid early morn in Yellowstone National Park, bison graze, elk feed and a wolf wails his cry. It's often coldest just before sunrise, and crisp powdery snow sifts like sugar from the trees as a valley breeze ghosts its way through the timber. As the sun bursts over mountains to the east, the snow sings its radiance, welcoming a textbook bluebird day.

Snow has a way of transforming a place like Yellowstone, blanketing a fiery

land characterized by rivers that don't freeze, geysers that cascade frozen mist and wildlife well-adapted to survive the near-polar conditions.

While services are limited in the park during the winter season, there are a number of ways to experience wintertime in Yellowstone. If you do venture out, be sure to check the park's webpage for current conditions and information on how plan accordingly, as winter weather is far less forgiving than its warmer counterparts.

Visit [nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/visiting-yellowstone-in-winter.htm](https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/visiting-yellowstone-in-winter.htm) for more information.



2020 Winter Closing Dates

Roads will close to oversnow travel by snowmobile and snowcoach at 9 p.m. on the following dates:

- March 1: East Entrance to Lake Butte Overlook (Sylvan Pass)
- March 8: Mammoth Hot Springs to Norris
- March 10: Norris to Madison, Norris to Canyon Village, Canyon Village to Fishing Bridge
- March 15: All remaining groomed roads close

- **Green:** Open year round
- **Blue:** Opens Dec. 15
- **Orange:** Opens Dec. 22



A winter eruption of Old Faithful Geyser. NPS PHOTOS



The Upper Geyser Basin covered in snow.

INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Snowmobiles and snowcoaches pass bison on the road.



Skiers travel over Old Canyon Bridge Trail.

Things to do

With the majority of Yellowstone's roads closed from November to March, skis, snowshoes, snowcoaches and snowmobiles quickly become staples of transportation. The road from Gardiner to Cooke City remains open to wheeled vehicles, otherwise consider booking a snow trip with a winter guide, hitching a snowcoach ride into the park interior, or travel by ski or snowshoe on any of a series of trails open to public access.

Stay: Within the park proper, visitors can make reservations at the Mammoth Hotel or Old Faithful Snowlodge, as well as camp out at the Mammoth Campground. For those traveling to the Snowlodge, be prepared for a special treat—you can only get there on one of a number of commercial snowcoaches.

Hit the trails: Whether you spend the night or are just visiting for the day, consider making first tracks on one of Yellowstone's many trails. Some are even groomed for cross-country skiing, and can be accessed off of the open road between Gardiner and Cooke City, or with the help of a snowcoach shuttle. Yellowstone also offers a select number of permits for snowmobile trips into Yellowstone—book with a guide or try your luck winning a permit—the park takes applications each summer.

Take a soak: While it is not only illegal, but also very dangerous, to soak in the park's many hot springs, a dip in the warm waters where the Boiling River flows into the Gardner River is allowed. After leaving your car at the parking lot between the North Entrance at Gardiner and Mammoth Hot Springs, walk a half-mile along the Gardner River then pick a spot in the river. If you'd rather treat yourself to a more developed hot springs experience, try the Yellowstone Hot Springs, an established facility located about 7 miles north of Gardiner on Highway 89.

Enjoy the views: From the North Entrance at Gardiner, you can drive all the way to Cooke City, passing through the famed Lamar Valley. This area is called Yellowstone's Northern Range and is an excellent place to view wildlife. Visitors can also book snowmobile or snowcoach tours aimed to view wildlife, or tour key landmarks in the park.

Inter Season Services

Anything not included in this list is closed during the winter.

Facilities

- Albright Visitor Center: Open year-round
- Mammoth Campground: Open year-round
- Mammoth Clinic: Open year-round
- Mammoth General Store: Open year-round

- Mammoth Hotel: Dec. 15-March 2
- Mammoth Ski Shop: Dec. 15-March 2
- Old Faithful Show Lodge: Dec. 16-March 1
- Old Faithful Visitor Education Center: Dec. 15-March 15
- West Yellowstone Visitor Information Center: Open year-round

Warming Huts: shelter for skiers, snowshoers and snowmobilers

WARMING HUT	STAFF	FOOD	WATER	RESTROOM	HOURS	FIRST DAY	LAST DAY
Canyon Visitor Education Center Lobby	Yes	Yes ¹	Yes	Yes	9 am - 3 pm	December 15	March 10*
Fishing Bridge	Yes	No	No	Yes	Open 24 hours	December 15	March 15*
Indian Creek	No	No	No	Yes	Open 24 hours	December 15	March 2*
Madison	Yes	Yes ^{1,2}	No	Yes	Open 24 hours	December 15	March 15*
Mammoth Hot Springs ³	Yes	Yes ¹	No	No	Daylight hours	December 15	March 2*
Old Faithful Yurts	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Daylight hours	December 15	March 15*
West Thumb	Yes	No	No	Yes	Open 24 hours	December 15	March 15*

* - Dates are tentative and subject to change

¹ - Vending machine snacks available 24 hours a day

² - Light snacks and hot drinks sold during the day

³ - Snow mobile fuel available

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Royal Coachman Ranch
160 ACRES / \$5.9M



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail
1.27 ACRES / \$800K

BIG SKY

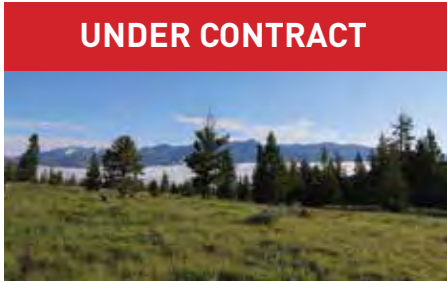


2005 Upper Chief Joseph
7,690 SQ FT / \$4.3M



64 Lodgepole
6,160 SQ FT / \$3.895M

BIG SKY - LAND



Mountain Meadows
120 Acres / \$3.495M



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
2A-1B
526 Acres / \$5.8M



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
Tract 3B-1
23 Acres / \$875k

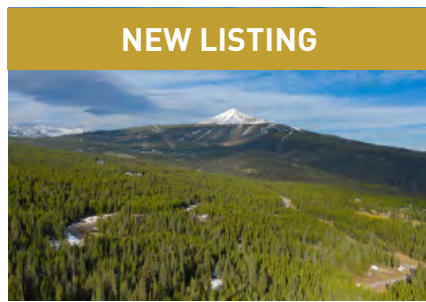


The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
Tract 1A-1
21 Acres / \$795k

BIG SKY - LAND



Lot 3 Joy Road
6.83 Acres / \$395K



Lot 71 Morning Glory
3.65 Acres / \$375K

BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA

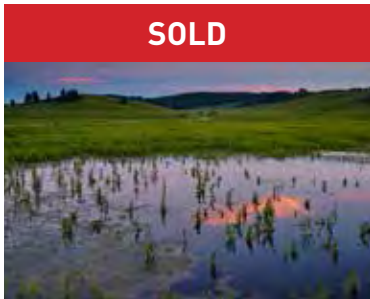


SxS Ranch
Bozeman, MT
483.78 ACRES / \$7.5M

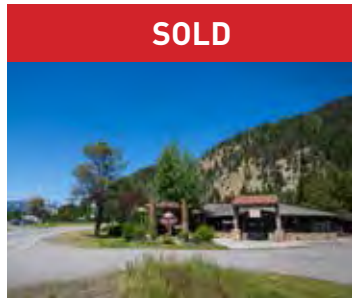


Rocking S7 Ranch Lot 4
Bozeman, MT
20.232 ACRES / \$650K

RECENTLY SOLD



Yellowstone Ranch Preserve
List Price: \$19M



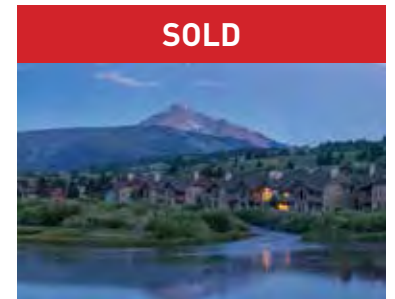
Big Sky Corner Property
List Price: \$3.24M



78 Meadow Village
Dr. Big Sky, MT
4,769 SQ FT / \$2.1M

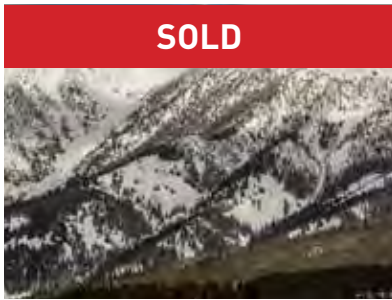


245 Rain in Face
3,446 SQ FT / \$1.695M

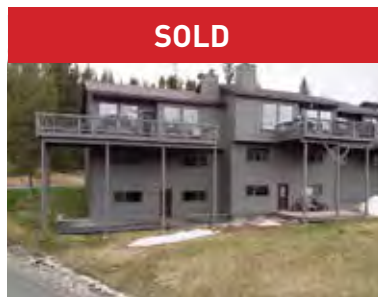


Crair Ranch Unit 40
List Price: \$1.35M

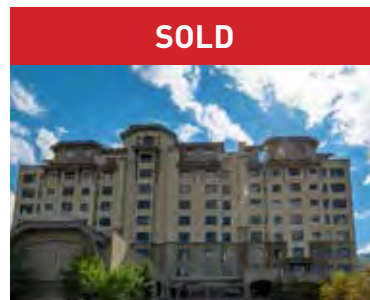
RECENTLY SOLD



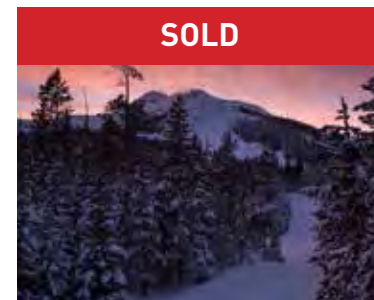
Lot 44 Diamond Hitch
1.25 ACRE / \$699K



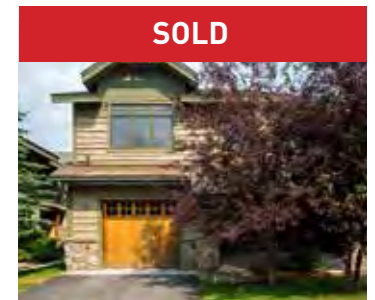
Hidden Village
15 Blue Flax Place
2,788 SQ FT / \$599K



Summit 911/912
List Price: \$595K



Lot 39 Diamond Hitch
1 ACRE / \$595K



Cottonwood Crossing #15
1,854 SQ FT / \$539K

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30 Beehive Basin Rd.
6,203 SQ FT / \$2.9M



211 B Pheasant Tail
\$720K



Cottonwood Crossing Unit 5
1854 SQ FT / \$565K



Hill Condo 1321
440 SQ FT / \$185K



Big EZ
Lot 42: \$339K / 20 ACRES
Lot 43: \$375K / 20 ACRES
Combined: \$699K



Lot 2 Big Buck Road
20 ACRES / \$480K



Lot 4 Beaver Creek
20 Acres / \$539K



Bear Paw Ponds Parcel 7
20.04 Acres / \$399K

COMMERCIAL



Homestead at the Beacon
Butte, MT
640 Acres / \$1.65M



Marketplace Unit 104
Big Sky, MT
1,204 SQ FT / \$560,920



Marketplace Unit 202
Big Sky, MT
966 SQ FT / \$389K



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Bozeman, MT
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Taking reservations for
building G

SOLD



Black Eagle Lodge Unit 30
List Price: \$1.35M

SOLD



2078 Little Coyote List
List Price: \$1.079M

SOLD



Ski Tip Lot 10
List Price: \$975K

SOLD



81 Pheasant Tail Ln. Unit 2
2,707 SQ FT / \$839K

SOLD



Lot 64 Goshawk
1.04 ACRES / \$775K

SOLD



Lot 119 Old Barn Rd.
3.13 Acres / \$490K

SOLD



118 Rose Hip Circle
1,940 SQ FT / \$489K

SOLD



3170 Winter Park #B
Bozeman, MT
1183 SQ FT / \$295K

SOLD



Hill Condo 1316
770 SQ FT/\$280k

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Fish and Wildlife Commission to meet Nov. 12, will hear Madison River petitions

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission will hold their regular November meeting on Nov. 12 at the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks headquarters in Helena, where they will hear presentations regarding rulemaking petitions for the Madison River.

After the latest in a series of contentious talks on how to manage burgeoning recreation numbers on the Madison River, which has thus far failed to yield compromise among outfitters, local anglers, landowners and non-residents, a number of stakeholder groups have submitted petitions to the Fish and Wildlife Commission requesting some form of regulation on the river.

These groups will present their requests during the commission meeting, after which commissioners will take public comment. The meeting will be streamed live to all of the FWP regional offices, which includes the Bozeman Regional Office on 19th Avenue. Audio from the meeting will also be streamed online.

The Madison River Foundation has submitted a petition similar to a joint request by the George Grant chapter of Trout Unlimited, Skyline Sportsmen Association, Anaconda Sportsmen Association and Public Lands Water Access Association. Both of these petitions urge the Fish and Wildlife Commission to initiate rules that FWP originally proposed in April 2018, at which time the commission rejected after hearing outcry from fishing outfitters.

These proposed rules on the Madison River would cap the number of commercial-use permits, establish year-round reaches of the river set aside for non-commercial use and prohibit the use of glass containers from Quake

Lake to the Jefferson confluence, among other rules.

The Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana has also submitted a petition to the commission and will make a presentation on Nov. 12 emphasizing the group's request that the commission establish a Madison River Commercial Use Working Group and develop a commercial use plan that, among other things, sets a maximum number of commercial trips at the 2019 level and establishes a trip distribution pool for new-entry outfitters.

After the commission hears these three petitions, the commissioners must either deny the petitions or initiate rulemaking on them.

Eileen Ryce, the administrator for FWP's fisheries division, said commissioners will be able to deny all three petitions, or approve one, two or all three. Should they approve any of the petitions, this would initiate a rulemaking process in which the proposals are filed in the Montana Register then released for public review. Public comments would be taken through a formal commentary period as well as during public open hearings, the input of which would then be collated and used to create a final rulemaking proposal that the commission would ultimately adopt or reject.

The most recent petitions come after a panel composed of interested stakeholders disbanded in May, unable to reach a consensus decision on recommended regulations for the Madison. Since then, representatives of the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association and the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana have encouraged FWP to develop an education program that might mitigate poor etiquette at Fishing Access Sites.

Visit fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/insideFwp/commission for more information about the Nov. 12 meeting or to listen to the meeting live.

MSU Library acquires collection from Fly Fishers International

BY ANNE CANTRELL
MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN — A new collection of materials available to the public at Montana State University's Library covers numerous aspects of the popular sport of fly fishing, from the motivations of why individuals fish, to casting and how to tie a fly.

The collection, acquired from Fly Fishers International, consists of books, periodicals, promotional materials and other items that relate to the study and practice of fly fishing. It includes an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 volumes dating from the 19th century to today. Fly Fishers International is a nonprofit based in Livingston that focuses on conservation, education and community.

"The material is a wonderful addition to our Trout and Salmonid Library Collection, which is the largest on the species in the world," said James Thull, MSU Special Collections librarian. "The [Fly Fishers International collection] is one of the most comprehensive collections on fly fishing in existence, and its addition to our library makes our collections wider in scope and more useful to researchers and anglers alike."

"While we focus on the fish themselves, [and] collect everything from scientific reports on fish diseases to children's literature, the [Fly Fishers International] library is focused on a particular fishing style that is, of course, very popular in Montana and the Western states," Thull added, referencing the act of fly fishing.

Thull said the collection is valuable because it adds to the library's materials on fly fishing, fills gaps in its subject areas and will offer "a bounty of information for anyone looking to get a line wet in Montana's trout waters."

The MSU Library acquired the collection after informal discussions throughout the years. Thull noted that many individuals at Fly Fishers International contributed to the efforts and helped make the acquisition possible.

"Our collection represents an extensive repository of publications and materials authored by many of the most important luminaries in the sport of fly fishing, some of whom were founding members of our organization," said Patrick Berry, president and CEO of Fly Fishers International. "The collaboration between Fly Fishers



Montana State University's Library has acquired a collection of materials from Fly Fishers International. The collection consists of books, periodicals, promotional materials and other items that relate to the study and practice of fly fishing. PHOTO BY ADRIAN SANCHEZ-GONZALEZ

International and Montana State University's Special Collections and Archives represents a truly synergistic partnership as we merge part of our respective strengths."

"This is a win-win for both institutions in that Fly Fishers International can focus on [its] museum collections and free up valuable space, and MSU gets to add an amazing collection to our library where it will be cataloged, stored in archival conditions and available to the public," Thull said.

The MSU Library's Special Collections and Archives has more than 800 active collections. It specializes in collections related to Montana agriculture and ranching, Montana engineering and architecture, Montana history, MSU history, Native Americans in Montana, the author Ivan Doig, prominent Montanans, trout and salmonids, U.S. Sen. Burton K. Wheeler, and Yellowstone National Park and the Yellowstone ecosystem.

Visit lib.montana.edu/archives for more information.

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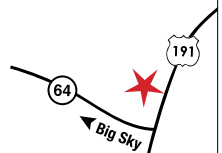


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Managing chronic wasting disease

Montana's approach to a fatal wildlife infection

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – In mid-October, samples from a mule deer buck on Montana's Hi-Line were packaged and shipped to Colorado. There, scientists at Colorado State University confirmed the news: the deer was infected with a fatal disease that has slowly cropped up in deer within the Treasure State. Another was confirmed on Nov. 4 in an area north-east of Joliet.

Known as chronic wasting disease, this infection has been confirmed in approximately 60 deer statewide since it was first found in wild herds in the Treasure State in 2017. It has been found along the Hi-Line mostly north of Highway 2; in southern Montana south of Billings; within a half-mile of the southeast border near Decker; and in the northwest near Libby.

CWD, making its way into newspaper headlines as “zombie deer disease,” is a difficult problem, one that wildlife disease ecologist Emily AlMBERG is increasingly faced with in her role at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

CWD is a slow-moving, fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose, though it has only been confirmed within Montana in our wild deer herds. It is caused by a misfolded protein known as a prion, and AlMBERG says once an animal is exposed to the prions, they accumulate in the nervous system and cause normal cellular proteins to misfold. This ultimately leads to tissue dysfunction and death. In advanced stages, there is so much damage to the brain that the organ comes to resemble Swiss cheese.

And the challenge for managers is multifaceted. For one, there is no known noninvasive method to sample for CWD; tissue samples from the nervous system or lymph nodes from a dead animal are required for testing. Additionally, CWD-causing prions are capable of surviving in the soil for what is yet unknown lengths of time and a sick deer can spread the disease even before the appearance of symptoms.

“If left unmanaged, CWD will spread,” said FWP Director Martha Williams in a statement. “As infection rates increase, it can have a significant impact on our wildlife.”

According to AlMBERG, herds heavily affected by CWD can see serious population declines—in Colorado, mule deer populations have dropped 45 percent over 20 years and in Wyoming, one herd is experiencing a 21-percent annual decline. Yet perhaps the most worrisome piece remains that researchers haven't been able to find a cure.

CWD was first discovered in 1967 in mule deer at a Colorado research facility. It quickly showed up in captive mule deer and elk in Ontario, Colorado and Wyoming, and by the '90s, it was present in wild deer, elk and moose in Colorado and Wyoming and in captive herds from Saskatchewan, South Dakota and Oklahoma, as well as at a game farm in Philipsburg, Montana. At the time, the infected Philipsburg elk were destroyed and the facility was quarantined.

As of 2017, CWD was present in wild cervid herds in 25 states, three Canadian provinces, Norway, Finland and South Korea. It reared its ugly head for the first time in Montana's wild populations in October 2017 when a deer harvested south of Billings tested positive.

“I think probably CWD has been here for a while and we're just finding it,” AlMBERG said, noting that as a slow-moving disease, it can take a while before it becomes detectable. Though animals that have reached the terminal stage are visibly sick—with excessive salivation, emaciation, apparent drowsiness and a lack of muscle coordination—it can take up to two years before symptoms develop.

Montana's management of CWD continues to evolve as new cases appear. Guided in-part by a citizen advisory panel, FWP has designated CWD Management Zones where the disease is known to exist, and is also sampling high-risk areas in order to look for any new infections.

To prevent the spread of the disease, transport restriction zones have been set up across CWD Management Zones. Additionally, hunters can opt to have any deer tested for CWD and FWP will cover the costs and submit the samples for testing. While the disease is not thought to be transmissible to humans or domestic animals, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend sick animals should not be consumed.

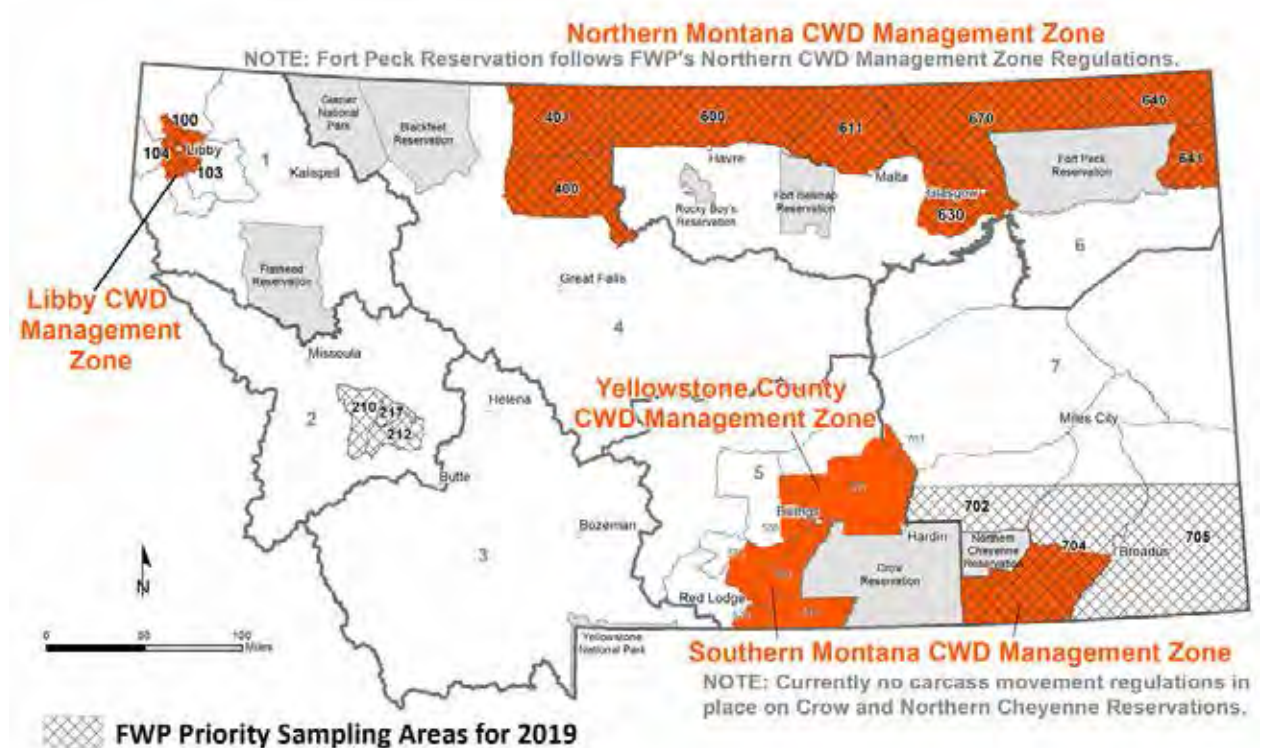
AlMBERG said an important point for hunters to remember is to avoid inadvertently spreading the disease and that proper disposal is key. Rather than dump body parts or trimmings in ditches or carcass piles, she said hunters should leave the spinal column at the kill site and dispose of hides, bones and trimmings at approved landfills. Not only is it illegal to dump carcasses near roadways, but also if it is infected with CWD, the carcass can spread the disease for at least two years.

Visit fwp.mt.gov/cwd for more information.

-- For Hunters

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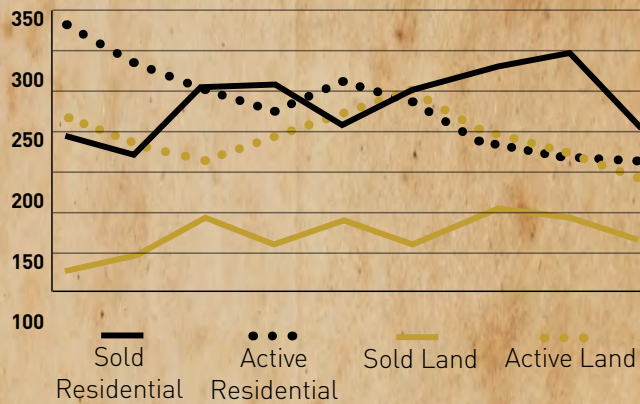
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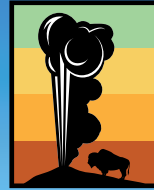
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Tales from Afield: Hooked on whitetails

BY ANDREW HERMANCE
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

My passion for whitetails started off long before I could even hunt. My dad was, and still is, big into hunting white-tailed deer with his recurve bow, and that is where I got it from. Already by my first year hunting, at 12 years old, I knew I wanted to harvest a white-tailed buck with my bow.

My dad helped me get my PSE Nova compound bow all ready to go and I spent all summer practicing. Opening day of bow season came and we had the stand set in a patch of timber that my dad knew deer would go through. That evening I climbed into the stand and patiently waited. About 45 minutes before dark I had three does and one velvet spike come by. I was eager and excited, ambitions set on taking a buck—any buck—with my bow.

All the does took a trail to my right and the buck took the trail that came in front of the tree stand. He passed beneath me at 5 yards. I pulled my bow back and let the arrow fly and the rest is history. That was the day that really got me hooked on bowhunting whitetails.

Fast forward to 2016, and I had gained permission to hunt on a new property. Not knowing what kind of potential this property had, that year was more or less a figure-it-out year and see what was around. I quickly learned that property had a ton of deer and held some big bucks.

I ended up harvesting my first buck with a traditional bow that year. Though I had shot does with the traditional gear before, it was a great feeling to finally be able to take a buck. Since that day, I haven't picked up a compound.

The following year I told myself I was going to put more time than ever before into scouting throughout the summer, trying to pattern a mature deer for the upcoming season. I spent three or four days a week from June till opening day of bow season in September, watching all the deer, getting a sense for their movements, and picking out which deer I'd try to hunt during the season. I had four bucks picked out and patterned going through one little area on the property. My buddy and I hung a stand there and just waited for the season to come.

The week before season, two of my bucks quit being active in the daylight so I was narrowed to just the remaining two deer. With opening weekend foreboding super-hot temperatures, I had my doubts, and ended up not making it to the stand until the third day of the season. Walking into my stand that evening, I bumped into one of the two bucks that I was going to hunt that night, but wasn't able to make a shot. With him spooked, I was now down to just one buck.

About 30 minutes before dark, I spotted deer moving on the river bed. I pulled my binoculars to eyes to see if my buck was around when all of a sudden, he came through the brush right next to the tree my stand was in. He stopped just 10 yards away.

I grabbed my bow as he moved closer to the tree and at 4 yards he turned and quartered away, giving me a perfect shot. I drew back and let the arrow fly, watching as it hit my target. I was in such shock of what just happened.

To successfully take a mature buck, and to do it with a traditional bow, sent excitement and adrenaline coursing through my body, fueling my love of bowhunting whitetails.

It was time to set a new goal. My next ambition was to take a big, full-velvet buck.

Going into the 2018 season, I wanted to take a deer with my grandfather's old recurve. I didn't have much time to scout that summer, so on opening weekend I was just trusting my instincts. I set up in the same spot where I'd taken the buck in 2017 with my traditional bow. As I sat in the stand on opening evening, there was very little deer activity around me. I started to wonder if I'd made the right choice, but remained in the stand, waiting it out.

About 10 minutes before dark, a buck I'd patterned in 2017 stepped out into the open and walked by my stand, some 15 yards away. I drew back and sent the arrow flying. The shot was marginal, and after discussing the shot over with my dad, we decided it would be better to wait till morning to look for the deer. The next morning, after picking up the blood trail and a quick 60-yard track job, we recovered the buck.

I can't begin to explain my love and respect for whitetails. After spending so much time watching river-bottom whitetails—learning their habits and behavior—I think they're one of the most fun animals to bow hunt. Maybe it's the personal challenge, maybe it's part time spent in the woods, but there's just something about it that keeps me coming back year after year.

Andrew Hermance was born and raised in Bozeman, where he currently works at Extreme Plumbing and Heating.



The author uses a spotting scope to look at white-tailed deer. PHOTO BY KADEN RICHARDS



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SECTION 3: SPORTS, BUSINESS, HEALTH & FUN



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THE LONE PEAK PLAYBOOK



LPHS volleyball places third at district tournament

BY BRANDON WALKER
EBS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

MANHATTAN – The Lone Peak High School volleyball team was on a roll to close out the regular season, winning their final five matches. The last two victories came the final week of October against West Yellowstone on the road, and at home on Senior Night versus White Sulphur Springs. LPHS won both matches in straight sets to finish their regular season with an 11-4 record.

Lone Peak entered the double elimination District 8C Tournament seeded third out of six schools. In their opening match on Oct. 31, they took on West Yellowstone, winning in four sets. According to Lady Big Horns head coach Missy Botha, the Wolverines surprised them, taking the first set of the match, but LPHS won the next three by a combined score of 75-47 to come away with the come-from-behind victory.

“They started so slow it was shocking,” Botha said. “Once they finally came to their senses and got the jitters out, they took the next three. That was definitely concerning to start the tournament off like that, but I sort of chalk that up to nerves.” Junior Hannah Dreisbach paced the team with eight kills, while junior Ivy Hicks had all 28 of Lone Peak’s assists for the match.

Next up on the day for LPHS was Manhattan Christian and once again the Eagles proved to be a thorn in the side of the Lady Big Horns. Manhattan Christian won the match in straight sets, 25-16, 25-13, and 25-19. Junior Reilly Germain had six kills for the Lady Big Horns and junior Chloe Hammond did her best defensively with a 10-dig effort in the loss.

Lone Peak had to turn around and play a third match on the evening, squaring off with Shields Valley. Now with their backs against the wall, LPHS was able to stem the tide by winning in straight sets and making it to the next day of competition. Lone Peak was led by senior Dounia Metje with nine kills and Hicks who had 23 assists.

On Nov. 1, the Lady Big Horns faced off with White Sulphur Springs in their first game, a rematch of the Senior Night game that Lone Peak had won just one week prior. Once again, LPHS was able to defeat White Sulphur in straight sets, 32-30, 25-19, and 25-19 advancing to the semi-final round. Metje helped lengthen her high school volleyball career by leading the team with seven kills and Hammond chipped in eight aces for the Lady Big Horns.

Gardiner was awaiting Lone Peak, with the victor slated to take on Manhattan Christian in the championship match. Similar to the Eagles, the Bruins had also been a formidable opponent for the Lady Big Horns throughout the season. LPHS fought hard but was unable to overcome Gardiner’s offensive prowess, losing in three sets. In the final match of her varsity career, Metje led LPHS with three kills. Hicks capped her season with a seven-assist effort and Hammond contributed three digs.

“I could not be more proud of the girls with the way they played. Both teams were exhausted, but we stayed with them,” Botha said. “Once again, they rose to their level. Sometimes when you see a team lose, you’re like well, you know what, they left it all out there. They did everything they could to win and at the end of the day you just have to give credit to the better team that day, and the better team that day was Gardiner.”

Aside from their third-place finish in the district tournament, a couple of the



LPHS seniors Emery Miller (11), Madi Rager (22), and Dounia Metje (32) led the Lady Big Horns into the district tournament on a tear. Lone Peak placed third in the tournament, capping off their season. Metje was selected to the all-conference team for her offensive prowess throughout the season. PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL BOUGH

Lady Big Horns brought home individual honors. Metje was voted to the All-Conference team, while Hicks was selected second team All-Conference.

After an outstanding season, Botha believes there are good things to come. “The fire that was in their bellies for this tournament, that’s going to keep burning through. They’re starting a co-ed volleyball league in the school. They’ve already got like 40 kids signed up for this. They’re going to continue to play during the winter [and] through spring,” she said.

Botha noted LPHS will graduate three seniors this year, while their toughest opponents, Gardiner and Manhattan Christian, will each see six seniors depart. Additionally, LPHS freshman Maddie Cone and Jessie Bough were able to get some tournament experience under their belts, preparing them for upcoming seasons with the varsity squad.

“The entire season we only lost to two teams. Manhattan Christian and Gardiner. If you look at it like that, that was a hell of an accomplishment to begin with. We are in the toughest district in all of Montana, I would say,” Botha said.

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Wolverines pounce on Big Horns

BY BRANDON WALKER
EBS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

BIG SKY – Under the lights at the Lone Peak High School football field on Oct. 26, the West Yellowstone Wolverines stole the show on senior night, defeating the Big Horns 62-14. LPHS head coach Adam Farr acknowledged the tough competition that his team faced on the night: “The team fought hard all the way to the end. We were simply outgunned and outmatched.”

The Big Horns scored the first touchdown of the game when senior quarterback Frankie Starz found freshman Pierce Farr in the back of the end zone with 7:41 remaining in the first quarter. Starz then connected with sophomore Bennett Miller on the two-point conversion to make it an 8-0 ball game early on.

West Yellowstone found another gear after that, scoring 42 unanswered points to close out the half. They went on to add another 20 in the second half, putting the game out of reach for Lone Peak.

At halftime, a ceremony recognized the accomplishments and dedication to the program of LPHS seniors Starz, Austin Samuels, Nick Wade, Ryker Potter, Chaz Paduano and Greg Miller. “They certainly never wavered in their drive and desire to win. I really mean that. Those guys were fighters,” Farr said. “This season was one to remember for sure. At the end of the day the seniors meant a lot to the program throughout their entire time there. To see them move on is sad, but I’m certainly proud of their effort throughout their entire high school career.”

As fate would have it, Lone Peak’s last touchdown of the season was scored by a pair of seniors. Austin Samuels caught one of his final



Senior quarterback Frankie Starz (6) unleashes a pass against West Yellowstone on Oct. 26. The Big Horns fell to the Wolverines on senior night, 62-14. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

passes from Starz in the fourth quarter, capping off a season in which the pair generated most of the Big Horns offense.

LPHS finished up their season with a 3-5 record. “I was super proud of the effort they put forward throughout the entire season. We had a lot of contribution from, obviously the seniors, but the underclassmen as well, which bodes well for the future,” Farr said. “We have a very strong middle school team, which only lost one game the entire season, so they’re going to be feeding some really top-notch talent upwards to the high school as well, so I think the future of the program looks bright.”



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New ski-assistive technology coming to slopes this season

BY BRANDON WALKER
EBS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

BIG SKY – Winter sports are a staple of any mountain town and injuries from the physical demands of sliding through snow are inevitable. Knee-related issues have always been one of the most common injuries for skiers. To help remedy the effects of these injuries for powder enthusiasts, Roam Robotics has developed a product called “Elevate”. Elevate’s intended purpose is to alleviate the pain that riders feel in their knees from old, nagging injuries by absorbing some of the pressure that is focused on those joints while making turns downhill.

DJ Glusker, Regional Operations Manager for Roam Robotics in Park City, Utah, simplified the concept behind the device: “A cylinder that’s clothed gets filled with air to a certain pressure. The shape of the cylinder tries to change as the pressure increases. It tries to straighten out and that’s where the person feels the support. We’re able to control the pressure that gets put into it and the pressure that’s let out in order to provide support.”

The device weighs around 13 pounds in all, between the brace and the backpack that powers it. “The device is made to be lighter than most traditional powered devices. It’s not a closed system, like many other devices. Meaning you don’t have to put anything into it, it just gives you power out,” Glusker said.

Dylan Hall, Vice President of Retail for Big Sky Resort, is intrigued by the new technology. “Anyone who lives in a ski town long enough is no stranger to knee pain. If we can help minimize that by making these products available, we’d consider that a success,” Hall said. “We are always looking for innovative ways to use technology to improve the ski experience.”



Roam Robotics’ “Elevate” device equipped on a rider. The device weighs about 13 pounds and will be available to rent at Big Sky Resort this season. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROAM ROBOTICS

Starting Dec. 15 and running until the season comes to a close, skiers will be able to try the device out for themselves. Roam Robotics will have a designated space in the Big Sky Demo Shop, located in the Snowcrest Building, with a representative stationed in the store throughout the winter season.

Originally constructed in 2018, the second edition of Elevate will be available for rent to the public this season. “Nothing for sale this year. It’s not a prototype, but there will still be a lot of changes that we want to make to continue to improve it,” Glusker said. “We have a small space in there that will allow us to interface with clients, fit them, and then take them to snow and make sure everything’s working well and kind of launch them, if you will.”

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Last Chair with Bob Dixon

BY EMILY STIFLER WOLFE

“Sit there...”

Big Sky ski patrol director Bob Dixon is buried up to his waist in avalanche debris. “Let’s go find my friend,” he says to the patroller digging him out, adamant. “Let’s go. Let’s get moving.”

It’s the last week of the 2018-2019 ski season, and Dixon, 69, wasn’t actually involved in an avalanche accident. Instead, he’s starring in a training video to help next year’s rookie patrollers learn how to respond to an avalanche. His role in the film was as a poacher who skied into closed terrain, and is now acting as a witness.

Wearing an old purple coat and grinning in the sun, it’s not hard to imagine Dixon when he first came to Big Sky in 1982 at age 33. His wavy red and gray hair is thick and bushy over the goggles he’s wearing backwards. Dixon is retiring this year after 37 years, and if the 10 patrollers helping with the film project are any indication, his team is going to miss him.

“Bob, you’ll be immortalized next year at the refresher,” says Bart Mitchell, the longtime patroller who’s organizing the film project. “As if you’re not already famous enough.”

Indeed, Dixon is famous on Lone Peak: for his Mr. Spock-like calm under pressure; for patrolling six days a week during most of his career; for his tall tales about surviving the 1960s; and for wearing only sunglasses until the temperature is below negative 10.

“He looked like he had his head stuck in the spark plug cleaner in auto class,” said Eddie Garcia, who patrolled with Dixon for 18 years starting in 1989, recalling a particularly cold avalanche control morning in the Gullies with Dixon. “The conditions were so punishing. He’s dressed warmly, mind you, but no hat, no goggles. When everybody else—like everyone who’s not crazy—had no exposed flesh. He was frosted...like an ice cream cone with sugar on top.”

He’s also known for his quirky habit of saying “sit there” as a filler word when others might say “like” or “um.” For example: “When I was in Alaska, I held a carrot in my mouth and fed it to a moose in a wildlife refuge, sit there, so it looked like I was kissing the moose.” Perhaps the most famous Dixonism, it’s become part of the patrol lexicon. (And yes, that’s a true story about the moose.)

Dixon’s first season at the resort, Dixon was one of seven patrollers. With three years of experience patrolling in Utah and 30 years of skiing (he grew up in Colorado), he became assistant patrol director a couple months into that season and held that position until taking the helm 10 years later. He remembers a time when Big Sky was so quiet, patrollers competed to see how many times they could ski the Big Couloir in a weekend—and that was before the tram, so they had to hike up it every time they wanted to ski it.

Since 2013, when Big Sky merged with neighboring Moonlight Basin, he’s managed 105 professional patrollers and 145 volunteers. Dixon is passionate about patrolling and is proud of his team’s professionalism.

With only a few days left in the ski season, I ride the Six Shooter Lift with Dixon after they wrap up filming for the avalanche

training video project. “This season has been awesome,” he says. “A lot of good snow. Good avalanche control. Good comradery. A lot of really good ski patrolmen doing a great job, which makes my job easier....It’s all about the patrol. It’s not one person, by any means.”

Big Sky Ski Patrol is renowned for its skills in medical care and avalanche control. It’s no wonder there is a long list of applicants for these coveted positions every year. Bob Dixon helped build that reputation.

“I went to the medical directors’ board in Helena a few years ago, and they said we’re one of the best—if not the best—in the country,” Dixon said. And although he had a large hand in building that reputation, he of course credited the patrol. Creating this team of strong, independent thinkers and giving them the reins to do their job has clearly been one of his favorite parts of the job, and it’s the people he’ll miss most.

“So many people think it’s just some goof off thing, and Bob’s made a life of it,” said Mike Buotte, Big Sky’s snow safety director. “He believes it’s important work that we do, and I think that does trickle down to the crew.”

Dixon isn’t sure what’s next, although he has no lack of ideas. He’s considering helping manage a helicopter skiing operation in Alaska next year, doing some software programming, or even becoming an environmental lobbyist. “You never know. Karma takes you where it’s going to take you.”

In the meantime, he has tickets to Costa Rica for a solo surf trip. And having earned a lifetime pass at Big Sky, you can bet you’ll see him on the hill next winter.

“I am starting to realize how lucky I’ve been to basically live the dream,” he said. “It’s gonna be painful. It’s been a good career and I’m proud of it, and it is time. Time for younger people to take it to even a higher height.”

Emily Stifler Wolfe is a freelance writer based in Bozeman and a former ski patroller in Big Sky. This article originally appeared on Big Sky Resort’s blog: The Way I Ski It on Nov. 5, 2019. For more stories, visit blog.bigskyresort.com.



Bob Dixon hiking the Big Couloir in the pre-Tram days in standard Bob attire—no hat or goggles. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT



Making it in Big Sky: Dodd Law Firm, P.C.

Matt Dodd came to Big Sky from Georgia as a twenty-one-year old ski instructor in 2000 and worked for the Big Sky Ski School through 2009. Dodd then attended law school in Utah before returning to Big Sky with his wife Ashley to raise their two children, Piper and Jasper and start his own practice, Dodd Law Firm, P.C.

On top of providing personalized and zealous representation to his clients throughout Gallatin County, Matt has served four years on the board for the Morningstar Learning Center and joined the Big Sky Fire board of directors in 2018. Explore Big Sky recently sat down with the ski-instructor-turned-lawyer to discuss the legal profession, his career path and his perspective on the future of the town he calls home.

Explore Big Sky: *When did you first decide to become a trial lawyer? Why?*

Matt Dodd: Growing up, I always thought I would be a trial lawyer like my father. I used to follow him to court and sit in back with my own legal pad. I majored in philosophy, took the LSAT, and even started applying to law schools. But, after college, I found Big Sky and got sidetracked for the next nine years.

When I finally made it to law school, I was exposed to lots of different kinds of lawyers. It didn't take long for me to confirm that trial law fit me better than reviewing contracts. Being in the courtroom isn't exactly like it is on TV but it is the most exciting part of being a lawyer—and it allows me to help real people who are going through difficult times.

EBS: *You first moved to Big Sky in 2000 as a 21-year-old ski instructor from Georgia. Where did you learn how to ski?*

M.D.: I'm embarrassed to say that I was a terrible skier when I first came to Big Sky. On my very first day on the mountain, I double ejected on Mr. K, blackened my eye, and busted my lip. Thankfully, I was a good teacher and I was willing to spend a lot of days teaching three and four-year-old kids on the magic carpet.

I spent the next few years working hard at ski school, taking as many clinics as possible, and trying to follow my friends all over the mountain. A thousand plus days later, I was able to keep up pretty well.

EBS: *You recently co-authored a book with your father. What was the motivation behind that?*

M.D.: In the 1980s, my father and a partner wrote a book, *Cross-Examination: Science and Techniques*, that remains a touchstone for many trial lawyers. It was and is a great book, but it's a tough read at over 1,200 pages.

In the last few years, my father and I started lecturing and teaching together. Those opportunities allowed us to explore and refine some of the teachings from the original book. We also saw the opportunity to write a shorter, more accessible book that would appeal to younger lawyers.

EBS: *What characteristics make a good lawyer?*

M.D.: The best lawyers I have been around are thorough, detail-oriented, and focused on their client's goals. Those lawyers also put in the work so that they are the most prepared person in the room.

EBS: *What's the best advice that you've been given about practicing law?*

M.D.: Early in my career, a mentor told me to work hard for my client to get the best possible outcome.

EBS: *You drafted an innocence petition that exonerated a man who had been incarcerated for over four years. Can you say more about how you achieved that result?*

M.D.: There is no question that innocent people are, unfortunately, convicted of crimes they did not commit. Harry Miller was one of those who was wrongly convicted.

The Rocky Mountain Innocence Center (RMIC) took on Harry's case. Jensie Anderson, president of the RMIC and one of my law school mentors, gave me the opportunity



Matt Dodd competes in Big Sky's annual pond skim event dressed as Captain Justice: Defender of Freedom. PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT DODD

to show that Harry was factually innocent. Though Harry was convicted on eyewitness testimony, the facts supporting his innocence were compelling.

Just days before the crime in Salt Lake City, Harry had suffered a debilitating stroke in Louisiana; he had no money or transportation to make the trip to the Salt Lake City; and other witnesses confirmed that Harry never left the state. But, for a variety of reasons, little of this evidence was presented at Harry's original trial. After myself and others at the RMIC compiled the evidence, I drafted the Petition setting out all the evidence that should have come to light at trial. After reading the Petition, the State of Utah agreed that Harry was innocent, exonerated him, and provided financial compensation for the years he was locked away.

EBS: *As a board member of Morningstar and the BSFD, you're well aware of the demands that Big Sky's rapid growth places on our infrastructure. What is the pressing problem our town faces at the current moment?*

M.D.: Housing for locals continues to be one of the most pressing problems facing Big Sky. While the Meadowview housing development on Little Coyote is a great start, we have to continue working together to find ways to keep strong, smart locals in Big Sky. It would be a shame to lose them and the community they have helped to develop because there aren't any affordable housing options.

EBS: *What has been the most memorable court case that you have tried?*

M.D.: In 2017, I was lucky enough to try a case with my father here in Gallatin County. For three days, we tried a case that I had been prepping the prior three years. We sat side by side, fighting for a client who had wrongly been accused of taking advantage of another. We took turns dismantling the witnesses presented by the accuser and made our case. At the end of it all, we got the result our client deserved and were even awarded attorney fees by the judge.

EBS: *If you weren't a lawyer, what other profession could you see yourself pursuing?*

M.D.: Much to my wife's chagrin, I do not know what I would do if I wasn't practicing. Whatever I did, I would want it to be in a profession that allowed me to spend time with my family, ski and bike, and continue living in Big Sky.

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Big Sky Eyes opens in Town Center

BY DOUG HARE

BIG SKY – Big Sky has its very own eye doctor now. On Nov. 5, Dr. Erica Perlman-Henson celebrated the grand opening of Big Sky Eyes, an optometry and eyewear medical and retail business located at 99 Town Center Avenue.

“Since I met Erica and she was in school, her dream was to be an eye doctor, to provide the best care, and own her own practice so that she wasn’t controlled by any corporation that wanted to change the way we do good healthcare,” said Ryan Walker, Dr. Perlman’s husband. “And it finally happened in one of the coolest places in the world.”

Along with a vast selection of the latest trends in eyewear, Big Sky Eyes will use the latest technology to treat and detect ocular disease in a relaxed and professional atmosphere, according to their mission statement. Dr. Perlman has advanced training in fitting specialty contact lenses, such as scleral lenses that help treat keratoconus, corneal transplant patients, dry eye and many other conditions.

“Both my parents are optometrists and they own a private practice in a small farming community in California. So I grew up working in a small practice in an everyone-knows-your-name type of situation. That’s what I wanted to bring to Big Sky,” Dr. Perlman said. “I had the option to open up shop down in Bozeman, but I love the small community here and I wanted to be part of it.”

Dr. Perlman’s fondness for southwest Montana stretches back to her childhood when her family would visit Bridger Canyon every summer, flyfishing and visiting the vistas and wildlife in Yellowstone National Park. She says that when her husband got a job working on the new Montage hotel, things just kind of “fell into place.”

Dr. Perlman attended Bates College in Maine for her undergraduate degree and Boston University for her dual master’s degrees in public health and medical science. She then earned her doctoral degree from the University of California Berkeley School of Optometry, earning accolades for her exceptional clinical skills.

Her training also includes working at several Veteran Administration sites, a community health clinic, the California School of the Blind, and multiple excursions to Nicaragua to provide eye care to the underserved.



Dr. Erica Perlman-Henson had an option to open her optometry practice in Bozeman, but decided she would rather be based in Big Sky because of its small-town charm. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ERICA PERLMAN

“It’s exciting to have an optometrist here because as Big Sky... moves towards becoming a year-round community and a premier place to live, work and play, we need facilities like these for year-round residents,” said Caitlin Quisenberry, programming and events manager for the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. “The more services that we get here, the less Big Sky locals will have to spend a half day driving to Bozeman—they can just get their eyes checked or pick up a pair of glasses on their lunch break.”

Reason #13

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Life 101

How much do you gossip?



BY LINDA ARNOLD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Gossip is tempting. We hear things about people all the time. But where do you draw the line between normal curiosity and being part of the rumor mill?

Most of us have been the subject of gossip at some point in our lives, and we've all felt the sting of humiliation that goes along with it. On the other hand, we've all done some gossiping of our own, and we may have hurt someone's feelings

as a result.

Most gossip stems from fear, anger or jealousy. The gossiper wants agreement and validation from others. The burden, then, falls on the listener. And you always have a choice.

Listen carefully to how a person speaks about other people to you. This is how they will likely speak about you to other people.

A lot of gossip takes place in the workplace. The American Psychological Association has conducted research around employees venting to coworkers and reports this venom can take on a life of its own and start to define the work-place culture.

Gossiping is the coward's way of expressing anger. To put someone else down in order to make yourself feel superior is a giant red flag for insecurity. Ultimately, gossip only offers temporary gratification, which calls for the cycle to repeat in order for that adrenaline rush to continue.

So, what can be done? Can one person actually make a difference? With time and repetition, the answer is yes.

Here are a few tips to put yourself on a gossip-free diet:

- Watch out for patterns. Don't put yourself in risky situations.
- Stop gossip in its tracks. Don't take the bait. Make it known you won't spread gossip.

- Be courageous and stand your ground. Walk away if you have to. Throw in a comment about the subject that turns the gossip on its head.
- Take the "No Gossip" pledge. Build on the popularity of current movements, the "no texting while driving pledge," for example, and hold each other accountable.

Your group may be skeptical at first. After all, we teach people how to treat us. If you've taught those around you that you'll keep the gossip going, it will take demonstration after demonstration of the new behavior before you can be effective.

Gossipers need supportive listeners and are unlikely to continue if their point of view is being challenged.

The following phrases, drawn from employee-assistance programs, could be helpful:

"I don't think talking about the problems Sue is having behind her back is going to help her."

"As Sue's friends (coworkers), I think we should come up with better ways to support her instead of talking about her."

"I know my feelings would be hurt if I knew my friends (coworkers) were talking about my personal problems and spreading things around."

Remember, when you take delight in others' misfortunes, you're actually setting yourself up for misfortune. Buddhists would call this karma.

Here are some rewards you'll likely feel by not engaging in gossip:

- When you remove yourself from gossipy situations, the gossipers will eventually go somewhere else.
- You'll feel much better in time, without that sense of betrayal and guilt.
- A lot of drama and stress will be eliminated from your life.

Linda Arnold, M.A., M.B.A., is a syndicated columnist, psychological counselor and founder of a multistate marketing company. Reader comments are welcome at linda@lindaarnold.org or visit lindaarnold.org for more information on her books.

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American Life in Poetry: Column 762

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. POET LAUREATE

How about a light-footed Irish reel before winter sets in, before the rest of our lives sets in? Here's a poem by Barbara Crooker, who lives in Pennsylvania. Her most recent collection of poems is *The Book of Kells* from Cascade Books, the winner of the Best Poetry Book of 2018 as judged by Poetry by the Sea.

Reel

Maybe night is about to come
calling, but right now
the sun is still high in the sky.
It's half-past October, the woods
are on fire, blue skies stretch
all the way to heaven. Of course,
we know that winter is coming, its thin
winding sheets and its hard narrow bed.
But right now, the season's fermented
to fullness, so slip into something
light, like your skeleton; while these old
bones are still working, my darling,
let's dance.

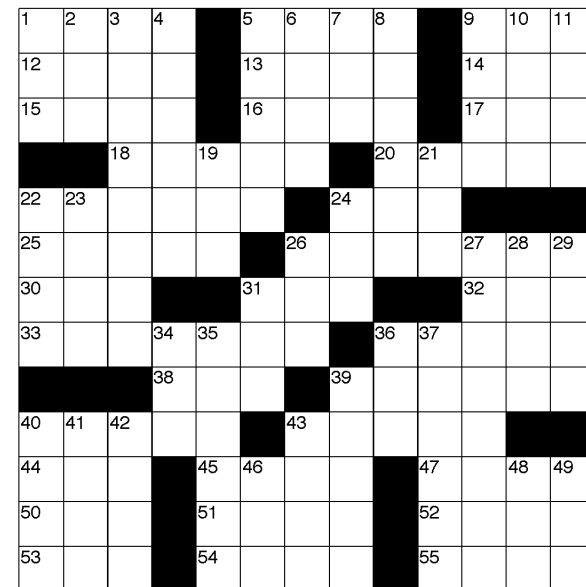
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 N.Z. evergreen
 - 5 Ruler (suf.)
 - 9 Amount (abbr.)
 - 12 Blister
 - 13 Molten rock
 - 14 Grasp
 - 15 Thick slice
 - 16 Danube tributary
 - 17 Carriage
 - 18 Stinging ant
 - 20 First bishop of Paris
 - 22 Stinging segment
 - 24 Wood fastener
 - 25 Tilting: naut.
 - 26 Wool fat
 - 30 Jap. family badge
 - 31 Irish church
 - 32 Axilla
 - 33 Queue
 - 36 Confess
 - 38 Too
 - 39 Universal
 - 40 Off
 - 43 Irish poet
 - 44 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
 - 45 Lower intestine
 - 47 Nipa palm
 - 50 Amer. Cancer Society (abbr.)
 - 51 Tidy
 - 52 Hereditary factor
 - 53 Federal excise tax (abbr.)
 - 54 Pretensions
 - 55 Pitcher
- DOWN**
- 1 Tablespoon (abbr.)
 - 2 Complete
 - 3 Wimp
 - 4 Head nun
 - 5 Extraneous
 - 6 Abrasive tool
 - 7 Columbia Valley Authority (abbr.)
 - 8 Become solid
 - 9 Association (abbr.)
 - 10 Physician (pref.)
 - 11 Ionian city
 - 19 Son of Haran
 - 21 Vanity (abbr.)
 - 22 Pound down
 - 23 "The Time Machine" people
 - 24 Companion
 - 26 "Abner"
 - 27 Haricot (2 words)
 - 28 Hip
 - 29 National (abbr.)
 - 31 Glove leather
 - 34 Prepare leather
 - 35 Heart problem
 - 36 According to (2 words)
 - 37 Senility
 - 39 Scand. people
 - 40 Women's Aux. Air Force (abbr.)
 - 41 Tribe
 - 42 Oven
 - 43 Time period
 - 46 Garland
 - 48 Donkey (Fr.)
 - 49 Via

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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



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A108

Corner Quote

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”
- Theodore Roosevelt

BIG SKY BEATS



“Think Like You Think” - Cody Jinks

Cody Jinks made history in the month of October, releasing two albums, *After the Fire* and *The Wanting*, that both soared to #1 on the charts as the best-selling country albums in consecutive weeks. Check out this track from the Texas-native's latest release and you will get a sense for why he is considered country music's biggest independent artist. Uncompromising lyrics and smooth baritone vocals make this song a brooding ballad worth a listen or two.

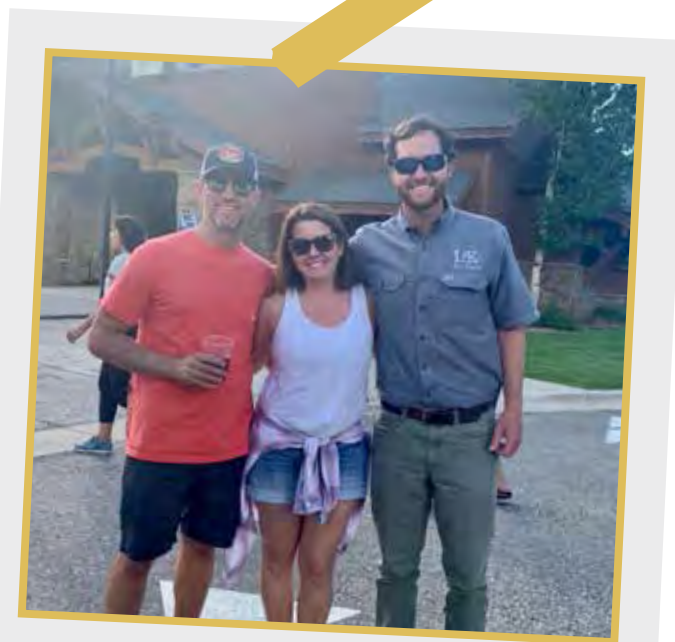
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SECTION 4: ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & DINING

New artists and exhibit at Museum of the Rockies pg. 46

Reel Review: Joker pg. 48

Big Sky Bites: Butternut squash soup pg. 54

Soikkeli brings new soul to BSSD's art program

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – When DJ Soikkeli was a junior in high school, pamphlets advertising life at colleges and universities around the nation began to jam his family's mailbox.

As a southern California native growing up in Covina, a Los Angeles County city backdropped by the chaparral mountains of the Angeles National Forest, Soikkeli was attune to a life in the mountains.

For Soikkeli, who is the Big Sky School District's newest art program hire, where he teaches 6th through 12th grade classes, one pamphlet in particular, that of Montana State University, caught his eye.

"The nature aspect was huge for me," Soikkeli said. "I saw the pamphlet from MSU, and was like, 'Wow, that looks kinda sweet.' I checked it out, applied, got in and came here and fell in love with Montana. I grew up dirt biking and mountain biking, being out in the mountains, so it was a perfect fit."

Arriving at the Bozeman campus with a desire to be a graphic designer, Soikkeli soon found that another passion was calling his name: art education.

"I started out as a graphic designer ... and then my freshman year I took a couple of sculpture and drawing classes, then took a bunch of other art classes and switched my major to art education," he said.

In the winter of 2018, he graduated from MSU, already eyeballing a fulltime position at BSSD after a positive experience student teaching under his predecessor Megan Buecking.

While substitute teaching during the spring following his graduation, he learned that Buecking would be leaving her post and that an open position might be his for the taking.

As time proved, Soikkeli was the man for the job. He shares responsibilities with veteran educator Chandler Dayton, another new hire who serves as the lead art teacher for the 11th and 12th grades.

Only 25 years old, Soikkeli is already bringing a passion and wealth of knowledge usually reserved for teachers that have spent thousands of hours in a classroom environment, injecting a bit of youthful empathy into his curriculum.



A student-designed advertisement for the BSSD's art club, which Soikkeli formed. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

Take a project he's spearheading with his 8th graders, in which he asked the students to choose a social issue of importance and turn it into a piece of a pop art.

"Students created pieces highlighting a wide range of social issues, everything from white tigers being inbred, to pill addiction, to gun violence, police brutality, surveillance, pollution and LGBTQ rights. Anything they felt passionate about," Soikkeli said, tapping into the natural connection youngsters have for outspoken advocacy. "It's a good project to get them thinking and engaging with art media."

Around his classroom, which he remodeled to be more



Soikkeli, splattered with bits of dry clay, didn't feel the need to wipe his face. He's an art teacher—the mess is part of being in his element. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

accommodating to his curriculum and the creative flow it generates, are ripe examples of students testing their hands at a wide range of mediums, from ceramics to paintings, pencil-based works to those made with pen.

Soikkeli acknowledges that not all of his students will go on to careers of artistry, or even forge lifelong amateur relationships with craft—which is especially true of a school where sports culture dominates extracurricular focus—but the former football player, assuming the grueling nose tackle role, only hopes to help expose his students and give them a platform to troubleshoot.

"This really comes down to life skills, problem solving, overcoming adversity," Soikkeli said. "You're presented with a problem, whether it be a blank canvas you have to make something beautiful on, or a hunk of clay that has to be made into something that's utilitarian."

Still, despite this pragmatic perspective, Soikkeli is an advocate for growing the arts at BSSD as a whole, a fact backed not only by his chosen profession but also through his efforts in forming things like a student art club.

He emphasizes he's there as a facilitator and guide, but left the challenges of advertising and garnering interest to his students. Therefore, they won't take the club for granted.

Each school night, Soikkeli works until around 7 p.m. in his classroom, long after the hallways have emptied. One can find him there developing his technique for rather altruistic reasons.

"The more that I learn about my art media, the more I can teach my kids. Which is the goal here: to be able to teach them different techniques they may not have had the opportunity to experience otherwise."

Two passions illuminated

Three artists and a new exhibit at Museum of The Rockies

BY ALICIA HARVEY
MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES

BOZEMAN – Thirty-eight years ago, Steven B. Jackson, a Bozeman native, was hired by Museum of the Rockies to catalog the recently acquired Schlechten photography collection, which features over 30,000 images by three photographers: Albert, Alfred and Chris Schlechten.

Arriving in Bozeman in 1900, the Schlechtens established a photography studio that would ultimately span two generations and 78 years, and Albert soon began shooting a series of landscapes using an 11-by-14-inch glass plate camera, creating a collection of over 175 individual landscapes. Upon crossing paths with their works, Jackson instantly cherished the dramatic landscapes and the way the light on the land allowed fine details to emerge.

He was also intrigued by the time capsule snapshots of both the frontier and small town sides of life found in and around Bozeman.

Zoom to present day, and Jackson, who holds a Bachelor of Science in film and photography from Montana State University and a Master of Fine Arts in photography and printmaking from the University of Florida, has been MOR's curator of art and photography for 35 years and has served as an adjunct professor with the School of Film and Photography at MSU since 1984.

Jackson's research areas include historical and contemporary art and photography, the preservation and management of photograph collections, and the digitizing and database design solutions for online access to museum collections. He teaches MSU courses on the history of photography, photography theory and criticism, and senior capstone projects. Therefore, and quite naturally, the works of the Schlechtens piqued his interest.

Just as Albert had a passion for capturing images on dry glass-plate negatives, Jackson longed to bring Schlechten's 11-by-14-inch photos into the light and share them with museum visitors and members; in 2016, the MOR Photo Archive began making digital scans and enlarged prints from the original glass plates, and Jackson's dream is today a reality with 40 stunning images on display through Dec. 31, 2019, at MOR.

Jackson's exhibit, "Light on the Land: The Photographs of Albert Schlechten," the latest in a string of successful exhibitions featuring fine art, photography and history he has curated, is a Museum of the Rockies' original exhibition presenting the dramatic and beautiful natural world of southwest Montana and Yellowstone National Park.

"Albert Schlechten's important photographic work deserves to be recognized as a significant part of American photographic history, capturing the light and land of his world through the lens of his camera," Jackson said.

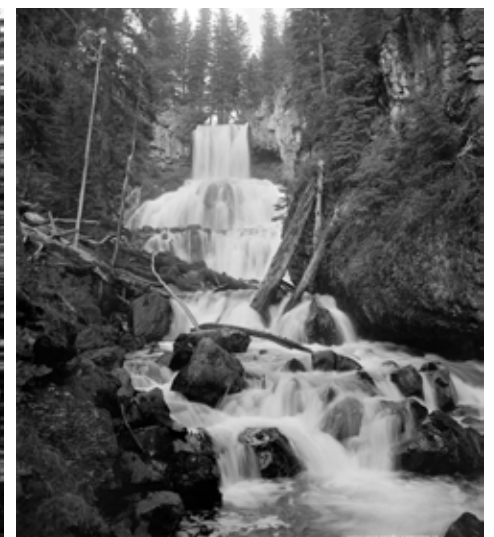
View additional photos and exhibition details at museumoftherockies.org/light. Alicia is the Director of Marketing at Museum of the Rockies and can be reached at alicia.harvey@montana.edu.



Steve Jackson at a MOR lecture. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHAWN RAECKE



'Ramshorn Lake' by Albert Schlechten. PHOTO COURTESY OF MOR PHOTO ARCHIVE



'Undine Falls' by Albert Schlechten. PHOTO COURTESY OF MOR PHOTO ARCHIVE



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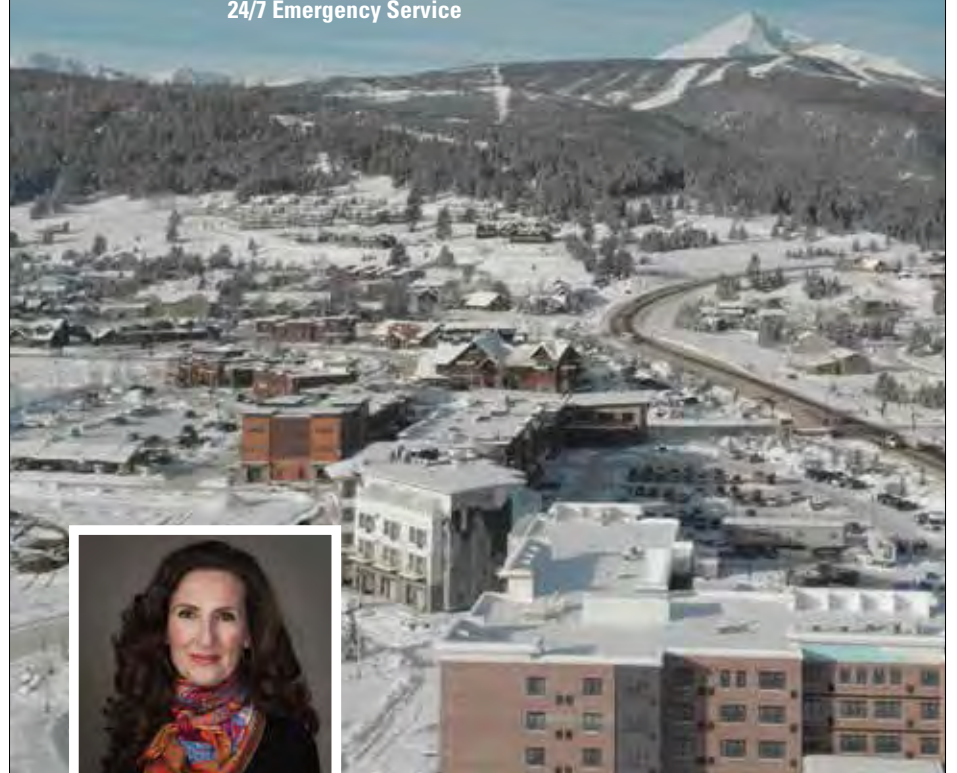
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REEL REVIEW

'Joker'



BY ANNA HUSTED
EBS FILM CRITIC



Mentally-ill Arthur Fleck (Joaquin Phoenix) has been abused and thrown out by society. He fights back and finds satisfaction by enacting brutal violence on the wealthy in Gotham. COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT

While most critics have blasted Todd Phillips' "Joker" as gratuitous, I stand with the audiences and their reviews, which scored the film with a resounding 89 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

And for good reason: "Joker" is perceptive (and timely) in its themes of classism and societal abuse, and progressive in its long-takes and directorial homages to Martin Scorsese and David Fincher.

"Joker" is not a superhero movie but is an inquiry into one man's experience in a society with a growing class divide and dwindling empathy for the condition of fellow humans. Said man is Arthur Fleck (Joaquin Phoenix), who suffers from an unspecified mental illness where he laughs uncontrollably when he is nervous, uncomfortable, or in a situation that calls for tears. Phillips' decision to keep the illness vague is important because it respects mental illness and maintains the Joker's nebulous past, which is important to the comic books and character.

By day, Fleck works as a clown performing for kids or twirling signs for warehouse sales. At night, he longs to be a stand-up comedian like his idol and late-night host Murray Franklin (Robert De Niro).

We slowly uncover clues that Arthur was neglected as a child because his mother suffers from a mental illness as well, and that due to his own illness and impoverished state he continues to be neglected by the system.

While humanity has not quite reached the depths of Gotham's grotesque iniquity, New York City came awfully close in the 1980s, and while he is not attacked by thugs, and rather by drunk, young financiers, Arthur stands up for himself by shooting them. It's an act that takes Gotham by storm, instigating city-wide riots demanding class equality.

The grittiness of the subway and back alleys reflects Scorsese's New York City in "Mean Streets" and "The King of Comedy." The stand-up comedian and late-night host plot line draw directly from "The King of Comedy" but with richer and darker characters than its predecessor.

Phillips also draws direct parallels to Fincher's "Fight Club" in the main character's love for violent self-expression and in its anti-consumerism motif. We pity and root for Arthur in the first half of the film because he has no one on his side. It is not until he becomes Joker that he is comfortable as himself and we are finally disturbed by his transformation from the victim to the monster of the city.

The transition from Arthur to Joker happens in two long takes following Arthur up a particular, and now iconic, set of steps in the city. The first time we see these steps they make for an oppressive climb for Arthur, who has just been beaten up by a group of kids. The second long take shows Arthur dancing down these steps now as a nonchalant Joker to Gary Glitter's "Rock and Roll Part 2." He gets his "Rocky" moment, but his success and happiness are directly tied to violent revenge.

"Joker" usurps the superhero genre. Its anti-hero is more complex than any hero we have seen on screen. Phillips and Phoenix's remarkable contribution created a film that will transcend the superhero genre and contribute to films for years to come.

"Joker" is now playing in theaters.

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



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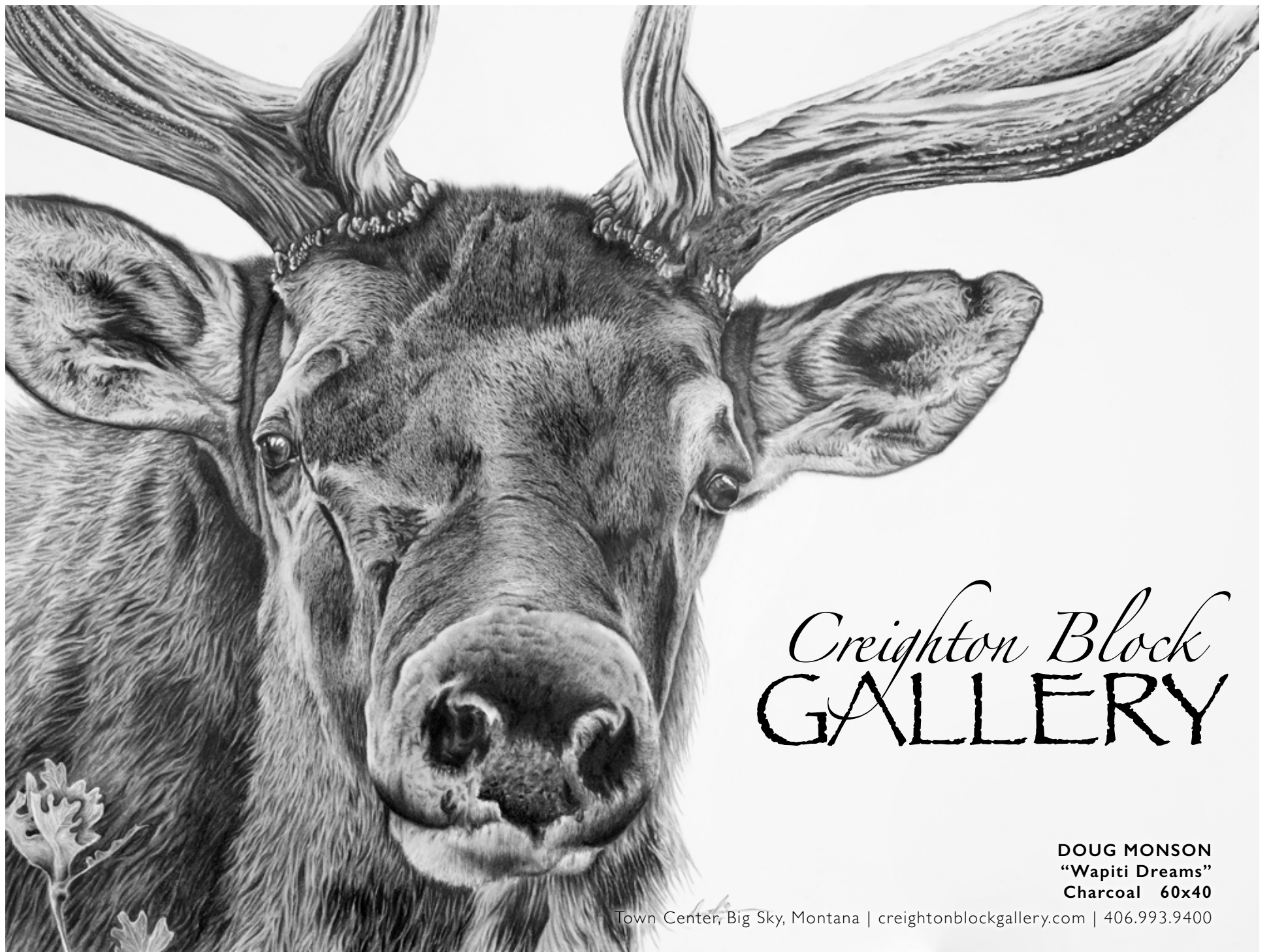
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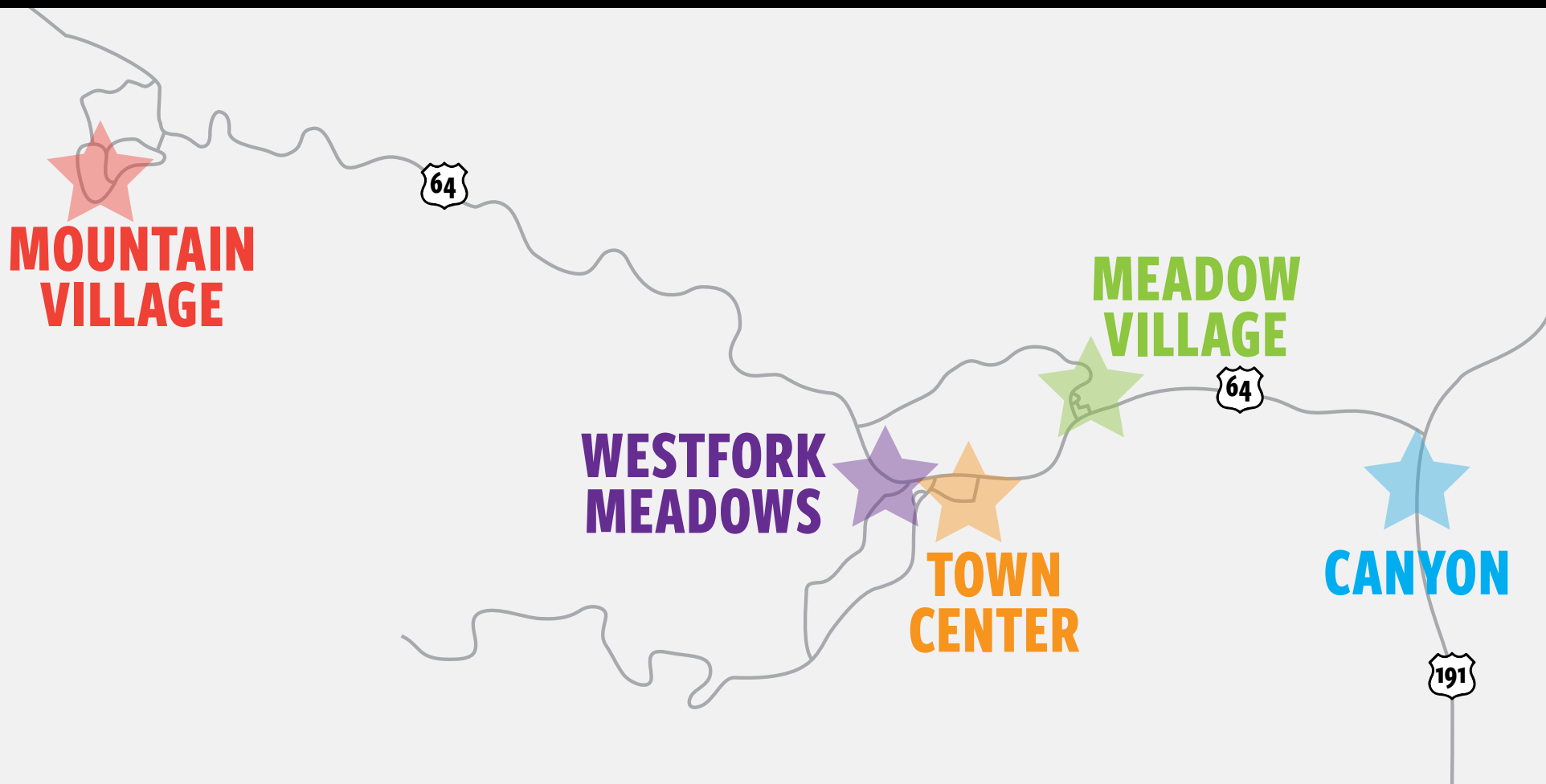
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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, NOV. 8 – THURSDAY, NOV. 21

If your event falls between Nov. 22 and Dec. 5, please submit it by Nov. 13 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

FRIDAY, NOV. 8

Scholastic Book Fair and Friends of the Library used book sale
Ophir Elementary Gym, 8:30 a.m.

Live Music: Ben & Joe
Wilson Hotel, 7 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

Science Inquiry Lecture
“Ice Patch Archaeology: Exploring the Greater Yellowstone’s High Elevation”
Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Film: “Fantastic Fungi”
Ellen Theater, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV. 14

American Institute of Archaeology Lecture
“Who Built the Parthenon?”
Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, NOV. 15

Live Performance: “HOWL! A Montana Love Story”
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOV. 16

Live Performance: “HOWL! A Montana Love Story”
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOV. 17

Film: “Newsies”
Ellen Theater, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

Live Music: Eve 6
Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV. 21

Extreme History Project Lecture
“Racial Terror Lynching in Montana”
Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

WORTH THE DRIVE



The Ghost of Paul Revere: Rowdy pickers from Portland, Maine. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GHOST OF PAUL REVERE

Live Music: The Ghost of Paul Revere

Top Hat Lounge, Missoula
Nov. 15, 8 p.m.

A self-proclaimed “holler folk” band, Portland, Maine’s The Ghost of Paul Revere took the bluegrass genre to task, using the traditional instruments of the genre to write music that is influenced by Radiohead, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, among others. Summoning the sounds of traditional field hollers, call-and-response melodies, sing-along hooks and layered harmonies, the quartet has created a rich sound all their own, sharing stages with The Avett Brothers, The Travelin’ McCourys, Brown Bird, The Revivalists and the Infamous Stringdusters. Don’t miss them play Missoula’s intimate Top Hat Lounge, the perfect Montana setting to welcome fellow pickers from the East.

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Community Theater preps for stage

'HOWL! A Montana Love Story' premieres at WMPAC

BIG SKY COMMUNITY THEATER

BIG SKY – When Virginia City playwright Allyson Adams first debuted the precursor to "HOWL! A Montana Love Story" in 1997, members of the audience, some troubled by the content, packed into a tiny Ennis furniture store for the performance.

The venue wasn't Adams' first choice, but the controversial, watershed ecological event that served as the basis for the play—the 1995 reintroduction of wolves in Yellowstone National Park—had some Madison County residents bristling.

The original play was titled "The People vs. Hairy Wolf," and was performed by 25 youth drama students from Ennis. To the audience's surprise, Adams says, they found the story quite balanced, neither leaning in favor of the wolves nor the ranchers who felt left out of the reintroduction decision-making process.

The world premiere of Adams' latest play, "Howl! A Montana Love Story," comes to the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Nov. 15 and 16, and revisits the wolf reintroduction telling the story with drama, humor, modern dance and live music.

Carly (played by Kali Armstrong) is a young woman haunted by prescient dreams of a white wolf, and her boyfriend Quinn (Josh Allen), is a rancher who sees the wolf reintroduction as nothing more than a danger and detriment to his livelihood. The wolf reintroduction divides the small ranching town near Yellowstone National Park where they live, creating a stand off among residents on both sides of the issue. The town also responds to newcomers arriving in the wake of the wolf reintroduction firestorm, including a wolf biologist (Ashley Hegseth) and an East Coast reporter (Joe O'Connor).

"Howl!" also features previously unreleased original music by renowned American pianist George Winston, a live band featuring original music and vocals by Armstrong, joined by local actor Stephanie Kissell, and modern dance choreography by Jennifer Waters.

Under the guidance of Adams and veteran Bozeman director Cara Wilder, the local 12-member cast will take the WMPAC stage at 7 p.m. on Nov. 15 and 5 p.m. on Nov. 16.



Don't miss 'HOWL! A Montana Love Story,' a play based on a local issue, written by a local playwright, performed by local actors at Big Sky's very own WMPAC. PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.COM

"I was thrilled when [WMPAC artistic director] John Zirkle asked me to direct a Big Sky Community Theater production this fall," Wilder said. "He gave me the option of choosing a play, and I thought it was the perfect opportunity to present Allyson's play. She and I are friends, and she brought the play to me about a decade ago so that's how long we've been discussing presenting it somewhere, somehow."

That vision will soon come to fruition at WMPAC—don't miss the opportunity to see this important and entertaining story told by a local playwright and director, and performed by local actors.

Visit warrenmillerpac.org for more info.

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BIG SKY BITES

Butternut squash soup with mushroom, garlic and sausage

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY



PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

When it comes to home cooking, there are just two elemental secrets to coaxing a dish into something that truly satisfies hungry gastronomes.

The first is to choose seasonally appropriate ingredients and flavors. You wouldn't want to be the chump serving watermelon with shredded mint and feta on Thanksgiving or Christmas Eve.

And two, butter (oil, if you must) and salt the hell out of it.

Those two components help to explain why everything from a Michelin Star dinner to junk food always seems to hit with more flavor and zeal than most people's home cooking; many of us are, for health reasons,

afraid to incorporate butter and salt to the degree a professional chef does regularly.

But unless you have a legitimate reason to abstain from the dynamic duo, don't take it from me, take it from legendary and intrepid chef Julia Childs: "With enough butter, anything is good."

Couple this with her long-held credo that cream, salt and butter are essential to good cooking, and you have all the motivation you need to give the maligned materials a chance.

Cue butternut squash soup, a synthesis of a popular winter squash ripened to perfection by early fall chills, plenty of salty, savory poultry undertones, cream and, you guessed it, a modest pile of butter. Some might knock simpler renditions of butternut squash soup as too bland, and fair enough—this is Montana, after all, so toss in some choice bits of sausage with a few extras for a striking dose of carnivore-nourishing flavor.

Recipe:

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45-50 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup cream
- 1/2 small yellow onion, chopped
- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- 1 sprig of rosemary
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 6 white mushrooms, sliced
- 1/3 pound ground Italian-style sausage
- 3 cups unsalted chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Ground pepper, to taste

Instructions:

1. In a large pot over medium heat, sauté the chopped onions and celery in 1 table spoon of olive oil, stirring occasionally until the onions become translucent
2. Add the butternut squash, butter, herb sprigs, salt and chicken stock, and cover and bring to a boil
3. Reduce the boil to a simmer, and allow to cook for 35-40 minutes
4. Remove the sprigs
5. With a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to a blender, and purée
6. Return vegetable purée to pot and stir until thoroughly mixed with the leftover stock
7. Stir in the cream
8. Set the temperature to low, and cover
9. In a separate pan over medium heat, sauté the garlic and mushrooms in the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil, occasionally stirring for 5 to 6 minutes or until browned and tender
10. Transfer to soup mixture
11. In the same pan over medium heat, cook the sausage for 6 to 8 minutes, or until browned, manually breaking it down into chunks and crumbles
12. Transfer to soup mixture and stir well, salting and peppering as needed
13. Allow to reduce to the desired thickness
14. Enjoy



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AMUSE-BOUCHE

Amuse-bouche refers to an appetizer, and by French translation means, “to entertain the mouth.” It offers a glimpse into what you should expect from a meal. Also it’s free, compliments of the chef.

Looks aren’t everything, or are they?



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

We say we are tolerant. We say we are accepting of those that are different from us, that looks aren’t important, it’s what’s on the inside that’s important. But do we really believe that?

Consider one tomato in particular that regularly finds itself advancing deep in the flavor bracket. It is grown in abundance, reasonably priced and not at all expensive—which would make it seem as if this tomato

checks all the boxes.

But there’s just one problem: this tomato is not visually appealing. In fact, it’s downright ugly: Florida’s UglyRipe tomato, one of the most flavorful tomatoes on the market and also one of the least expensive.

Because these tomatoes have deep grooves and crevices, they are deemed not attractive enough for commercial sale. Therefore, they are hard to get outside of Florida.

So on one coast, we routinely experience shortages with items like tomatoes. Too much rain in the Salinas Valley, they say. Too dry in Mexico. It’s always some type of weather challenge that compromises the produce, which inevitably creates a price increase for the consumer.

Yet on the opposite coast, we grow a tomato with superior flavor and lower price, yet simply due to its appearance, the Florida Tomato Committee, which is a collection of growers of “beautiful tomatoes,” has banded together to prevent the sale of the Ugly Ripe outside the state. Simultaneously, we talk of the perils of starvation, food waste and world hunger.

It seems our hypocritical vanity has no bounds. But it’s not just tomatoes. A variety of produce doesn’t pass the beauty test.

A study conducted earlier this year by the Journal of Marketing found a fascinating conclusion. The number one reason consumers avoid unattractive but perfectly edible fruits and vegetables was that purchasing unattractive produce negatively affected their perception of themselves and lowered their self-esteem.

You can’t be serious, I thought. Are we really this fragile?

Farmers leave as much as 30 percent of their produce in the field because it would be perceived as unsightly to the consumer. I have been on tour with farmers and walked endless fields of strawberry (yes, strawberry fields forever). And walking the rows, I had beautiful strawberries at my feet in the dirt that were vibrant red and delicious. Why on the ground? Because they would be spoiled by the time they reached the grocery store. Instead, they pick and package under-ripe fruit so that they turn red by the time you see it in your local market.

And groceries trash over 15 billion dollars in produce annually that is still quite edible. Restaurants do their fair share of discarding produce as well. We can utilize less than stellar fruits and vegetables, depending on the dish or preparation, but the challenge is that we are the end user, which means once we even receive these items, the spoilage clock has already been ticking for days.

Thankfully, there are companies popping up that, much like a meal kit, will sell weekly and monthly boxes of produce that is categorized as “too visually unappealing for consumer sales.”

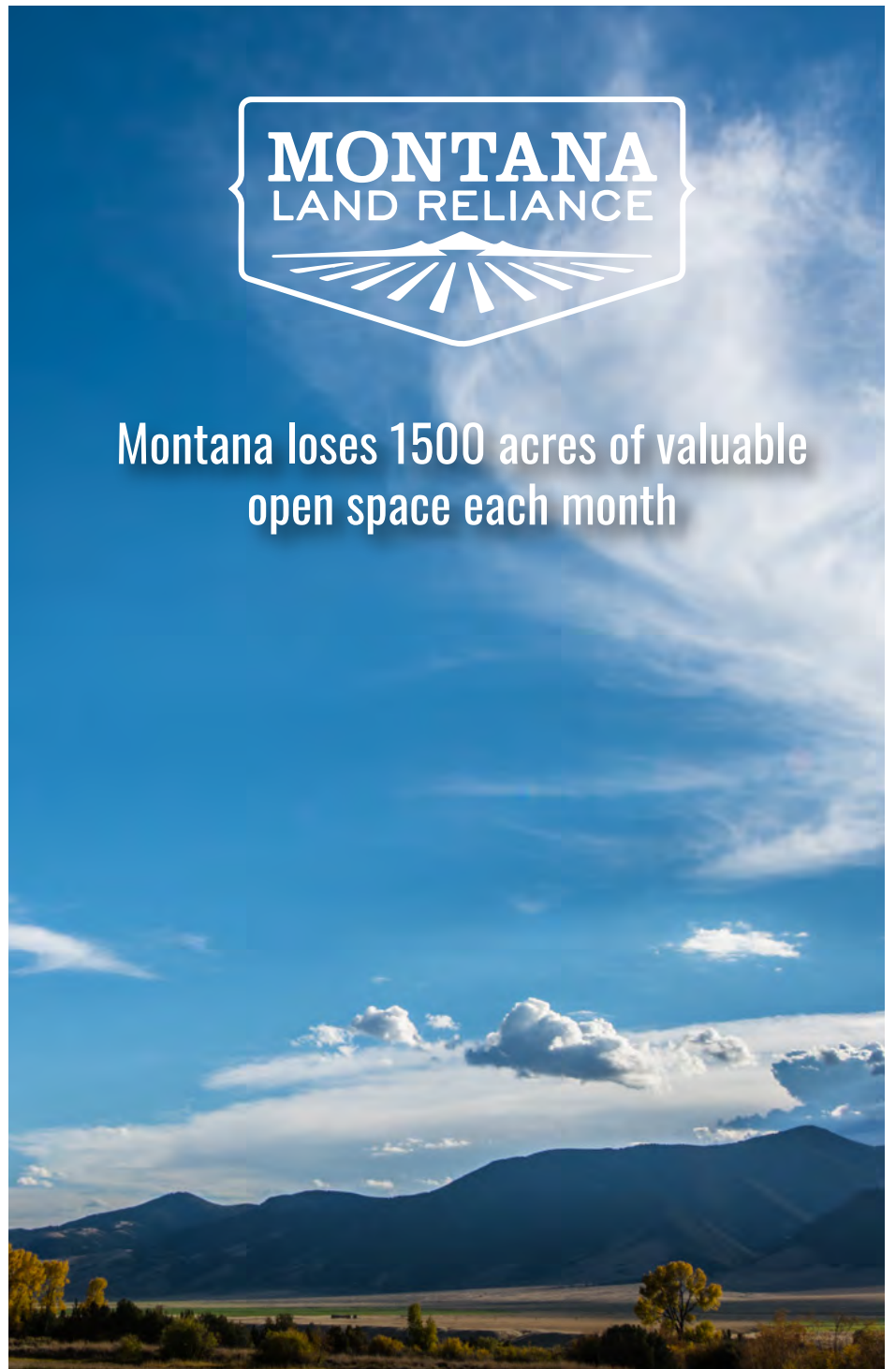
Let’s go America. What would Lady Liberty say about such unloved produce?

“Give me your wrinkled, your twisted, your huddled bunches yearning to be picked, the discarded produce of America’s salad bowl. Send these, your tempest under soil, I lift my cutting board and knife to you.”

Scott Mechura has spent a life in the hospitality industry. He is a former certified beer judge and currently the Executive Chef at Buck’s T-4 Lodge in Big Sky.



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