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Life and land from the heart of the Yellowstone Region

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Big Sky

Jan. 3 - 16, 2020
Volume 11 // Issue #1

Welcome to 2020!

Top Stories of the Decade

Chronic Wasting Disease numbers rise

Pinky G's opens for business

***LPHS squads fight for early-season
hoop wins***

*'Elkwood': Local author pens
wildlife fantasy book*

'Big Sky Quarry' project advances



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ON THE COVER:

A warm alpenglow illuminates the summit of Lone Mountain as the sun sets on a memorable decade. The new year brings many changes, expected and unforeseen, but the emblematic peak of Big Sky provides a consistent comfort for all living under its powerful trance. PHOTO BY KENE SPERRY

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Top Stories of the Decade

Before the new decade commences, bringing with it a plethora of fresh news stories yet to be told, recall the noteworthy happenings of the last 10 years by flipping through our top stories from the 2010s.

23

Chronic Wasting Disease numbers rise

The fatal Chronic Wasting Disease continues to plague elk, moose and deer in Montana, with the first case in the southwest region of the state recently being announced.

35

Pinky G's opens for business

Pinky G's, a Jackson Hole-based pizzeria, opened its new Big Sky location the day after Christmas. In addition to offering New York-style pizza and other tasty bites, the new Town Center restaurant brings promise of late-night food.

33

LPHS squads fight for early-season hoop wins

Both Big Horn basketball teams struggled to stifle the Manhattan Christian's high-scoring offense in their recent meeting. Even so, the LPHS girls and boys' teams displayed promise for better results down the road.

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'Elkwood': Local author pens wildlife fantasy book

Tracie Pabst, owner of Big Sky Shuttle, fulfilled a lifelong goal to publish a book that follows the story of personified Montana wildlife characters.

7

'Big Sky Quarry' project advances

Big Sky Rock LLC seeks to remedy Big Sky's lack of housing with a cluster-style development project they are calling the "Big Sky Quarry."



Three generations of family fun at the Elkhorn Ranch sleigh ride dinner. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

EDITORIAL POLICIES

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Big Sky Resort introduces fastest six-person chairlift in North America

Swift Current 6 lift to arrive 2020

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – On Dec. 20, Big Sky Resort announced the instillation of a new chairlift feature, the latest in a slew of infrastructural upgrades securing the resort's primacy in North American skiing.

Swift Current 6, a six-person, high-speed chairlift, will be ready for skiers for the 2020-21 ski season, and will feature the signature Big Sky Blue Bubble currently seen on the Ramcharger 8 and Powder Seeker 6 chairlifts, along with heated, ultra-wide seating.

Chairs on the Swift Current 6 lift will travel at a speed of roughly 1,200 feet per minute, crowning the chairlift as the fastest in North America. The initiative is a piece of the resort's larger Big Sky 2025 vision, of which a critical component is creating the most technologically advanced lift network on the continent.

Despite the impressive speed, the chair will be "whisper quiet," according to Boyne Resorts CEO and President Stephen Kircher.

Manufactured by Doppelmayr, the lift will be the fifth major Doppelmayr lift infrastructure project at Big Sky in the past four years.

Construction will commence as soon as possible following closing day of the 2019-2020 season on April 19.

Visit explorebigsky.com/swift-current-6-coming-winter-2020-2021 for more information.

Outlaw Partners announces Peak to Sky concert dates

EBS STAFF

It's been six months since the inaugural Peak to Sky concert event and one could argue it's taken that long time for the proverbial dust to settle in the Big Sky Events Arena.

It was there, in that assembly of rodeo-style bleachers surrounding the dirt arena, that four Rock and Roll Hall of Famers—Mike McCready, Chad Smith, Josh Klinghoffer and Duff McKagan—joined by Grammy-winning artists the likes of Taylor Hawkins and Brandi Carlile, truly rocked the Big Sky community, setting the town's summer events bar to previously unthinkable heights.

Now, after months of anticipation, buzz and nostalgia, Outlaw Partners, the Big Sky-based event's producer and publisher of this newspaper, is announcing dates for the second Peak to Sky concert event.

On Aug. 7-8, a new assembly of renowned performers will descend upon Big Sky for two new nights of rock 'n' roll excellence, curated again by world-class rock legend Mike McCready. Ticket prices and sale dates will be announced soon.

Some good advice as we embark on a new year in a new decade: save the date.

Visit peaktosky.com or follow on Instagram @peaktosky for more information and updates.

The 5 Browns to wow at WMPAC

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – As part of an ongoing mission to bring diverse and world-class talent to Big Sky, the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is hosting a unique performance on Jan. 11: The 5 Browns, a group of Juilliard-trained siblings with a prescient ability to meld the sounds of five grand pianos into new and winning takes on the classical music genre.

Dubbed "extraordinary" by Oprah Winfrey, the group has also performed on "60 Minutes" and each of The 5 Browns' three albums have held the No. 1 spot on Billboard's Classical Album Chart.

Accepted simultaneously to Juilliard, a first-ever for New York's world-renowned school of music, art and performance, the five members of the band will wow at the WMPAC with their complex arrangements with no other instrumental or vocal accompaniment.

For the WMPAC staff, pulling off such an event is also nuanced; it's no small feat to transport five grand pianos to the heart of the Montana Rockies, all with heated tractor-trailers and an entire crew of piano movers.

Visit warrenmillerpac.org for more information.

Big Sky Resort announces 60-minute interactive adventure game

EBS STAFF

Big Sky – Imagine it's 1863 in the Montana Territory. Gold has been struck in nearby Alder Gulch and members of the infamous gang known as The Innocents have overrun your town. They've raided your supplies, imprisoned the local law enforcement and promised to kill anyone that stands in their way.

You and other members of the town have managed to barricade yourselves inside Sheriff Plummer's cabin for safety. But after several cold winter nights, supplies are running thin and The Innocents are close to discovering your whereabouts. With no one coming to your aid, you must work together to uncover the secrets of their plan, bring justice to your town, and escape. Will you make it out in time before this ruthless gang closes in?

That is the imaginative scenario for the initial installment of Big Sky Resort's new real-life escape game. An escape room is a real life puzzle where teams work together to solve clues, logic puzzles, riddles and physical challenges. Participants are able to challenge their wits, problem-solving ability and creativity attempting to 'escape' before the time (one hour) runs out. Teams of four-to-six can now check in at the Basecamp to the Yellowstone in the Mountain Village Center, take a step back in time and let the intellectually satisfying fun begin.

Book online or contact Basecamp to reserve your spot: (406) 995-5769

NASTAR Town Series races into Big Sky

EBS STAFF

Big Sky – On Jan. 15, Big Sky Resort's Town Race Series, an amateur community ski racing competition utilizing NASTAR handicaps, will commence its second season.

The Town Race Series will run from 2:30-4:00 p.m. Wednesday afternoons through March 4 with President's Weekend omitted, giving teams a broad window to claim the fastest times of the 2020 season. At the end of each race day, an après gathering at Vista Hall will celebrate the participants and their results.

"The series is designed to gather people from the community and get them racing and having fun," said Paul Mannelin, Mountain Sports' adult program supervisor.

NASTAR (National Standard Race) was developed in 1968 and has since become the largest ski and snowboard recreational program in the United States, recording over 6 million skier and rider race days.

Town Race Series teams can include four to six members and must register with Big Sky Resort by Jan. 14. To register, email mountainsports@bigskyresort.com, visit the Mountain Village Mountain Sports Office or call (406)-995-5743. More information and the team registration form can be viewed at bigskyresort.com/townrace.

SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT

BSMC introducing behavioral health programs to Big Sky

Local philanthropy to serve as foundational driving force

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – Four years ago, a longtime community goal was realized when Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center opened its doors to the Big Sky community, not only reducing patients' costly commutes to Bozeman for emergency medical care but also ushering in a wave of primary care at the fingertips of those lucky enough to call the small mountain hamlet home.

Therefore 2015, by some estimates, was the year Big Sky budded into the strong community it is today, tacking medical services onto three other essential pillars of community: a thriving school system, varied public art offerings and a sense of livability.

"The best partner the community has in Montana is Bozeman Health," said Loren Bough, a member of the Big Sky Medical Center Community Council and vice president of the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation's Board of Directors. "They made a \$25 million investment into facilities and an ongoing commitment to operate them, and they've exceeded in every aspect their promises. It's been a big game changer."

Now, Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center is growing its role in response to calls to make behavioral health programs in Big Sky a priority, working to raise some \$1 million in philanthropically sourced funding to kick-start programs at the facility.

"Due to our nonprofit status, [Bozeman Health is] required to conduct formal, highly technical surveys once every three years for each of the hospitals that we lead," said Jason Smith, chief advancement officer for Bozeman Health and the Bozeman Health Foundation. "The results of a 2017 survey were released in 2018 and the No. 1 community need in both Bozeman and Big Sky was behavioral health services."



Jeremy Mitchell, DO provides primary care to a patient at Big Sky Medical Center. Dr. Mitchell is one of six providers caring for the Big Sky Community and surrounding areas. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN HEALTH

The road to the \$1 million goal is well underway, with over \$300,000 in gifts and pledges earmarked for Big Sky programming, and more than \$200,000 of that sum inspired by a \$350,000 challenge grant awarded to BSMC by the Charles and Peggy Stephenson Family Foundation.

Steve and Robin Stephenson, Big Sky locals, philanthropists son and daughter-in-law to Charles and Peggy, are spearheading that grassroots effort with others like Loren and Jill Bough, and the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation was the first to answer the call putting up a generous \$150,000 for the Stephenson Foundation to match.

"The key to the foundation is that it's run specifically for the benefit of the communities we live in," Steve Stephenson said. "Community partners like the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation are essential in making the three year matching grant of \$350,000 possible."

The \$350,000 grant will bring Integrated Behavioral Health to the facility, including adding a licensed clinical social worker to the BSMC team to provide direct on-site behavioral health care. Gifts toward the challenge will support telepsychiatry, increased crisis response capabilities and community-based education, suicide prevention and stigma reduction programs.

"We are currently at a time where people are starting to talk more about mental health and the overall effect that it has on us, not just mentally but physically too," said Lauren Brendel, system director of marketing and communications for Bozeman Health. "Oftentimes you'll find that when people face mental health or behavioral health complexities, that will often manifest itself in their physical health. And that's why IBH is so critical."



Big Sky Medical Center is a critical access hospital that has been serving Big Sky since 2013. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN HEALTH

"Instead of giving you a business card or sending you away, we'll now be able to do a warm handoff to a licensed clinical social worker who can have a first and subsequent behavioral health conversations with you," Smith echoed.

The two remaining prongs of a three-part strategy include telepsychiatry—an emerging industry standard in enhancing emergency and crisis response—and reducing stigma within the community while providing the tools to recognize and combat signs of behavioral health struggles in a number of arenas.

"Thanks to support from the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, we've enrolled every ninth grader at Lone Peak High School in a program called 'Youth Aware of Mental Health' and that's giving those students a firsthand understanding of what behavioral health is, along with giving them personal coping skills in the event that they should need them or when they're dealing with friends or peers who might be facing some of those challenges."

Thinking big picture, addressing behavioral health needs in a community not only improves the lives of patients receiving that crucial aid, but also reduces the prevalence of suicide—an epidemic in ski communities, particularly in young males, with Montana leading the nation in suicides per capita.

"We want to make kids and the community aware that there's help out there, for everything from drugs and alcohol to behavioral and suicidal issues," Stephenson said. "This is our community, and it's something that we're really excited to be addressing and getting people the help they need."

Visit bozemanhealth.org for more information on the organization's continued dedication to the Big Sky community. <https://www.bozemanhealth.org/news/>



Amy Frey, RN treats a patient in the Big Sky Medical Center Emergency Department. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN HEALTH

Finding ability on the slopes

Local organization brings hundreds of volunteers to adaptive ski school

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – For people with physical and cognitive challenges, prioritizing ability versus disability is a critical motivation that serves as the foundation for their first independent turn on the slopes of Lone Mountain.

Eagle Mount, a non-profit with Bozeman roots, was established in 1982 with the mission of empowering people with disabilities through recreation and adventure. The organization presents a diverse menu of programs and camps year-round that take advantage of the unique offerings of southwest Montana to achieve this goal—one of these options is skiing, one of Eagle Mount's largest initiatives.

The ski program materialized in Bozeman at Bridger Bowl, where Eagle Mount now offers an 8-week lesson series. Over 10 years ago, the organization launched a similar adaptive ski school at Big Sky Resort with a slightly different angle; to accommodate the larger tourist base, the Big Sky program is a destination program, meaning its students come from all corners of the nation and beyond to take part in the experience of learning how to ski.



Eagle Mount volunteers support a skier with tethers, a mechanism that helps control balance, direction and speed.

“It’s all about empowering yourself,” Eagle Mount’s Big Sky director Sarah Wolf said. “Being able to do something that you otherwise didn’t think was possible.” Wolf found Eagle Mount somewhat serendipitously upon moving to Big Sky roughly 11 years ago, and it is this sentiment that compels her to return each year with even more enthusiasm.

“Just to watch how far some of our skiers have come is magic,” she said, recalling stories of uplifting triumph. “[We get people] that have disabilities that won’t allow them to walk, and then the next thing you know they’re skiing standing up off tethers.”

Wolf believes it is, in part, this rewarding experience that calls so many volunteers back each season. This year, on Dec. 14 and 15, a record number of 237 volunteers signed up for Eagle Mount’s Big Sky two-day training session.



A sit skier cruises down a run with grace with an Eagle Mount volunteer trailing behind. PHOTOS COURTESY OF EAGLE MOUNT

Volunteers are first taken through instruction on how to teach. Each individual identifies with a particular learning style—visual, auditory or kinesthetic—and then receives instruction on how to familiarize with the styles they are less comfortable with. Because different disabilities require unique methods of communication and guidance, it is imperative for volunteers to be well versed in them all in order to best accommodate each student’s needs.

From there, volunteers are taken through the fundamentals of skiing, once again identifying their own tendencies and habits and correcting and adjusting for the foundational nuances that will later be taught to students. The second day of training is entirely focused on how to teach skiing, specifically using adaptive methods such as sit-skiing, mono skis and tethers.

Wolf said there are plenty of challenges to navigate, but providing volunteers with the tools to break down student’s walls of apprehension can open up an unparalleled experience of fun and empowerment that nods to the organization’s founding mission.

According to Wolf, many of their students come to Big Sky specifically for the Eagle Mount program, often bringing with them several family members each visit. Eagle Mount operates in Big Sky from opening to closing day. Last year, they provided approximately 700 lessons. This year, Wolf hopes to grow that number to 1,000. For the dedicated director, each one of those lessons is equivalent to one less individual getting left behind.

“It’s all about bringing people to their ability,” Wolf said. “It doesn’t matter if you’re abled or disabled, let’s focus on what you can do.”



Eagle Mount is an adaptive ski school for people with cognitive and physical disabilities. Volunteers are trained to instruct using special resources, such as crutches, mono skis and tethers.

'Big Sky Quarry' housing project moves forward

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The 175-acre parcel of land currently occupied by the Big Sky gravel pit along Highway 191 took another step toward welcoming new occupants on Dec. 12 when the Gallatin County Planning and Zoning Commission approved a “Planned Unit Development,” or PUD, to local developer Big Sky Rock LLC.

The project, called “Big Sky Quarry,” calls for 265 entitlements, equivalent to front doors, throughout the PUD, and Big Sky Rock LLC plans to break the entitlements down between 135 single-family homes, along with an additional 130 two-bedroom condos. The condos will likely be housed upstairs from the nearly 180,000 square footage of commercial space that was also included in the PUD, according to Scott Johnson, a partner of Big Sky Rock.

Johnson says the goal is to bring more housing options to Big Sky. “We’re trying to solve a problem,” he said. “The last thing [Big Sky] needs is more mansions, so to speak, when you need to address the workforce housing ... That’s what we’re trying to do with this project and that’s why we went with the original zone changes.”

The single-family homes will vary between 700 and 1,500 square feet and will form small communities, according to Johnson, each with about a dozen homes accompanied by trails and playgrounds.

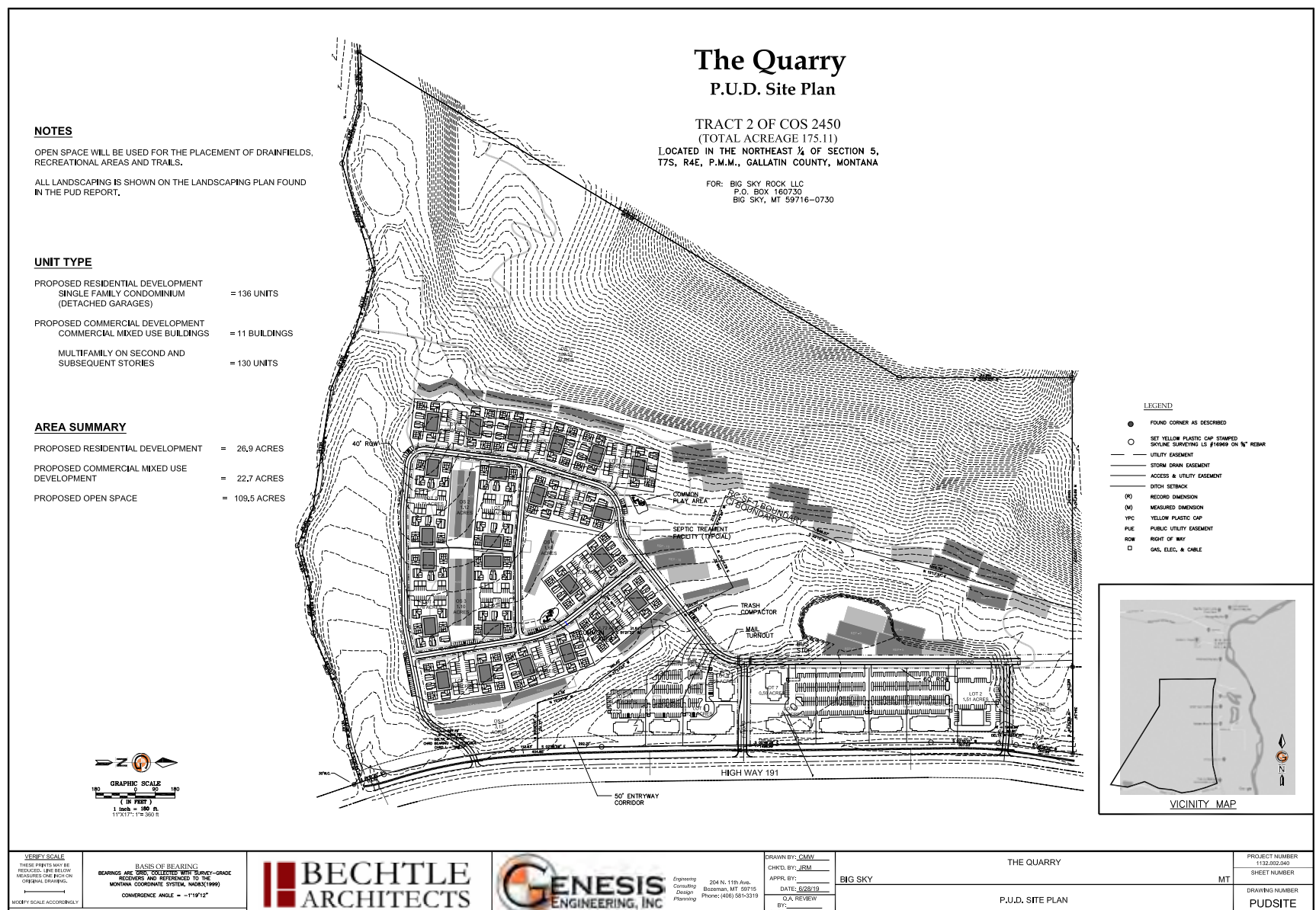
“We’ve been fortunate enough to design it to where we can take those 135 homes with a roughly 135-acre envelope, but still provide 70 percent open space,” Johnson said. “We don’t plan on touching a lot of the land, so that’s where that cluster [or] pocket neighborhood concept comes from.”

Prior to the commission’s approval of Big Sky Rock’s PUD, the land had been slated to only allow one home for every five acres, but now it permits one home for each acre of the parcel after Big Sky Rock applied for and was granted a Zone Map Amendment in 2018.

One of the largest concerns with the original proposal, voiced by the commission as well as the Big Sky community, was a potential adverse effect that the development’s septic system might have on the nearby Gallatin River. Although their initially proposed septic system was approved by the state, the county requested the developers find a better alternative. After further research, Big Sky Rock found a satisfactory system; SepticNET, manufactured by a Butte-based company.

After review, Johnson and his team believe the new septic system they plan to use will be a significant upgrade to the original plan, treating the water at a higher rate. According to Johnson, SepticNET has been producing septic systems for a little over a decade and has 65-plus systems currently installed throughout the state. “We’re trying to keep it affordable, and [while] this new system is roughly 50 percent more expensive than the other proposed system, it’s 70 percent more efficient, which we felt was even more important.”

The next steps in the process for Big Sky Rock LLC will be to apply for subdivisions. “As we get our financing and get our designs completely finalized, we will be submitting our application for first phase, pre-plat, of subdivision of phase one here hopefully next year in 2020 and getting the infrastructure that we need to create a neighborhood,” Johnson said. The project is anticipated to break ground summer of 2020.



The PUD site rendering Big Sky Rock LLC presented to the Gallatin County Planning and Zoning Commission. Big Sky Rock LLC plans to cluster houses and commercial spaces together to allow for much of the land to remain untouched. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY ROCK LLC

MT timberland purchaser promises continued public access

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KALISPELL – A Georgia-based investment group has confirmed it is buying 1,000 square miles of timberland in Montana from Weyerhaeuser.

An attorney for Southern Pine Plantation told the “Flathead Beacon” the timberland investment company is buying the land and has no plans to change Weyerhaeuser’s long-standing practices related to public access, forest management, grazing, existing outfitting agreements and conservation easements.

Seattle-based Weyerhaeuser announced the \$145 million cash sale on Dec. 17 without naming the buyer.

Weyerhaeuser owns 1,375 square miles (3,561 square kilometers) of timberland in Montana. The sale is expected to close by June 2020.

Fish and Wildlife Commission to meet Jan. 6 Will hold elk shoulder season work session

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission will meet Monday, Jan. 6 to discuss a few items of official business and to hold a work session.

The commission will consider a bull trout harvest closure on Lake Koocanusa and a petition to allow hovercraft on the Bitterroot and Clark Fork rivers, along with the White Rock Coulee right of way easement and Helena urban deer plan quota ranges.

Beyond this official business, the commission will also hold a work session to discuss elk shoulder seasons.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks headquarters in Helena and live streamed to all regional offices around the state. The work session is open to the public, but no comment will be taken.

Visit fwp.mt.gov for the full agenda or to live stream the meeting online.

Task force recommends pay protection measures for construction industry

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY

HELENA – The Task Force on Integrity in Wage Reporting and Employee Classification recently announced recommendations on how to help reduce and eliminate unlawful misclassification and payroll fraud in the construction industry.

The task force recommended additional educational and outreach initiatives, as well as changes to current rules and laws.

Among the recommendations are focusing on education for construction hiring agents, establishing a web-based dashboard that allows for quick compliance verification searches, creating a tip line where workers of employers can report suspected abuse of Independent Contractor Exemption Certificates, rule changes that allow inspectors to quickly determine compliance, changes to the ICEC renewal process that ensure the certificate holder provides additional documentation of their ongoing eligibility to hold a certificate, and increasing the penalties imposed for knowingly hiring an unregistered independent contractor.

Gov., First Lady Bullock announce \$28,000 grant



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

HELENA – Gov. Steve Bullock and First Lady Lisa Bullock have announced nearly \$28,000 in private grant funding to implement the Breakfast After the Bell program in an additional eight Montana schools.

These schools received funding to implement an innovative service model that shifts the time breakfast is served so students are allowed to eat a meal during or between morning lessons rather than in the cafeteria before classes begin. After incorporating breakfast into the morning schedule, schools see student participation in the breakfast program increase by double or more.

The eight schools that received breakfast grants in this fall 2019 cycle include schools in Box Elder, Butte, Kalispell, Florence, Forsyth, Fairfield, Joliet and Billings.

CC PHOTO

Montana extends deadline for

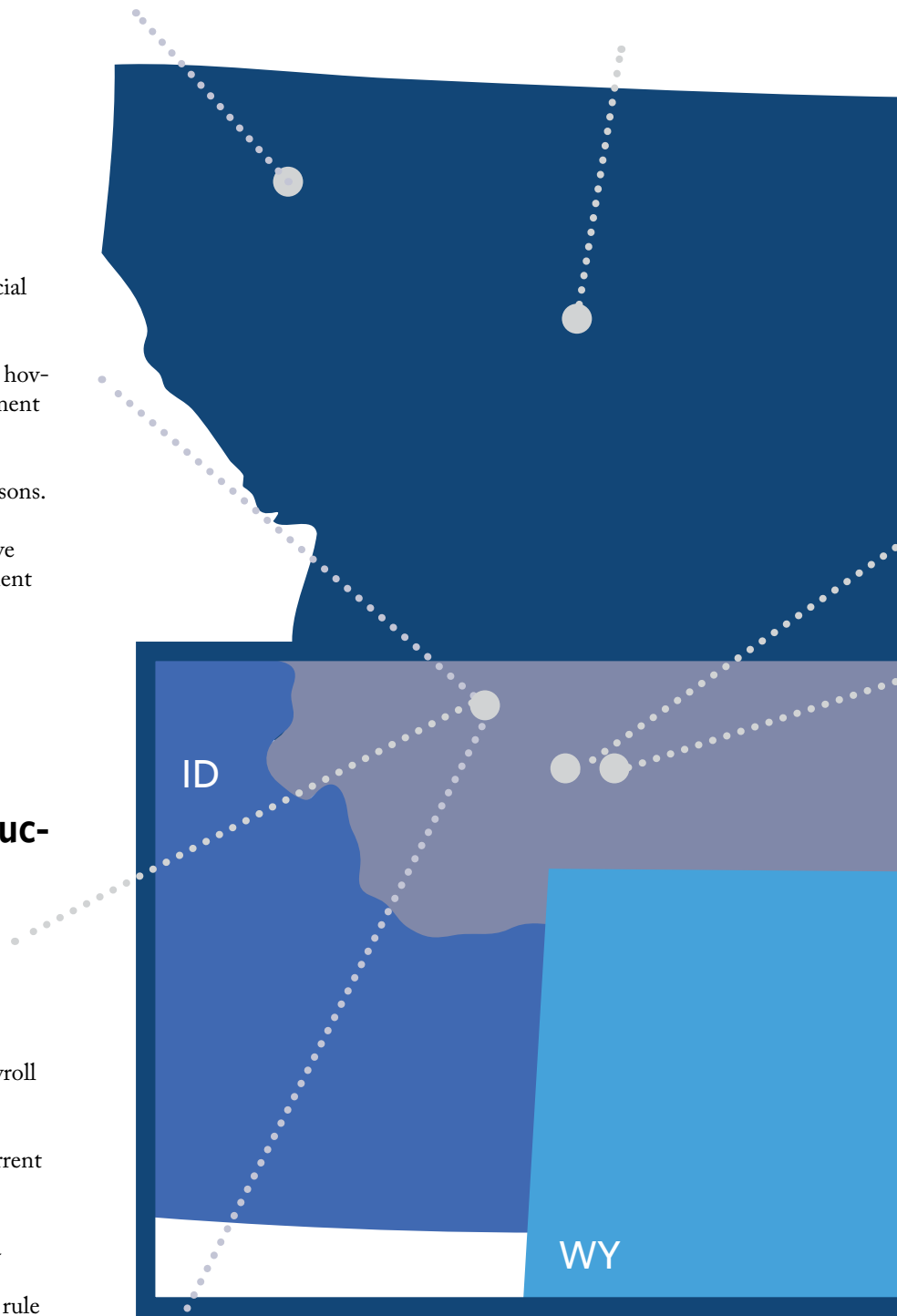
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREAT FALLS – Montana’s Missing In Action database project allows colleges to apply for a grant to start and a

Officials say none of the state’s seven tribes supported the task force voted to extend the deadline

The grant requires the database be administered by the state. Applicants must also include a plan for meeting

The money to create the database was approved by the state. Federal and tribal agencies to work better



Wyoming’s governor drafts wildlife migration corridor order

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CASPER, Wyo. – Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon’s public comment on a proposed executive order aiming to establish migration corridors that are used by mule deer

Wyoming is home to the world’s longest intact pronghorn antelope migration corridors, and the governor’s draft order is a key step toward maintaining wildlife populations, according to the governor’s draft order.

The proposal would designate three existing migration corridors and establish a process for designating others and call on state agencies to protect the annual movement of the animals and to minimize disturbances to the corridors on public

Gordon plans to release a final order early next year.

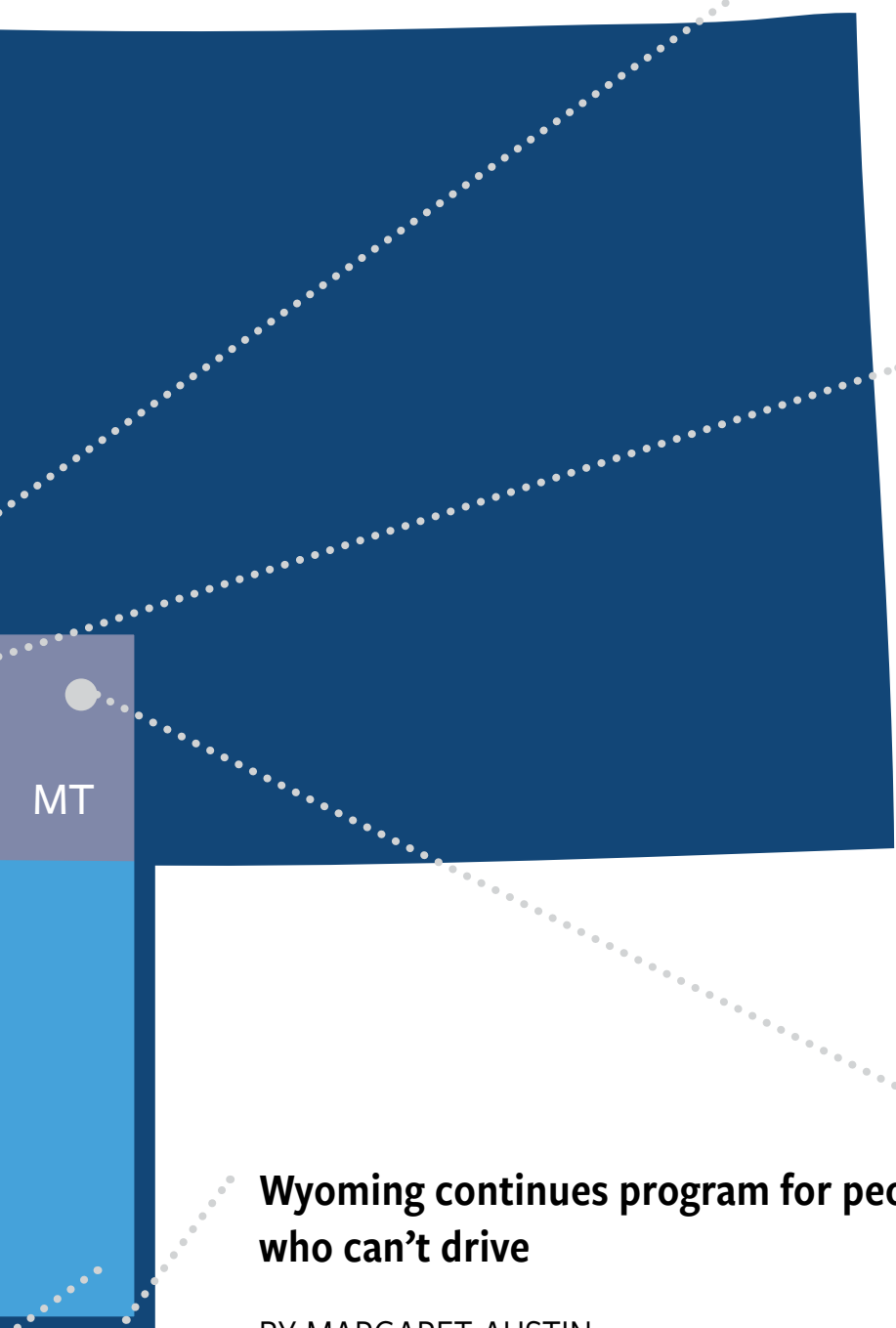
for missing persons database

Indigenous Persons Task Force has extended the deadline for tribal to administer a database of missing American Indians.

al colleges applied for the \$25,000 grant by the Dec. 13 deadline so e to Jan. 25 with the goal of awarding the grant by mid-February.

istered by a data specialist who meets certain qualifications. Appli- g data verification and security standards.

ropriated by the legislature as part of an effort to get state, local, together in reporting and searching for missing American Indians.



New law seeks to reduce Montana’s license plate designs

ASSOCIATED PRESS



CC PHOTO

BOZEMAN – Montana motorists might soon have fewer sponsored license plates to choose from to put on their vehicles.

The state Legislature in 2019 approved new rules to discontinue less popular specialized plates. Right now, Montana offers 266 specialized plates. Proceeds from the sale of specialized plates go to charity.

Starting in 2020, Montana will discontinue specialized plates chosen by fewer than 400 drivers, the “Bozeman Daily Chronicle” reports.

One reason for reducing plate designs is to make plates easier for law enforcement officers to read, said Joann Loehr, vehicle services bureau chief at the Montana Motor Vehicle Division.

Another change to the law requires 75 percent of revenue from the plates to be spent in Montana.

U.S. astronaut sets record for longest spaceflight by a woman

ASSOCIATED PRESS



NASA PHOTO

LIVINGSTON – A U.S. astronaut set a record Dec. 28 for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, breaking the old mark of 288 days with about two months left in her mission.

Christina Koch, a 40-year-old electrical engineer from Livingston, arrived at the International Space Station on March 14. She broke the record set by former space station commander Peggy Whitson in 2016-2017.

Koch is expected to spend a total of 328 days, or nearly 11 months, on board the space station before returning to Earth. Missions are typically six months, but NASA announced in April that it was extending her mission until February.

Wyoming continues program for people who can’t drive

BY MARGARET AUSTIN
WYOMING TRIBUNE EAGLE

CHEYENNE, Wyo. – For people with disabilities that prevent them from driving, even getting to the grocery store can be a struggle. The lack of mobility can be isolating and expensive, but Wyoming Independent Living’s Transportation Check Program is working to bridge that transportation gap.

Those who are eligible for the program can receive free bus passes and \$50 in Uber credit each month. If a person receives rides from family and friends, the Transportation Check Program will reimburse those drivers 36 cents per mile.

Last year in Laramie County, about 135 people utilized the program, which is funded through Wyoming Department of Transportation grants. According to officials, the program has the resources to help about 170 people, so they are looking to get more people to use the operation.

Court revives lawsuit over Yellowstone bison management

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILLINGS – An appeals court revived a lawsuit filed by an environmental law firm that challenged the U.S. government’s management of bison from Yellowstone National Park.

The decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reverses a lower court ruling from February that dismissed the lawsuit from the Cottonwood Environmental Law Center.

A three-judge appellate panel said Dec. 23 that by allowing hunting and hazing of bison, the federal government had taken actions that were a valid target of the lawsuit. The panel returned the case to U.S. District Judge Sam Haddon for further proceedings.

Under a 2000 agreement between Montana and U.S. officials, bison leaving Yellowstone during their winter migration are hunted, captured for slaughter or hazed back into the park to prevent the spread of the disease brucellosis.



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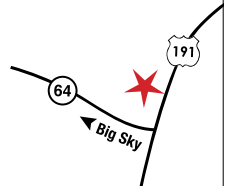
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What will you remember most from 2019 and what are you looking forward to in 2020?



Sam Warwood
Bozeman, MT

“It seems like 2019 we had a pretty good snow year. [I] remember some really good days up on the mountain and spending time in Big Sky I guess. Looking forward to 2020, hope we get some more snow and another good year in Big Sky.”



Brianna Winter
Big Sky, MT

“I went on a ton of hikes. A ton of hikes in like Big Sky and in Bozeman and that was super fun because like I definitely challenged myself, but I also got to like see so many new places, so I would say that for sure because that was a big goal... Hopefully skiing way more in January and February. [I] have not skied that much this past month, so racking up the ski days for sure and then more snow for sure because we need that.”



Greg Luce
Mobile, AL

“I enjoyed the nice business climate and then to get to come out here and spend a lot more time than usual... To an interesting business climate, to getting rid of Trump, and having the opportunity to spend time with my daughter out here and other people that we’ve met in all the years we’ve come.”



Kim Brown-Campbell
Missoula, MT

“What I remember most from 2019 is that I moved everything in my house, re-did the floors, and I moved my office and it all happened, pretty much, from July to October so what I’m looking forward to in 2020 is not moving again.”



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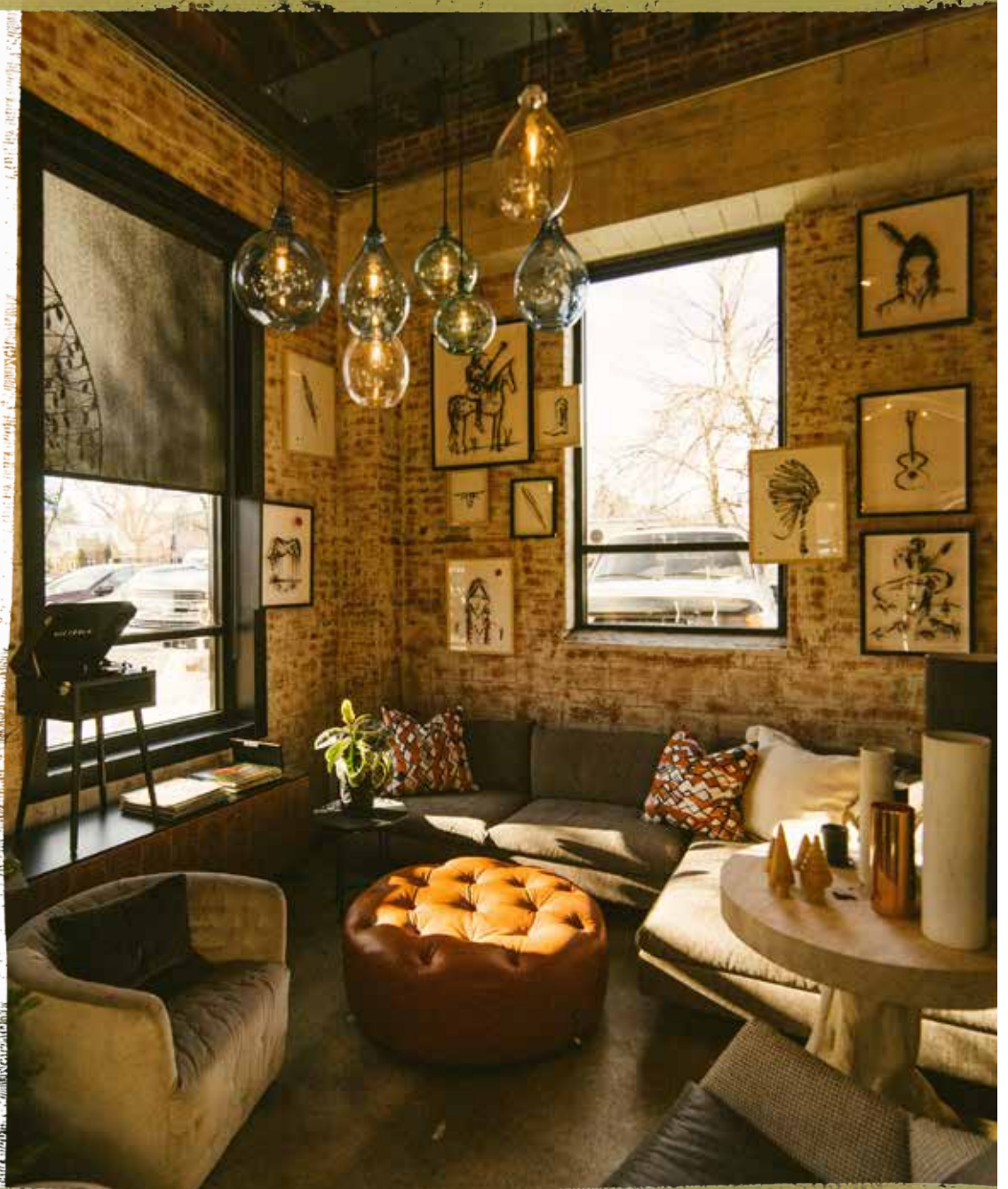
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OUTLAW™

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

TEDxBigSky 2020: Connection

What began in 1984 as a conference to share new ideas surrounding technology, entertainment and design has become the most renowned speaker series in the world. TED Talks now encompass nearly any conceivable topic, and occur around the globe in more than 100 different languages.

On Jan. 25, 2020 and for the fourth year in a row, the independently organized version of TED called TEDx is bringing a fascinating group of speakers to tell their unique and groundbreaking stories related to the 2020 event's theme: "Connection."

Outlaw Partners—the media, marketing and events company that also publishes this newspaper—launched the idea in 2017 to bring a TEDx event

to Big Sky when its Media and Events Director Ersin Ozer reflected on journalism and the stories coming out of the region.

"I was inspired by our magazine, Mountain Outlaw, to put on this event on a live platform," said Ozer, who chose a group of Big Sky community members to help bring the concept to fruition. "Outlaw has mastered the art of storytelling ... so producing TEDxBigSky brings it all full circle."

In the last edition of EBS we ran bios of six of our upcoming speakers.

Please allow us to introduce you the rest of our 2020 TEDxBigSky speakers:



Eric Stevens

Eric Stevens was born and raised in San Pedro, California. He played college football at the University of California-Berkeley and went on to play in the NFL with the St. Louis Rams in 2013. After realizing that football wasn't the career path for him, Eric became a Los Angeles City firefighter. On August 27, 2019, just one month after marrying his college sweetheart Amanda, Eric was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). After learning that there are treatments to help stop

the progression of the disease but patients are unable to access them, Eric is fighting for hope for the ALS community. #axeALS



Michael Peterson (he is giving talk alongside Steven Hawley)

Photographer/Filmmaker Michael is the founder and creative force behind Peterson Pro Media and partner in Peterson Hawley Productions. He is a lifestyle photographer and filmmaker who captures environmental portraits and expansive landscapes. His love of the outdoors and passion for the preservation of the land, animals and those who live in it lends the imagery he captures to be timeless and relevant. In 2005 Michael returned home to the Pacific Northwest after

nearly 20 years working in Hollywood, his film credits include Independence Day, Contact, Armageddon and Star Trek First Contact. Recently Peterson directed the award winning documentary film Dammed to Extinction.

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Kate Atwood

Kate Atwood is an entrepreneur, executive, and community leader whose career spans creating and growing impact initiatives in all business sectors. At 23, Kate founded Kate's Club, an organization that provides support to children and teens facing life after the death of a parent or sibling. Having lost her mother at 12, Kate recognized first-hand the importance of community and support after such a life-changing event. Kate's Club serves thousands of children and families

each year through direct services, strategic outreach partnerships, and national advocacy efforts. Today, Kate is the CEO of THEA, the first city-based video-on-demand streaming platform, and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

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Steven Hawley (he is giving talk alongside Michael Peterson)

Steven Hawley is a writer from Hood River, Oregon. He is the writer and co-producer of the documentary film Dammed to Extinction, and author of the book Recovering a Lost River. His work has appeared in Outside, High Country News, and The Drake Magazine. In spring of 2020, Patagonia Books will publish Steve's next book, on the world-wide movement to prevent and remove dams.

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Bode Miller

Bode Miller is an American Alpine skier who won six Olympic medals—more than any other American male skier. Born in the heart of the White Mountains in New Hampshire, Miller grew up at the Cannon Mountain Ski Area. He became known for his fearless, unorthodox and fast skills and stated that his basic goal as a skier was not to win medals but rather to ski "as fast as the natural universe will allow." In 2017, Miller officially retired from competitive skiing to spend more time with his family, to act as an on-air ski-racing analyst for NBC, and to focus on his newfound passion of horse training.

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SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS



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Mountain lion monitoring program pg. 31

MSU undergraduate documents microplastic in precipitation

BY MARSHALL SWEARINGEN
MSU NEWS SERVICE

BOZEMAN – A mountain meadow glittering with fresh snow may seem a picture of purity, but for Bekah Anderson, a Montana State University senior majoring in chemical engineering, the picture is more complicated.

Working with dozens of snow samples taken over the past year from Big Sky Resort, Teton Pass and other Rocky Mountain sites, Anderson uses microscopes and other specialized laboratory tools in MSU's Center for Biofilm Engineering to peer into the world of tiny particles that mix with airborne water that then falls from the sky as precipitation.

"There's all sorts of stuff in there," including plant pollen and dust, Anderson said, but of greatest interest to her are fibers of polyester and other pieces of microplastic.

"All the pieces I've found so far have been small fibers that seem to be from fabrics like fleece," Anderson said, noting that many kinds of outdoor clothing are made of finely spun plastic fibers. "We think that's because they're fine enough to get whisked up into the atmosphere."

Previously, scientists have documented the presence of microplastic in streams and other water bodies, but the MSU study is among the first to examine the man-made particles directly in precipitation, according to the project's leader, Christine Foreman, associate professor in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering in MSU's Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering.

"It's been exciting, but also saddening, to find so much microplastic in snow," Foreman said. The team's preliminary results are significant because they suggest the synthetic fibers are prevalent throughout the water cycle and not just in certain waterways.

Microplastics are "an emerging concern," Foreman said. Not much is known about how they affect ecosystems, but it's reasonable to suspect the petrochemical particles are, for example, being consumed by some aquatic organisms, she said. Scientists have warned that microplastics



CC PHOTO



Bekah Anderson, a senior majoring in chemical engineering, examines a filter she uses to strain tiny plastic particles from samples of snow and rain. PHOTO BY ADRIAN SANCHEZ-GONZALEZ

have a number of impacts on insects and fish, including clogging up digestion and disrupting hormones that regulate body functions.

In the lab, Anderson passes each sample of melted snow, as well as rain, through a fine filter that collects any particles. Then she applies a dye that binds to plastic. A certain kind of light applied under the microscope causes the dye to fluoresce, making any microplastic stand out. Using another technique called Raman spectroscopy, which measures how light interacts with a material's molecular composition, Anderson can determine what kind of plastic each particle is made of.

"I'm passionate about it," said Anderson, who is from Golden, Colorado. "It's important for us to understand the consequences of our plastic use."

When she presented early results from the project last March at the Western Regional Honors Conference, which brought top students from across the western U.S. to MSU to present their research, Anderson won the award for the best poster presentation.

"She's incredibly motivated," Foreman said of Anderson. "You can tell she's really excited about this project, and she brings that excitement to the rest of our research group," which focuses on studying microbes in glacial environments.

Anderson, whose work in Foreman's lab is funded by MSU's Undergraduate Scholars Program, also presented at the 2019 National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Kennesaw, Georgia. When MSU hosts the event on March 26-28, more than 4,000 students from around the world are expected to convene on the Bozeman campus to share their research.

Anderson said she "definitely" recommends attending NCUR. "I loved being around other students who were so passionate about their projects."

"Research has a strong community," she said. "It brings people together."

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

To encounter AD Maddox's school of trout up close, you quickly realize why she lives up to her reputation as an artistic tour de force. But, more importantly, to meet the painter herself firsthand, it also becomes abundantly clear why she is, by personality, nothing less than an unstoppable force of nature.

On the summer day we rendezvous at her new gallery in Livingston, Maddox's latest scenes—many, the most ambitious of her career—hang on interfacing walls.

Before us hovers a monumental-sized Pop Art depiction of a rainbow trout soon to find residence in a young multi-millionaire's Great Room; nearby, a series of smaller works explore the abstracted patterns of different fish species; and not far away are piscatorial portraits mesmerizing in their translations of water, shadow and light.

Equally conspicuous, however, are numerous blank spots indicating where other paintings used to be. That's because just the day before, within hours of opening her gallery near the corner of B and Callender streets, Maddox watched 10 of her original canvasses quickly sell. Catch and release, she was reminded again, applies to fish, not art.

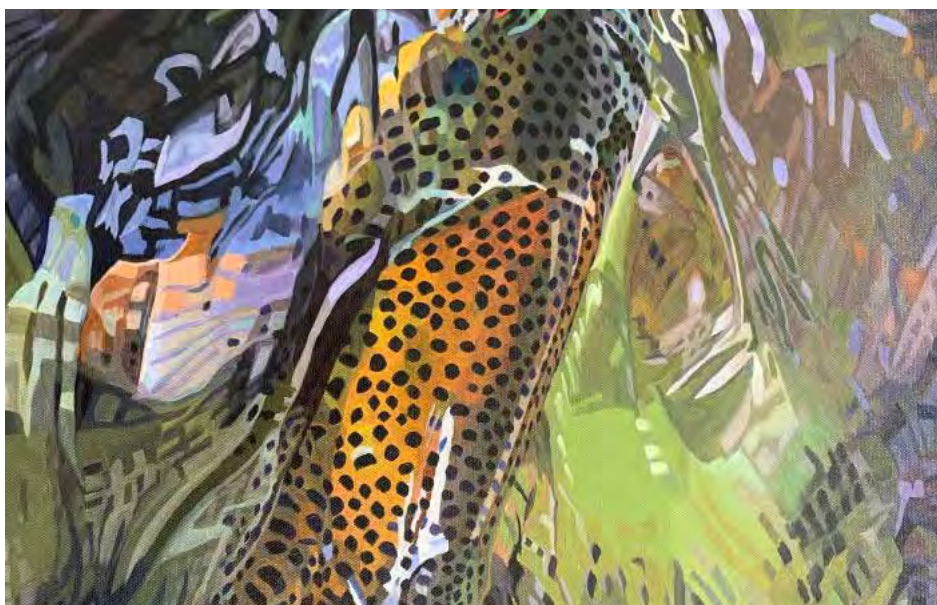
"If not completely on her own, then within a very narrow kind of movement in the sport, AD Maddox has brought to life an entirely new style of fishing art, a kind photorealism on steroids," says Marshall Cutchin, a former longtime fishing guide in Key West, Florida, who lives today in Fort Collins, Colorado, and makes regular pilgrimages to Montana.

Cutchin publishes the online fly-fishing lifestyle magazine "MidCurrent" and every time he shares a new Maddox original, reaction is off the charts. "AD's approach has since influenced many other artists, photographers and filmmakers. And remarkably her style continues to expand—always a step or two ahead of what could be expected."

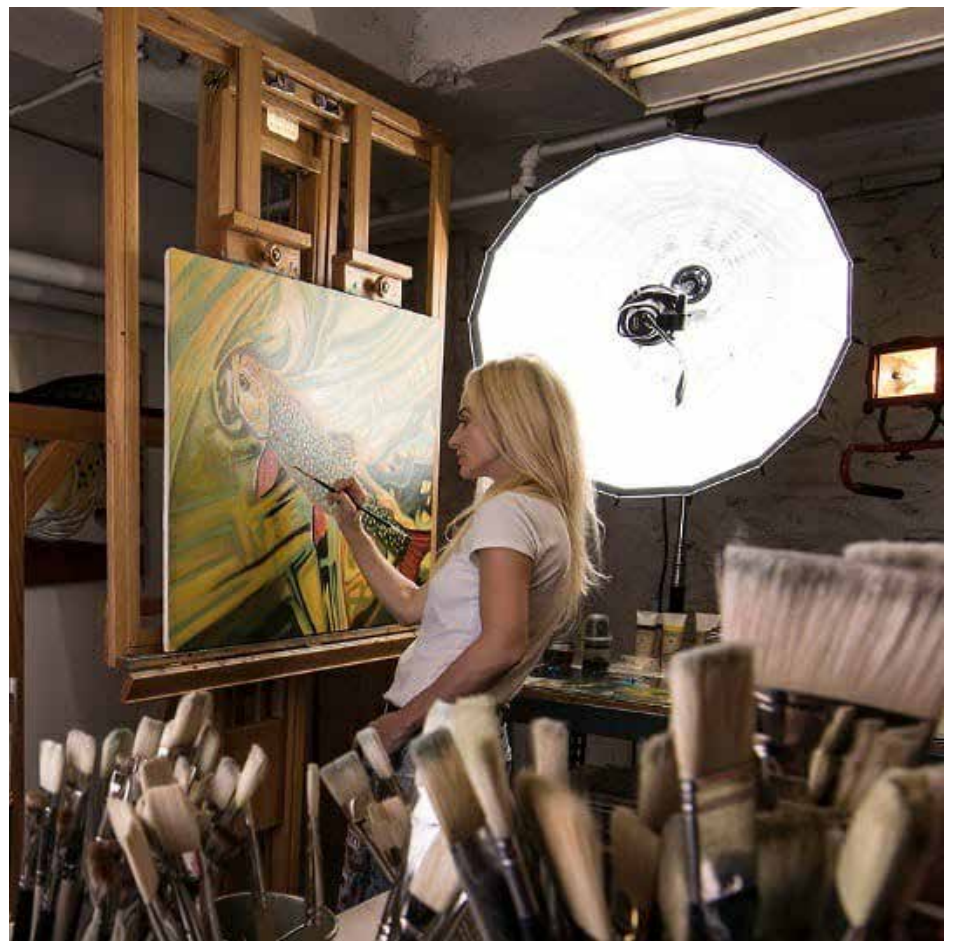
In addition to having her work featured on the covers of publications ranging from "Gray's Sporting Journal" to L.L. Bean's widely-circulated catalog, and adorning the hulls of StealthCraft boats and products sold by Montana Fishing Company, Patagonia enlisted her to help design displays at its retail stores as well as imagery put on its popular clothing.

Even when she's casting or shooting clay pigeons, she does it with style, though these days she's also apt to navigate the whirlwind of rising fame by unwinding on the back of a classic Ducati 999. In Montana, where there's a liberal speed limit on the interstates and rural backroads, she savors the liberating feel of her platinum-blond locks blowing out the back of her helmet, the sweet ambiance and scents of nature inundating her as she reaches warp drive.

Maddox's effusive enthusiasm for the outdoors is both genuine and infectious; so, too, her art.



AD Maddox casting toward her own rise as trout painter



Livingston painter AD Maddox's renditions of trout are an artistic tour de force. PHOTOS COURTESY OF AD MADDOX

Born Amelia Drane Maddox in Nashville, Tennessee, those who knew her in her childhood say she was regarded as something of an art prodigy by her grade school teachers.

Hunting and fishing are engrained in her DNA. Her grandfather, Dan, was a renowned safari hunter and won prestigious awards from the Weatherby Foundation. Her father, Jim (known to many readers here for his involvement with Shikar Safaris) advised her not to attain an art degree in college because he believed she would have a difficult time making a living. Ironically, the advice turned out to be brilliantly prescient but not for the reasons her dad intended.

Drawn to the West, Maddox moved to Jackson Hole and lived there for 10 years. Maddox' big break in art is not unlike the almost mythic tales of actors and models being discovered at coffee shops.

One day she walked into Center Street Gallery in Jackson and had a conversation with its owner, Beth Overcast, who had seen flourishes of Maddox's talent in decorative chairs and furniture she painted. Overcast offered to show a trout painting and within 20 minutes of its arrival the piece sold for \$1,000. Based on that reception alone, Overcast gave Maddox an advance to deliver more trout portraits and from there, things started to snowball.

Eventually, she went back to Nashville and immersed herself in the studio, free of distractions. Yet she grew homesick for the West. Her father had purchased a home up Tom Miner Basin near the wild back doorstep of Yellowstone National Park.

"I feel like Livingston is where I'm supposed to be," Maddox says. "Everything I've been working toward has led me to this place at this moment in time."

Impressionist Scott Christensen, an outdoorsman who is counted among the top American landscape painters and won the coveted Prix de West gold medal, has taken note of Maddox's work.

"She has grown a lot in taking her designs to a whole new level," he says. "She's paying attention to her edge work instead of being overly graphic. You can see the maturation that's happening. AD Maddox is on a roll."

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.

Water Wisdom

BY DAVID TUCKER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The Wild West. A free-for-all. Disorganized. Short-sighted.

These are phrases I've heard in the coffee shops and beer halls of Bozeman, describing Big Sky's growth. To outsiders, it appears that Big Sky is a runaway train destined for a precipice. On every visit, there are more hotels, restaurants, retail shops and condominiums. There is traffic at every intersection and lift lines at the ski hill. How is the town planning for even more growth?

Obviously, I understand why people want to be in Big Sky, but is there a sustainable path forward? The Big Sky I'd known and loved from a decade previous—I did my time as the front desk supervisor at the Huntley in 2008-09—has changed, and no one seems to be doing anything about it. Or so I thought.

Recently, certain life changes brought me to Big Sky working fulltime, from about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. I work here now, and after just under a month in town, it's clear that many people are doing quite a lot to plan for a future Big Sky that is recognizable to both longtime locals and repatriated residents.

Granted, my experience is limited to plans to protect and restore water resources, but without clean water, the town does not exist, so I think water is a good place to start.

As the communications manager for the Gallatin River Task Force, I've spent the last three weeks in and out of meetings—committee meetings, board meetings, public meetings, marketing meetings. I've met hydrologists, wastewater technicians, anglers, boaters, skiers and journalists. I've talked to donors, volunteers, other new staff and longtime supporters of the Task Force.

Into the flow

One person I haven't talked to is a mayor, a commissioner, a city council member or a city manager. That's because Big Sky doesn't have a town government—the people I've met are all involved and engaged citizens.

Some have a personal stake in the Gallatin's health because they are avid anglers and can't imagine living here without a robust trout population. Some have a financial stake in Big Sky's future because they bought a home here and would like to see their investment appreciate in value. Some are employed to manage water, and are therefore duty-bound to plan for supply, treatment and disposal. And some are conservationists, hell-bent on leaving an ecologically intact watershed for future generations.

But they all have one thing in common—they care, and they're trying to empower a plan with broad-reaching effects. Less than two years ago, the Gallatin River Task Force and our partners developed the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Plan, a process that in and of itself took several years to finalize. Armed with the Watershed Plan, the Big Sky community now has a framework for growth that considers impact to natural resources and environmental systems, like the water supply.

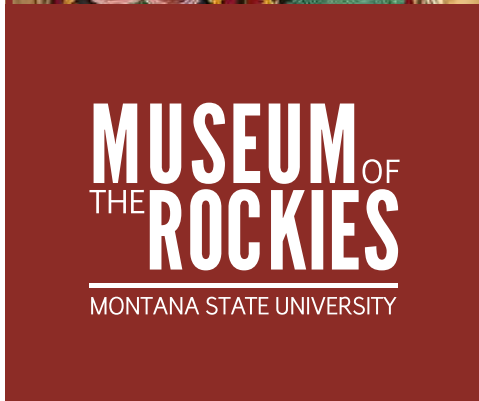
While it's easy to say that talk is cheap, and that a plan doesn't mean much without action, it's clear to me that the people I've met are paying much more than just lip service to this problem. They understand the gravity of their circumstances, that we're impacting the watershed, an essential part of any healthy community, but especially the Big Sky community, and we need to do something about it.

Now, when I go back to Bozeman, I'm happy to report to my friends and neighbors that while the challenge real, Big Sky is on the case. Mistakes will be made and progress will come in fits and starts, but the building blocks are there—all we have to do is put them into place.

David Tucker is the communications manager for the Gallatin River Task Force.



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REFLECTIONS

Thoughts for sustainable living



Carbon offsets

BY KATHY BOUCHARD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It was one of those cool and quiet days—no wind, and the pewter sky seemed particularly close. My high elevation had been reached, and the return downhill was letting me catch my breath. Various Douglas firs stand sentinel along this road, always seeming to be companionable. I was noticing all the trees around me because I was listening to a story about them.

The voice in my ear, from “The Overstory,” Richard Powers’ Pulitzer Prize winning novel, was telling about how scientists had sequenced the DNA of the Douglas fir. I looked around more attentively. The botanist character announced that the Douglas fir shares 24 percent of its DNA with humans, and that the two species shared a common ancestor 1.4 billion years ago. Wow! Cousins!

We are being told these days that preserving our forests is one of the most essential things we can do for the planet. In fact, more carbon consuming plants of many types must not only be preserved but restored to former or degraded habitats and expanded almost wherever possible. This includes the kelp forests off the Pacific shores, tall grass prairies where rain is scarce, mangrove tangles along the tropic shores and hardwood forests in our urban environments. These trees capture carbon, reduce temperatures, create rain, fertilize soils and provide homes for creatures of innumerable kinds.



Preserving our forests is one of the most important things we can do for the planet, as the plants that make up the forest capture carbon from the atmosphere. PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.COM

You can support these activities and offset some of your carbon footprint by donating to organizations designed exactly for the purposes of conservation and sustainability. These organizations use your donations to fund projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, allowing you to counteract a portion of your carbon footprint.

Two weeks ago, I googled “carbon offset,” tabulated my miles flown in the past year and selected an organization certified by long-standing watchdogs like The Gold Standard or Green-e. With a little research you can zero-in on a plant or region that interests you. The projects are usually in developing countries and are designed to reduce future emissions, according to one website.

I chose one with multiple programs around the globe, because variety is fun. This was the first time for me to buy carbon offsets, though driving a hybrid vehicle, buying energy saving lightbulbs and supporting organizations that fight pollution are still ongoing concerns. Listed below are a few suggested websites where you can take a closer look at carbon offsets:

- CoolEffect.org
- Terrapass.com
- Carbonfund.org

Kathy Bouchard is a member of the Rotary Club of Big Sky's Sustainability Committee. She has been a Montana resident for 20 years and is inspired to work for sustainability on behalf of her grandchildren.



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INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Two Yellowstone wolf pups fatally hit by a vehicle Biologist: Habituation factor in death

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARKS

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, Wyo. – On Nov. 19, 2019, two wolves from the Junction Butte Pack were fatally hit around sunset on the road between Tower Junction and the Northeast Entrance. A necropsy confirmed the black male and female pups died from a vehicle strike. Yellowstone law enforcement officers are investigating the incident.

The Junction Butte Pack is one of the most frequently observed packs in the park. Their territory ranges between Tower Junction and Lamar Valley.

During the summer of 2019, the pack of 11 adults attended a den of pups near a popular hiking trail in the northeastern section of the park. Wanting to keep visitors and wolves apart, the park closed the den and surrounding area to the public.

When the pups approached the trail and were in proximity to hikers, most people quickly moved away. However, some people violated the required 100-yard distance from wolves and approached the pups when they were on or near the trail to take a photo. Other people illegally entered the closed area to get near the wolves. Having grown accustomed to hikers, the pups then came close to visitors along a road.

Yellowstone staff hazed the pups several times over the last five months in an attempt to make them more wary of people and roads. This effort was never fully successful and the pups continued to demonstrate habituated behavior due to continued close encounters with visitors.



An aerial view of Yellowstone's Junction Butte wolf pack. Two of the pack's puppies were recently hit by a car. NPS PHOTO

“Having studied these pups since birth, I believe their exposure to, and fearlessness of people and roads could have been a factor in their death,” said Yellowstone’s senior wolf biologist Doug Smith. “Visitors must protect wolves from becoming habituated to people and roads. Stay at least 100 yards from wolves, never enter a closed area and notify a park ranger of others who are in violation of these rules.”

Snowshoeing: Discovering Yellowstone in winter

BY EDDY MURPHY
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Some winter adventurers go above the trees, into the big sky and glide through the powdery paradise of Lone Peak; some painstakingly contemplate the cardiovascular benefits of cross-country skiing on one of the area’s many groomed trails; and some of us delve into the blustery and glittering wilderness on snowshoes.

I’ve spent a lot of time in Yellowstone during the summer, working as a barista. After those seasons ended, I returned home to Tennessee’s bland, rainy winters, sinking into nostalgia when I couldn’t lace up my boots and gawk at mesmerizing vistas whenever I saw fit.

So, when the opportunity arose for me to avoid my mom’s shabby sofa in Tennessee and instead live in Montana year-round, I was elated. I also felt uneasy, because I have never skied. I knew the couple inches of cursed snow that fell in Tennessee every year were nothing compared to what these skies promised. I knew Montana winter would make everything I knew of that season seem trivial and ridiculous.

But I was going to be near the wonderland that stole my heart four summers ago, and I was not about to let some white fluffy stuff deter me from recreating in my new home.

This winter, my first in Big Sky, I’ve spent many subzero mornings trying to extract my two-wheel-drive pickup from Crown Butte Drive’s ditches. When I first purchased snowshoes, I thought their alloy frames looked awkwardly shaped and odd.

The next weekend, I took my inaugural solo snowshoeing adventure in the Yellowstone backcountry. I drove to the Fawn Pass trailhead in northwestern Yellowstone. My truck was the only vehicle in the lot on the gorgeous, clear and frigid day. A moose drank out of an unfrozen rivulet beyond the pavement, and I translated it as the beginning of a memorable experience.

I watched the moose as I strapped on the snowshoes I’d blindly invested in, hoping they could carry me to the same kind of fond memories my hiking boots had in summers past.

I sallied on, into the trees, without any idea what to expect. Right away, I noticed the silence. No birds chirping, no brooks babbling, no wind—only the thwack of my snow-



Two snowshoers traverse a trail in the Hellroaring area. NPS PHOTO

shoes breaking the surface of new snow.

When I paused to sit under a tree for a snack, I lost my balance and fell into an impossible position in two feet of snow. I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to escape.

Then, a slight breeze brought the hoary contours of the earth to life. I stopped in wonder. The sun blazed cold and brilliant behind a transparent cloud. Its strange, slanted light animated snow skimming the surface into phantasmagoric spirits. The lodgepoles whispered, and Yellowstone became something entirely new to me: a wintry wonderland, not only void of the sound of life, but a place with true solitude. It surely is an amazing thing to have the opportunity to be the only person on earth outside of your front door.

A version of this article first appeared in the Feb. 11, 2011, edition of EBS.

Eddy Murphy is originally from Nashville. He lives in Big Sky and enjoys hiking, fishing and live music.

The Descendents

Ecologist Jason Baldes' life work is to restore herds of buffalo to public lands

BY CAROL SCHMIDT

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Herds of American bison once roamed the vast river-veined plains and the sage-studded mountains of what is now the Wind River country of central Wyoming. They may do so again as a result of the work of Jason Baldes, a modern man dedicated to ancient ways.

As the tribal bison coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation, Baldes is recognized nationally for his efforts in an indigenous-led movement to return buffalo—the term Native Americans prefer—to Western reservations. His work is centered on his own Wind River Reservation, which is roughly the same size, and as ecologically diverse, as nearby Yellowstone National Park.

Over the last three years, the 40-year-old Montana State University graduate has led the building of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe's small yet growing herd of genetically pure buffalo, which means their ancestors have not been interbred with cattle.

The work is intensely personal for Baldes, a member of a band of Shoshone Indians that call themselves *gweechoon deka*, the Buffalo Eaters. Even before the arrival of horses, the tribe followed the herds of large mammals who were the tribe's life link, the center of their cultural, spiritual and material sustenance.

"The buffalo were our commissary—we used every part of the animal," Baldes said. "If you restore the buffalo, you will heal the people."

Baldes and his tribe have pieced together the Shoshone herd from several sources. The first 10 buffalo came from Iowa's Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in 2016. Another 10 came a year later from the National Bison Range in Moiese, on Montana's Flathead Reservation. There have been several calves born—five this year—an indication that the herd is thriving on the landscape that was once prime habitat for the migrating species.

In June, in collaboration with the National Wildlife Federation, Baldes organized a spiritual ceremony at the 300-acre Shoshone buffalo paddock near Pilot Butte Reservoir to welcome the latest arrivals: five bulls from the Fort Peck tribes' reservation in northeastern Montana, the location of the tribal holding facility for animals captured after they migrate outside Yellowstone National Park.

Two days after the summer solstice, about 50 people joined Baldes to welcome the Fort Peck addition. The group lined a wind-kissed bluff about 20 feet above the pasture, so close they heard the animals' grunting and swishing of tails in chest-deep bunchgrass.

It was a perfect morning, with one exception. The five new buffalo were stuck in Montana, their Fort Peck pasture so muddy with late spring rain and snow that the stock truck that would carry them could not load.

But because some participants had traveled far, Baldes went ahead with the welcome ceremony, negotiating what could have been an awkward situation as gracefully as he later hopped across rocks in his favorite trout stream.

"We are here today at a moment that has been years in the making," Baldes said. "There were no buffalo on this ground for 130 years, and now, thanks to the Fort Peck tribes, we will receive our third group. And while those buffalo cannot be with us here today, it is important for us to talk to the buffalo that are on their way here, to welcome them here."

Then Baldes explained, in words that he has repeated hundreds—maybe thousands—of times, that what the Shoshone are doing here is different. The hope is to manage the buffalo as a keystone wildlife species, as a cultural symbol, rather than as ranch or meat animals.

The story of the rise and fall of the American buffalo, the country's largest land-dwelling animal, is as well-known as any tale of the Old West.



Five buffalo bulls who were to arrive for a summer ceremony were stuck in Montana. In their stead, five bulls from the existing Shoshone herd seemed to respond to a prayer offered by Shoshone elder William Roberts. PHOTO BY KELLY GORHAM

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that as many as 30 to 60 million bison roamed North America before the time of Columbus. By the Westward Expansion, most buffalo had been pressured into the West, where they were both the source of food and basis for culture for the American Indian. But by 1878, U.S. Army Gen. Philip Sheridan encouraged the decimation of the animal by market hunters to manage Indians by eliminating their food supply, clearing the land for settlers.

The strategy worked. By 1902, there were 700 bison remaining in private herds. The Yellowstone herd was then estimated at 23 animals, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, in one of the great examples of American conservation, today the animal's numbers are resurgent. There are currently 20,000 plains bison in conservation populations managed as wildlife in the U.S. (there are another half-million managed as meat animals) and 5,000 of those are unfenced and disease-free, including about 4,500 in Yellowstone, according to the National Park Service. It is those buffalo, descendants of the prehistoric wild buffalo herds that once roamed the Wind River, that Baldes seeks as the source for the Shoshone herd.

There are other numbers and dates important to Baldes' buffalo calculus. One is 1863, the date of the treaty with the U.S. government that created the Shoshone Reservation on 44 million acres in parts of what are now four states, the tribe's historic hunting grounds. Five years later, the government reduced the size of the reservation to 0.05 percent of its original size and in 1878 put the Northern Arapaho, traditional enemies of the Shoshone, with them on what is now the Wind River Reservation.

According to the U.S. census, currently there are about 26,650 people living on the 2.2-million-acre reservation, including 15,000 non-Indians living on ceded lands. Still, Baldes figures there are thousands of acres of tribal lands on the reservation that could be used as buffalo habitat.

"A benchmark for conservation populations is a minimum of 1,000 animals in order to maintain genetic heterogeneity and variability," Baldes has said of his goal. "We could accommodate thousands of buffalo here, no problem."

Baldes said that once a sufficient population is reached, the tribe will conduct a lottery among members for a buffalo hunt. The meat will not be marketed, he said.

"We have the opportunity to manage them as wildlife, which is the greatest respect we can offer them," he said. "The buffalo have helped me, personally. I know that as the buffalo heal and are restored to this land, our people will also be healed and restored. Because, we have a connection with them. We are people of the buffalo."

This story has been shortened from its original version published in the fall 2019 edition of Montana State University's Mountains and Minds magazine. Visit <http://www.montana.edu/news/mountainsandminds/19345/the-descendents> to read the full story.

White-tailed deer in southwest Montana tests positive for CWD

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

A white-tailed deer harvested during the general hunting season by a hunter in the Ruby Valley in southwest Montana has tested positive for chronic wasting disease. The Ruby Valley deer was harvested on private land about a mile west of Sheridan, within Hunting District 322. This case is the first detection of CWD in southwest Montana. A second white-tailed deer buck harvested in the area tested positive shortly after the first.

The latest batch of testing has turned up other new positive samples from deer harvested within CWD Management Zones elsewhere in the state where the disease is known to exist.

This year Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks conducted CWD surveillance in parts of northern, western and southeastern Montana, primarily from hunter-harvested animals. In addition, hunters in all parts of the state were able to submit their own samples for testing. All samples are sent for testing to Colorado State University and those results were reported on a weekly basis to FWP. This is the last round of results from animals harvested during the general rifle season. Hunters who submitted animals for testing can visit fwp.mt.gov/CWD to check for their results.

This year, more than 7,000 animals have been sampled statewide, and as of Dec. 23, 131 have tested positive for CWD. CWD has been detected across much of Montana, including the northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest.

With the general hunting season now closed, FWP will review management strategies, testing results and other collected information to make plans for the next necessary steps in managing the disease. CWD cannot be eradicated once it infects a herd.

CWD is a fatal disease that can affect the nervous system of deer, elk and



More than 130 deer have tested positive in Montana this year for the fatal Chronic Wasting Disease. NPS PHOTO

moose. Transmission can most commonly occur through direct contact between animals, including urine, feces, saliva, blood and antler velvet. Carcasses of infected animals may serve as a source of environmental contamination as well and can infect other animals that come into contact with it.

The disease was first discovered in the wild in Montana south of Billings in 2017. There is no known transmission of CWD to humans. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that hunters harvesting an animal in an area where CWD is known to be present have their animal tested. If the animal tests positive, CDC advises against eating the meat.

Hunters who harvest deer or elk during late seasons can still submit their lymph nodes for testing to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks lab in Bozeman. Instructions can be found at fwp.mt.gov/CWD for sampling your own animal and mailing the samples to the lab.

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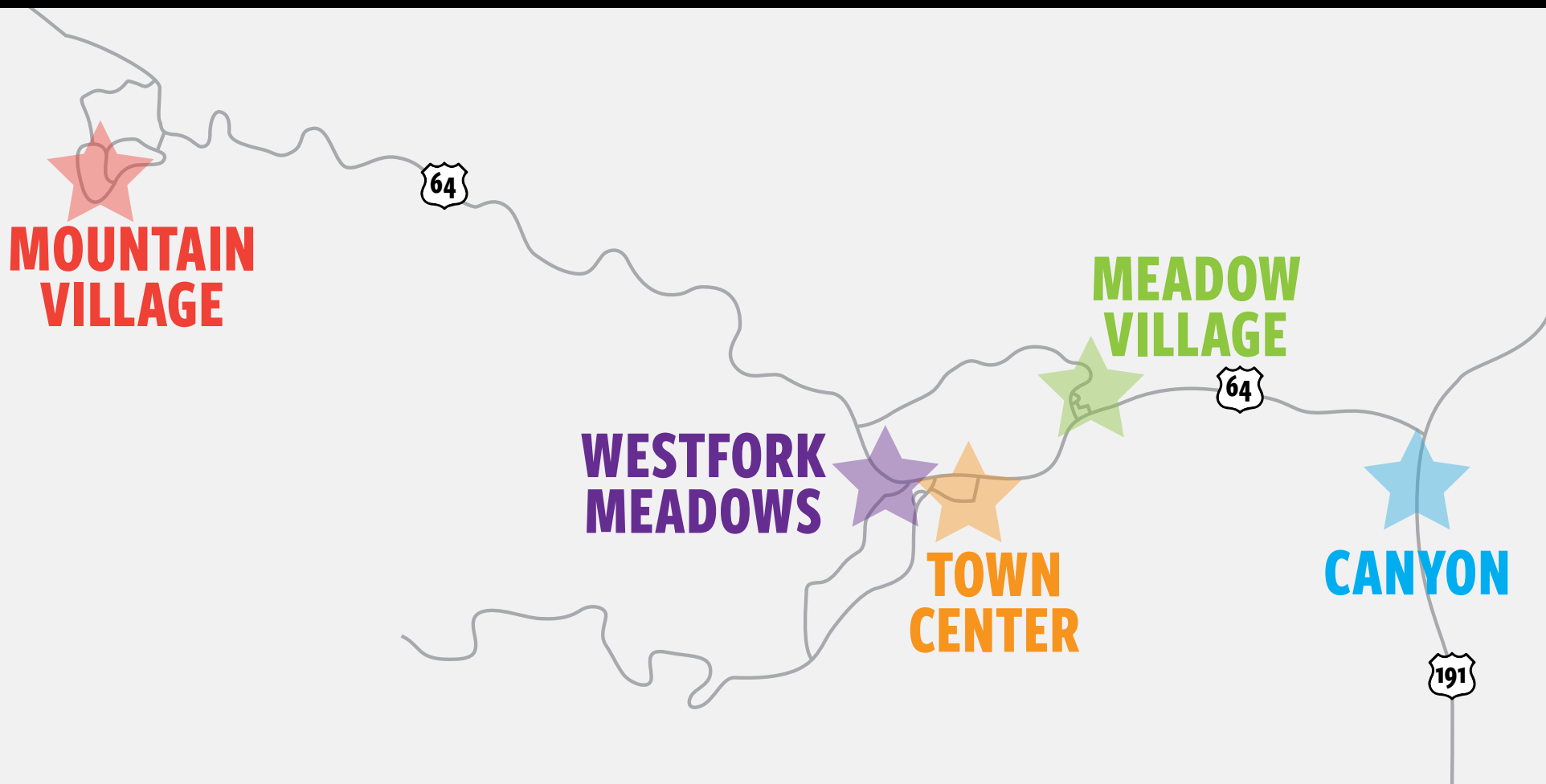
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Glide Big Sky

BY SARA MARINO
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Are you wondering where the groomed trails around town are located, looking for people to ski with, or maybe need a little extra motivation to get outside in the winter?

“Glide Big Sky” is the answer. This is a new program sponsored by Big Sky Community Organization, Lone Mountain Ranch and Visit Big Sky that is designed to connect community members through our shared love of cross-country skiing and the outdoors.

The ski series will run on Wednesdays at 2 p.m. on a biweekly basis from Jan. 8 to March 18. Each event will last a maximum of two hours and will feature a different trail to help skiers discover new areas and offers a chance to socialize. Take the “Brew-Ski” event, for example, that ends at Beehive Basin Brewery for a well-deserved craft beer after a ski.

Help kick off the Glide Big Sky series by meeting on Jan. 8 at 2 p.m. at the Big Sky Community Park. The series is free and open to the public, but participants are asked to come prepared with their own gear and a basic knowledge of cross-country skiing. Gear can be rented at Lone Mountain Ranch, Gallatin Alpine Sports, East Slope Outdoors and Grizzly Outfitters.

Rack cards with the full schedule can be found at the Big Sky Community Organization office, Lone Mountain Ranch and Visit Big Sky. From events like “Golf Course Crash Course” to the “Pace to the Pub” fun race, there will be something for everyone. Get out on the trails and have some fun this winter.

Visit bscomt.org to learn more about Big Sky's parks, trails and recreation programs.

Sara Marino is the Big Sky Community Organization community development manager. BSCO engages and leads people to recreational and enrichment opportunities through thoughtful development of partnerships, programs and places.



Bill Elledge, a BSCO trail ambassador, skis a trail in Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF LOVE STREET MEDIA

Glide Big Sky

Jan. 8

Glide Community
Big Sky Community Park
Enjoy an introduction to the classic Big Sky trails W2 and W3.

Jan. 22

Trail to Tavern
Historic Crail Ranch
Travel back in time gliding from the Historic Crail Ranch Museum all the way to Horn & Cattle, where a warm fire awaits outside the saloon.

Feb. 5

New Trail on the Block
Town Center Stage
Explore the new Spruce Cone connection, W8.

Feb. 9

Snow Full Moon Special Event
Big Sky Community Park Warming Hut
Enjoy an evening on the trails under the full moon. Gather your friends for a self-guided tour followed by fun activities and a chance to warm up at the yurts.

Feb. 19



Brew-Ski
Town Center Stage
Break a sweat on our favorite town trails W7, W6, W9 and W10 followed by a well-earned beer at Beehive Basin Brewery.

March 4


Golf Course Crash Course
Big Sky Chapel
Cruise along the many Lone Mountain Ranch loops on the Big Sky Golf Course with one of the LMR skilled guides.

March 18

Pace to the Pub
Town Center Stage
As the final challenge, glide through all the town center trails—W10, W9, W6 and W7, Ousel Falls Road to W8 and back to Beehive Basin Brewery.

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Avalanche safety education: Essential for wintertime athletes

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – If you plan to be recreating outdoors this winter, whether that means hitting the slopes donning skis or snowshoes, or cruising through white stuff on a snowmobile or fat bike, you’re sure to benefit from lessons taught in an avalanche course.

A variety of institutions offer avalanche safety training designed for recreationists as well as professionals. The recreation-track courses are usually broken into level 1 and level 2 trainings and are geared for both new or seasoned backcountry enthusiasts, and cover all aspects of backcountry travel, from trip planning and communication to recognizing avalanche terrain. Some are geared especially for snowmobilers, while other courses provide a walkthrough of rescue fundamentals.

Many avalanche safety courses are taught in the field so as to give hands-on experience to the participants. Instructors are usually professional ski guides, snow safety professionals or avalanche forecasters.

The American Avalanche Association—known as A3—is a national nonprofit organization that certifies avalanche training programs and a variety of their curriculums are offered in southwest Montana. A3 recommends backcountry users begin with an Avalanche Awareness course, then proceed to Level 1 and Avalanche Rescue. From there, consider furthering your experience in a Level 2 course.

According to A3, 25 to 30 people die in avalanches in the U.S. each year while many more are injured every winter.



CC PHOTO

Visit avalanche.org for more information about avalanche safety courses or check out the Big Sky Avalanche Foundation for Education on Facebook or Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center at mtavalanche.com for information on local courses.

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Gov. Bullock announces outdoor recreation plan

EBS STAFF

HELENA – On the heels of a recent report by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis that shows Montana is a national leader in outdoor recreation, Gov. Steve Bullock announced on Dec. 17 the release of a new Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This document, known as the SCORP report, will provide the state with five years of guidance in developing Montana's outdoor recreation infrastructure.

"It's no secret that Montana is an incredible place to live, work, play and raise a family," Bullock said in a press release. "The quality of life that our state offers is second to none, with unparalleled access to world class recreational opportunities. The plan addresses how we, as a state, can protect and enhance the outdoor recreation assets that sustain our economy and our livelihoods and support opportunities for residents and visitors alike."

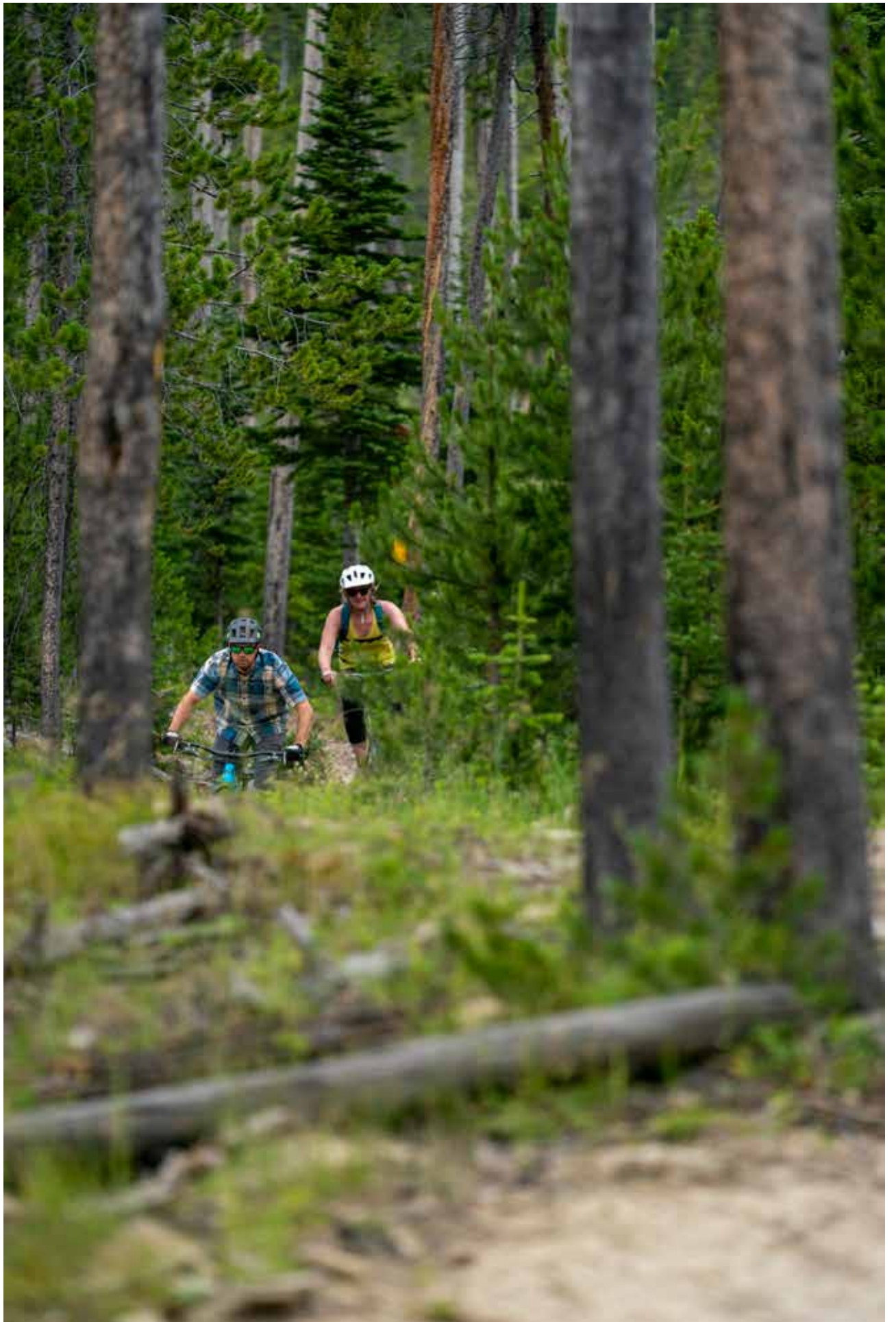
The plan identifies six statewide goals and recommendations for outdoor recreation. These include promoting outdoor recreation opportunities for all Montanans, enhancing public access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities, supporting the economic vitality of communities and the state, improving quality of life through outdoor recreation experiences, adapting outdoor recreation for a changing environment, and honoring Montana's outdoor legacy.

"At Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, we believe that the 'outside is in us all'. The SCORP report reinforces this sentiment and shows that Montanans cherish their time outside and the incredible experiences that Montana's outdoor resources offer," said MT FWP Director Martha Williams in a statement.

The plan also impacts the actions of the Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation. "The 2019 SCORP elevates and broadens the strategic plan to take action and I anticipate that it will take us and our outdoor way of life to a whole new level, setting the bar for state planning," said director Rachel VandeVoort in a statement.

The outdoor recreation plan was developed in part by an advisory council with members representing the public and private sectors, local, state, tribal and federal agencies, and advocacy organizations. It also relied on expertise from Elizabeth Covelli Metcalf, a University of Montana professor who oversaw development of the plan.

"As a social scientist and a professor of outdoor recreation, leading the planning efforts for SCORP was an invaluable opportunity to work with Montana State Parks and connect with the outdoor recreation community to develop goals that meet the needs of the state," Metcalf said in a statement. "As a Montanan who enjoys recreating with my



Two mountain bikers on the trail in Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF MT DEPT OF COMMERCE

family, the completion of this project is also deeply rewarding as it will impact our own experiences in the years to come."

In addition to serving as a planning document, the outdoor recreation plan provides Montana with eligibility for Land and Water Conservation Funds, which have been used in the Treasure State to the tune of \$38 million to support outdoor recreation.

Visit files.cfc.umt.edu/humandimensionslab/SCORP_2020-2024.pdf to view the 2020-2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

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Counting cats

Montana launches strategy to monitor mountain lions

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

LIBBY – It teeters on the edge of insanity—eyes peering over days-old snow that rests on the shoulder of the road, I harbor an urge to turn every depression into a fresh track. Almost mindlessly, sitting passenger in my husband’s Tacoma, my eyes read the snow, read the stories forest critters have left behind.

But I’m not reading for comprehension, I’m looking for something specific. My eyes scan over the splayed-out marks and toe drags left by deer, elk and moose. I barely pause to process the pointed-toed track of a coyote. But when I see dimples—clean, perfectly placed steps and beautiful teardrop toes—I crane my head out the window and catch my breath. We stop the truck. I grab the GPS and mark the location of the track. My husband and I had finally found footprints left by a mountain lion.

We were working as contracted hound handlers for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks during the second week of December just south of Libby as a part of an effort launched this winter to estimate the number of mountain lions in Montana. Dubbed the Montana Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, the new plan was approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in February 2019 and subsequently funded by the Montana legislature. And beyond learning more about the mountain lion population, this new strategy is an effort to find common ground.

Lay of the land

In what some wildlife managers describe as an unprecedented approach, state wildlife biologists have developed a mountain lion habitat map and intend to shift policies and practices away from human-designated administrative districts and instead look at mountain lions based on where they actually live. While researchers believe lions currently live in nearly all of Montana’s suitable habitat, having rebounded after the population was decimated alongside wolves and grizzly bears at the dawn of the 1900s, areas differ based on terrain and food sources.

In the northwest portion of the state—or the Northwest Mountain Lion Ecoregion—lion habitat is nearly continuous. The highly forested terrain is great for ambush predators and ample deer make northwest Montana, spanning from the Idaho and Canadian borders north to Missoula and east to the Rocky Mountain Front, some of the best lion habitat in the state.

The West-Central Ecoregion encompasses the Bitterroot Valley and dives east to Lewistown. This region is somewhat less quality than the Northwest because much of the cougar-preferred forested regions are separated by broad intermountain valleys.

Big Sky and the surrounding Gallatin Range and Spanish Peaks fall within the heart of the Southwest Ecoregion that captures the entire southwest corner of the state, ranging all the way east to Big Timber and Red Lodge. With only 1/3 of the total area covered by trees, the Southwest provides sparse high-quality habitat for mountain lions.

The entire eastern portion of the state, the fourth ecoregion, makes up a very small portion of mountain lion habitat as less than 10 percent of the region outside of the Indian reservations is forested.

“It’s a plan that tries to reflect how they live, how they move,” said former Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Dan Vermillion when the plan was first proposed to the public in October 2018. “It’s a pretty modern approach ... it’s a remarkable plan.”

Seeking answers

In order to estimate the mountain lion population, which is critical information for a game animal that is hunted, MT FWP has hired a handful of houndsmen and women to record GPS information and search for mountain lion DNA in designated areas within each ecoregion. These houndsmen, or



Montana’s new mountain lion monitoring plan launched this winter in order to better understand mountain lion populations and trends. PHOTO BY RYAN CASTLE

hound handlers, have their own personal dogs that track mountain lions and push them into a tree—a method used recreationally to take photographs or hunt mountain lions and bobcats.

The question for cougar biologists has always been, ‘how many of the elusive critters are there?’ according to wildlife sciences professor Jonathan Jenks of South Dakota State University. He calls it the “Holy Grail of cougar management.”

And now DNA can provide accurate counting; it’s something researchers have never had before. Biologists can’t fly and count mountain lions like they do elk, pronghorn, deer or wolves, and prior to the latest population modeling science and genetics, they weren’t able to verify whether photographs or sightings reflected multiple cats or a repeat visitor.

“Until we had these new genetically-based monitoring tools, we really weren’t able to detect changes in populations,” said Jay Kolbe, author of the monitoring strategy and White Sulphur Springs area biologist.

The study began this winter in the Northwest Ecoregion and crews will be in the field until early spring, with plans to then return to the area again next winter. Crews will repeat the two-year cycle in each of the western ecoregions, amounting to a six-year rotation before returning to Libby once again. As a long-term monitoring regime, biologists hope to better detect population trends in the long run.

In addition to marking lion tracks on a GPS and collecting scat and hair, a critical aspect of the study is to collect tissue samples from individual lions. Once we find a fresh track, we work with our dogs to tree the lion and with a carbon-dioxide powered dart gun loaded with a biopsy dart that has a small, sharp head, we collect a tissue sample.

It’s a more invasive strategy than camera traps or hair snags used to research animals like wolverines, but according to Kolbe the strategy is less invasive than collaring or trapping as humans never handle the lion. Additionally, by contracting houndsmen, the agency is building partnerships and involving the public sector with the science.

“I’m hoping that because we have these new tools, that will bring everyone to the table with a common set of facts,” Kolbe said.

Visit fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/mountainLion/ to learn more about Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks’ research and management of mountain lions or to view the Montana Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy.



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SECTION 3:
SPORTS, BUSINESS,
HEALTH & FUN



Leading Lone Peak: Nolan Schumacher
pg. 34



Pinky G's opens in Town Center pg. 35



New Resort GM: Troy Nedved pg. 40

THE LONE PEAK PLAYBOOK

Lady Big Horns fall to Eagles

BY BRANDON WALKER
EBS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

BIG SKY – The Lone Peak High School varsity girls basketball team lost for the first time this season, falling to the Manhattan Christian Eagles on Dec. 20, 55-23.

Like most of their games this season, LPHS head coach Loren Bough and his squad went up against a physically bigger and more experienced team, but they were able to keep their composure even facing some new challenges.

“First press, dramatically outsized, and first 1-3-1 [zone defense], I couldn’t be more proud. I think the future looks really bright,” coach Bough said. Manhattan Christian gained an 11-2 advantage in the first quarter, but the game felt much closer than the score reflected.

Lone Peak freshman guard Jessie Bough was content with her team’s effort. “I was super happy with how we played. If our shots were dropping, we could have been up in the first quarter and for playing [Manhattan] Christian, that’s a huge deal for us,” she said after the loss.

The Lady Big Horns proved that they could compete as they went toe-to-toe with the Eagles in the second quarter, almost matching them in offensive output, 14-12, leaving Manhattan Christian with a 25-14 lead at halftime.

The Eagles wore down the younger Lady Big Horns in the second half to slowly widen the gap and pull away with the victory. Sophomore Carly Wilson led another very balanced scoring attack for Lone Peak with seven points. Rounding out the top scorers for LPHS were freshmen Maddie Cone and Kate King with five points apiece.

“We’ve had four games and we’ve had three different leading scorers. I’d say that’s a remarkable level of unselfishness and distribution and being a real team,” coach Bough said.

Coach Bough believes the balanced scoring will continue with his point guard’s passing effectiveness. “I’d say Jessie really showed herself to be a special player ... Jessie’s got some of the highest pass-to-shot percentages we’ve ever seen. We’re



Lady Big Horn sophomore Carly Wilson (dribbling) penetrates the lane against Manhattan Christian on Dec. 20. LPHS came up short, falling for the first time of the season, 55-23. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

really super excited about the way she’s distributing the ball,” Bough noted about his daughter’s play throughout the first four games of the season.

Following the tough loss, the Lady Big Horns (3-1) will look to get back to their winning ways when they host the Harrison-Willow Creek Wildcats on Jan. 3.

Box Score	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Lone Peak	2	12	7	2	23
Manhattan Christian	11	14	15	15	55

Lone Peak: Carly Wilson 7, Maddie Cone 5, Kate King 5, Jessie Bough 4, Sara Wilson 2

Manhattan Christian: Taylor Devries 18, El Kuperus 15, Hope Kenney 7, Kiersten Vankirk 5, Madelyn Liudahl 3, Ava Bellach 3, Rylie Thompson 2, Anna Keith 2



LEADING LONE PEAK

Ivy Hicks – Junior #11

Hicks put up seven points in a victory over White Sulphur Springs to help her team remain unbeaten to that point, before falling to Manhattan Christian the following game. The captain has been praised all season by head coach Loren Bough for her leadership and willingness to assist her younger teammates. “Ivy was chosen for her leadership. She’s our junior captain and has just exhibited leadership on and off the court and particularly during a heavy practice schedule over the break. She’s been high-energy at every practice really, as we’ve worked some new things, new offensive [and] new defensive sets. She has just excelled,” Bough said.

Junior captain Ivy Hicks has led by example for her younger her peers this season. The veteran has not hesitated when asked questions by her teammates and continues to provide consistent scoring and rebounding for the Lady Big Horns. Hicks and Lone Peak will matchup with Harrison-Willow Creek in their next game slated for Jan. 3. PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL BOUGH

THE LONE PEAK PLAYBOOK



Manhattan Christian overwhelms Lone Peak

BY BRANDON WALKER
EBS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

BIG SKY – An impressive display of shooting and swarming defense led the Manhattan Christian Eagles varsity boys basketball team to victory over the Lone Peak High School Big Horns 81-27, on Dec. 20.

The Eagles’ shooters put their marksmanship on showcase all night long as they knocked down 14 3-pointers in the contest. That sharp-shooting propelled them to a 23-4 advantage after the first quarter.

Lone Peak junior Nolan Schumacher was undeterred by the tenacity of the Eagles. “We’ve always had a lot of trouble with Manhattan Christian. But I think in the first quarter that we had the energy to go at them and kind of keep up with them.”

LPHS fought hard in the second quarter, pouring in their highest scoring effort of any quarter. The 12 points from the Big Horns as a team left the score 45-16 at the half. “That’s one of the best things about our team is that we always work hard no matter what the score is,” said Schumacher.

Stifling defense from Manhattan Christian the rest of the way made it tough for Lone Peak to get anything going offensively. Senior Frankie Starz led the Big Horns with eight points, while fellow senior Austin Samuels and Schumacher contributed six apiece.

LPHS head coach John Hannahs was not dismayed with his team’s effort throughout the entire contest. “We played a really good team tonight and they shot lights out. I was happy with the amount of looks we got at the basket because they were very strong defensively as well. They put a lot of pressure on us,” Hannahs said. “We knew this was going to be a tough game and I just wanted to make sure that they put a performance out there that they could be proud of and they absolutely did that.”



LPHS junior Nolan Schumacher (20) elevates for a shot against Manhattan Christian on Dec. 20. The Big Horns were defeated 81-27. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

Lone Peak (0-4) will host the Harrison-Willow Creek Wildcats in their next matchup on Jan. 3.

Box Score	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Lone Peak	4	12	5	6	27
Manhattan Christian	23	22	19	17	81

Lone Peak: Frankie Starz 8, Austin Samuels 6, Nolan Schumacher 6, Michael Romney 5, Nick Brester 2

Manhattan Christian: Sam Leep 19, Josiah Amunrud 18, Devan Walho 8, Caidin Hill 7, Seth Amunrud 5, Tebarek Hill 5, Logan Leep 4, Charlie Keith 4, Jake Leep 4, Jacob Bos 3, Matthew Kenney 2, Willem Kem 2



LEADING LONE PEAK

Nolan Schumacher – Junior #20

The junior forward amassed 14 points over a two-game stretch versus Manhattan Christian and White Sulphur Springs. Eight of those points came against the latter in a hard-fought battle that almost saw the Big Horns capture their first victory of the season. Lone Peak head coach John Hannahs acknowledged the large role that Schumacher has been saddled with for the team this season. “We’ve asked him to step up in a really big way. He went from getting [a] couple minutes a game his sophomore year, to starting and spending a lot of minutes in there,” Hannahs said. “I realize I’m asking an incredible amount of him, but he’s never complained; he’s done the exact opposite. He’s rose to the occasion and he’s become one of our leading scorers and he’s a huge presence on the boards so that’s why he’s my pick.”

Junior forward Nolan Schumacher has been thrust into a large role for the Big Horns this season. His blue-collar efforts on both sides of the ball and on the boards have been much needed for Lone Peak. Schumacher and the Big Horns will take on Harrison-Willow Creek in their next contest on Jan. 3. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

Pinky G's Pizzeria opens up shop in Town Center

BY DOUG HARE

Big Sky – On Dec. 26, Pinky G's Pizzeria opened its doors in the Town Center location previously occupied by Moe's Original BBQ, which abruptly closed up shop 13 months ago and has been vacant ever since. Owner Tom Fay opened his original Pinky G's in the heart of Jackson, Wyoming, in 2011, where the eatery has been voted by locals as the best pizzeria in town every year since.

"It's incredibly exciting. It's a little nerve racking ... We don't want to come in and step on anyone's toes," Fay said, placing copious amounts of pepperoni slices on a fresh pie. "Hopefully, we aren't going to do that. We're going to set ourselves apart. We're excited to be here in Big Sky, Montana just like Jackson Hole, two of the best places on the planet."

Known for hand-tossed pizza and a family-friendly atmosphere, Pinky G's specializes in New York-style pizza, offered by the slice and whole pie, with more comfort food menu options, like chicken wings and tenders, and doughy delights like calzones and stromboli. Their infamous Abe Froman pizza (named after the Sausage King of Chicago) loaded with spicy sausage, buffalo mozzarella, topped with freshly chopped basil, has been featured on food celebrity Guy Fieri's show "Diner's, Drive-ins, and Dives" twice.

"We wanted to expand within close proximity to Jackson. We shopped around in Park City, over in Idaho a little bit—Sun Valley briefly—and then we thought it would be nice to do something in Bozeman," said Fay about his decision-making process on where to open up a second shop. Eventually a Bozemanite friend recommended Big Sky as a perfect location, and the rest is history.

"It's in our region. [Big Sky] is also, in our opinion, a hidden gem as far as a ski town goes," said Cameron Hartman, the general manager, who has been with Pinky G's Wyoming outfit since 2013. "We've done this process in record time. Transferring states has been the hardest part. Montana and Wyoming play in the same league but they're on different teams."

When the eatery hires a few more employees and gets fully staffed, the hours of operation are slated to be from 11 a.m. until "late," according to their menu. Pinky G's reputation as a go-to late-night food option in Jackson should translate well to their Montana counterpart, where they should be one of the last options to grab food where the after-dark food options are somewhat limited.



Owner Tom Fay shows off one of the first pies he fired up at his second Pinky G's Pizzeria venture located in the same building as Lotus Pad and The Standard in Town Center. PHOTO BY DOUG HARE

Fay noted that he also intends to roll out a delivery service once the storefront operation is going smoothly. Big Sky's latest small business owner plans on acquiring a liquor license in the upcoming weeks, offering cocktails and beer along with the Big Apple-inspired Italian cuisine.

"The pizza market is still on the rise. In Jackson, for example, they opened another pizzeria about a year and a half ago," Hartman added. "And we have increased sales since then—which is crazy."

Reason #13

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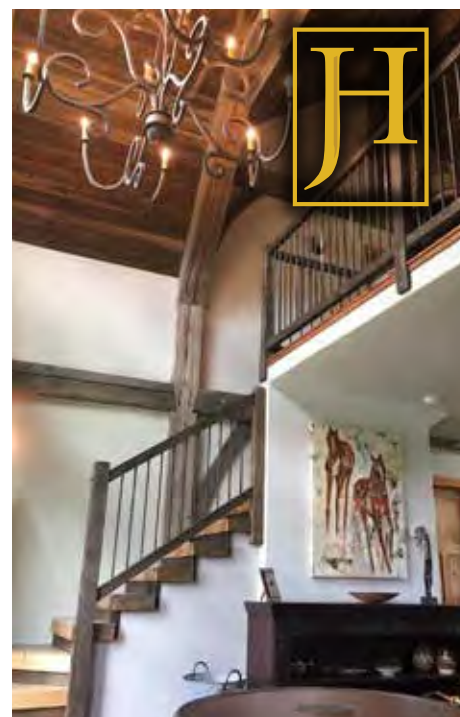
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At this event, Gallatin County along with Sanderson Stewart and Stahly Engineering will be in Big Sky to share the WHO-WHAT-WHERE-WHEN-HOW related to the beginning of the project's implementation in Spring 2020. Q&A will follow.

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The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce is a 501 (c)(6) nonprofit, membership organization



Making it in Big Sky: Sky Boutique

Q&A with Tanya Johnson

BY DOUG HARE

BIG SKY – A native of Kyiv, Ukraine, Tanya Johnson moved to the United States in her early 20s where she met her husband Andrew, eventually moving to Colorado. Now a family of four, with daughters Nicole (8) and Summer (2), the Johnsons were drawn towards southwest Montana for the same reasons that many families with young children end up in Big Sky: a strong school system and a host of outdoor activities to instill a love of nature in their kids early on.

Seven months ago, in early June, Johnson opened Sky Boutique in Town Center Plaza, a thriving dining and shopping district. Now with one full time and one part-time employee, Sky Boutique saw brisk business even during the shoulder season and, given its close proximity to The Wilson Hotel, should see plenty of foot traffic during the ski season.

Holding a master's degree in trade and economics, it was no surprise that Johnson had lucid answers to our questions about opening a small business in a ski town, commerce in Big Sky, and how better economic data could help local proprietors more accurately forecast their sales projections given the time of year.

Explore Big Sky: *What initially drew you to live in a ski town in Montana? Where were you based out of before making the move to Big Sky?*

Tanya Johnson: We lived in Breckenridge, Colorado. Breckenridge became busy and crowded, so we moved to Big Sky for its lack of crowds and traffic, and especially the great schools here and beautiful mountains of course.

EBS: *Can you tell me more about your history in retail? How did you find your niche in managing women's clothing boutiques?*

T.J.: I've always had a passion for fashion and when I started working in a boutique in Breckenridge, I found I really enjoyed working in the boutique atmosphere by providing a personal touch while assisting a customer in discovering something special in an intimate and relaxed setting.

EBS: *Tell me a little bit about your philosophy of retail. For starters, how did you go about finding which brands and types of accessories to put in your storefront?*

T.J.: Actually, [it's somewhat] the opposite. I like to get a feel for a place and the people who live or vacation there. Then I go on the search for the unique and tasteful things that best reflect their desires and needs. Personal touch and great customer service!

EBS: *What is something that you wish you had known before starting your own company in Big Sky?*

T.J.: It was very difficult to near impossible finding data regarding Big Sky's population and visitors, spending statistics and such. There is very little information to go on. Most of what we had to go on were newspaper articles about the town of Big Sky and Big Sky Resort development and real estate, our observations while visiting here, and the Big Sky Resort Area District tax historical data.

EBS: *What is the best business advice that you've received over the years?*

T.J.: Prepare a conservative and thorough business plan. Poke holes in it. Revise and improve it. Then keep updating it after the business opens, especially the financials.

EBS: *Who has been the most memorable customer that you've had in the store so far? Why?*

T.J.: We are very grateful for each and everyone who shops at our store and always very thankful for their support. Also, seeing returning customers makes us feel very happy.



Tanya Johnson, owner of Sky Boutique in Town Center Plaza, enjoys traveling to fashion hubs across the country to find the fashion items that best complement both the people who live in Big Sky and those who call it a favorite vacation destination. PHOTO COURTESY OF TANYA JOHNSON

EBS: *What is the biggest obstacle that you face running a business in a Montana ski town?*

T.J.: Boutiques have to remain relevant to boutique shoppers and their likes and desires. However, Big Sky is far removed from most of the centers of fashion. So I am constantly researching for next season's trends, and I have to make sure to travel to find the best there is to offer. Finding the right employees was a challenge, so we are very thankful for our two employees!

EBS: *How does the seasonality of Big Sky impact your bottom line? How did you approach the ebbs and flows of sales throughout the year?*

T.J.: We have to plan our financials to best take advantage of the high seasons of summer and winter, and build in a buffer to carry us through the shoulder seasons. Being this is our first year, this is still a very theoretical practice. However, we had a great summer and fall. Now, we are excited to see if the winter and spring do as well for us.

EBS: *Do you find yourself with many customers who are staying at The Wilson Hotel? Do you think that it has a potential to make Town Center a more robust shopping district?*

T.J.: Being located on Town Center Plaza definitely gives our store great exposure for boutique shoppers. The Wilson Hotel and Blue Buddha [Sushi Lounge] both drive traffic toward the Town Center Plaza as well. As development around the plaza continues, and the special events increase there, it will only make this a greater draw for everyone—especially boutique shoppers, we hope.

EBS: *How has the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce been helpful in making Sky Boutique a reality?*

T.J.: The promotion and exposure the Chamber gave us for our opening and Small Business Saturday was great too. Big Sky Town Center's promotion of our store and promotion of the plaza and special events there have been extremely beneficial to us as well.

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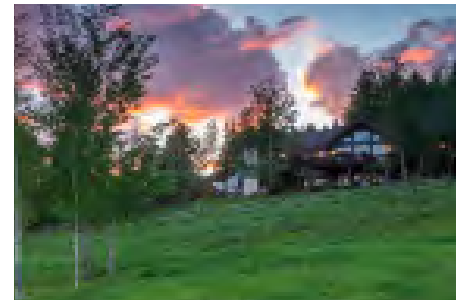


Royal Coachman Ranch
160 ACRES / \$5.9M



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail
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The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
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The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
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Lot 43: \$375K / 20 ACRES
Combined: \$699K



Lot 2 Big
20 ACR

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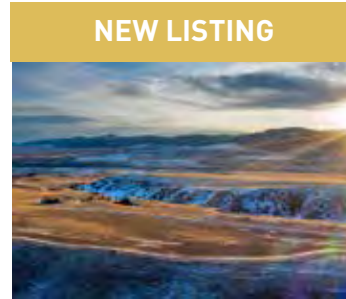
SxS Ranch
Bozeman, MT
483.78 ACRES / \$7.5M



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



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



380 Mountain Man Trail
Montana Ranch
20.8 ACRES / \$325K

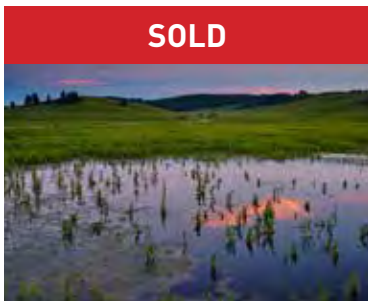


412 Enterprise Blvd., Unit 30
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1,304 SQ FT / \$315K

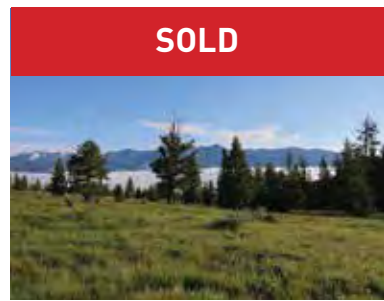


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1,204 SQ

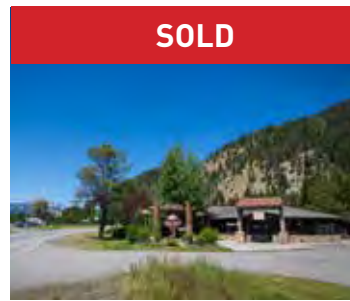
RECENTLY SOLD



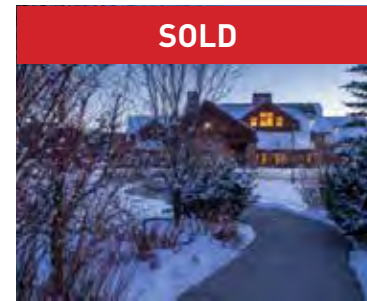
Yellowstone Ranch Preserve
List Price: \$19M



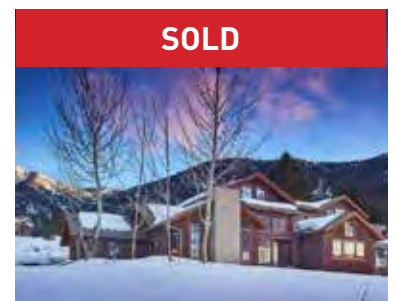
Mountain Meadows
120 Acres / \$3.495M



Big Sky Corner Property
List Price: \$3.24M

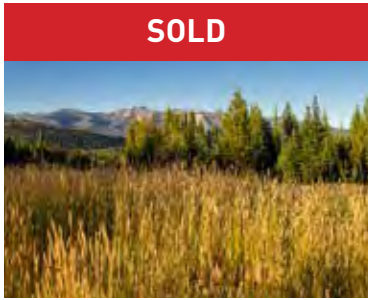


78 Meadow Village
Dr. Big Sky, MT
4,769 SQ FT / \$2.1M

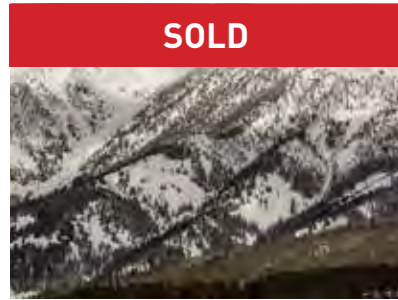


245 Rain in Face
3,446 SQ FT / \$1.695M

RECENTLY SOLD



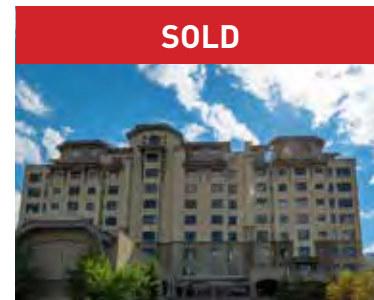
Lot 64 Goshawk
1.04 ACRES / \$775K



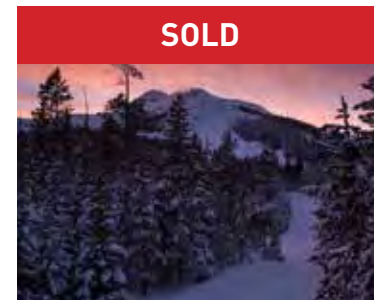
Lot 44 Diamond Hitch
1.25 ACRE / \$699K



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



Summit 911/912
List Price: \$595K



Lot 39 Diamond Hitch
1 ACRE / \$595K

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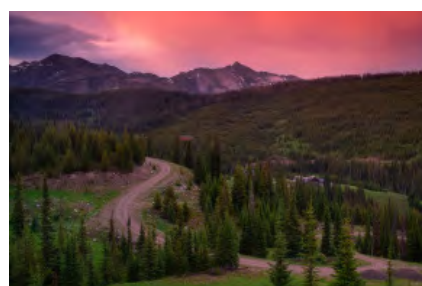
g Buck Road
ES / \$480K



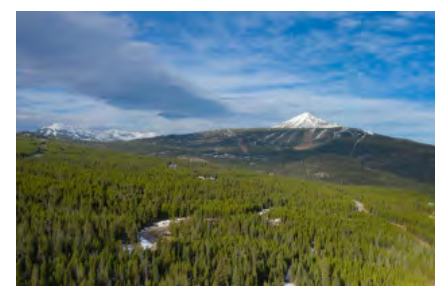
Lot 4 Beaver Creek
20 Acres / \$539K



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



Lot 3 Joy Road
6.83 Acres / \$395K



Lot 71 Morning Glory
3.65 Acres / \$375K

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FT / \$560,920



Marketplace Unit 202
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UNDER CONTRACT

47220 Gallatin Rd. Unit #2
840 SQ FT / \$149K



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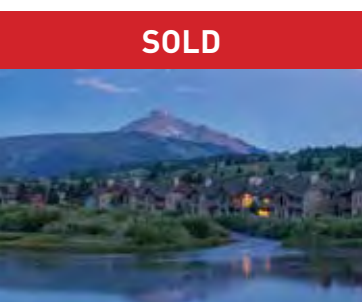


Airport Garages
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\$24.9K per unit
Taking reservations for
building G



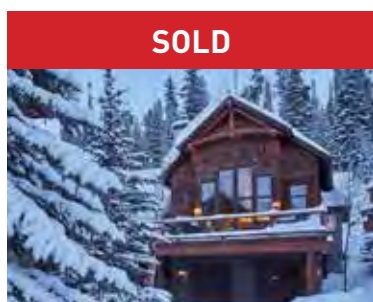
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Car Park Condo Unit E7
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SOLD

Crail Ranch Unit 40
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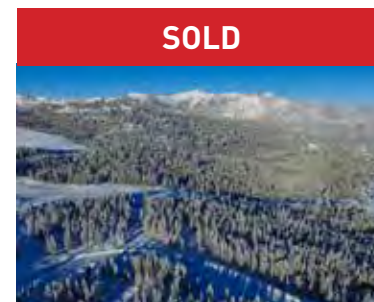
SOLD

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



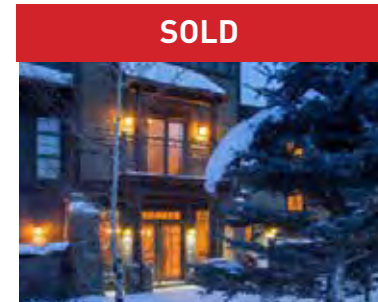
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2078 Little Coyote List
List Price: \$1.079M



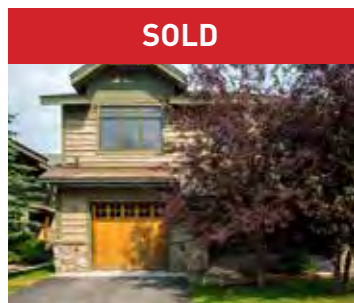
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Ski Tip Lot 10
List Price: \$975K



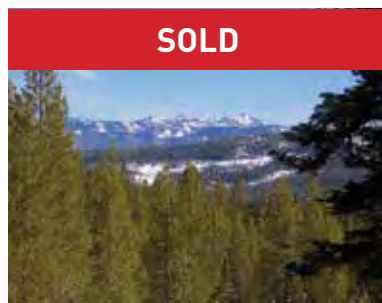
SOLD

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



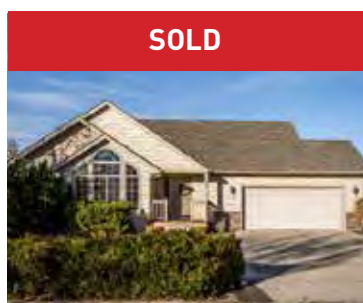
SOLD

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



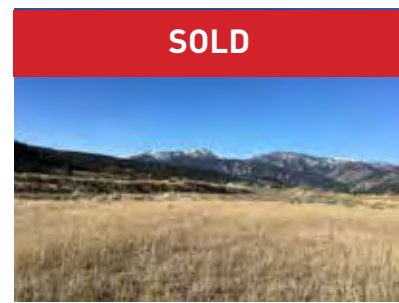
SOLD

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



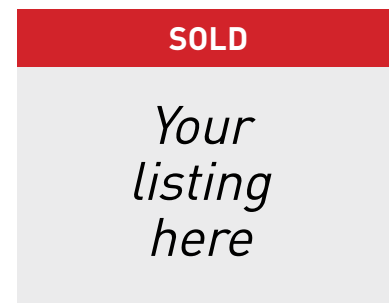
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Big Sky Resort's new general manager takes the helm

Troy Nedved brings background as outdoorsman, athlete, educator to the fore

BY DOUG HARE

BIG SKY – Troy Nedved grew up in the Black Hills of South Dakota, in the Rapid City area, where his passion for athletics and the outdoors blossomed from an early age. “My family didn’t ski. I didn’t have the money to ski. So I went with church groups at night to Deer Mountain Ski Area which doesn’t exist anymore,” Nedved said. “All I knew was night skiing and I never had a ski lesson—which is interesting considering my future job, yeah that’s been a core: ski instructor.”

Nedved chose to study at Montana State University intending to go to law school, attaining both a criminal justice and biology degree, when life intervened. Throughout college, he worked at Bridger Bowl as a ski instructor to obtain a free pass. He also started working for the National Park Service during the summers while still at MSU, eventually becoming a permanent employee in 2000. He did not exactly sign up for a desk job, spending most of his time outside conducting forestry and park management, including firefighting by helicopter.

Nedved lived in a teepee in Gardiner for two years down on the banks of the Yellowstone River across from the Yellowstone Raft Company, where he developed world-class abilities as a kayaker.

“The culture around rafting and kayaking is pretty heavy and I connected with some of the folks around there that were pretty into it. That was the start of that,” Nedved said of his early days in the park. “My Yellowstone days, I spent all my time when I was not working on the water.” And even when he was working, and someone needed to brave a stretch of Class V rapids for a rescue mission or body recovery, he was the one for the job.

When Teton Gravity Research started making kayak movies, Nedved and his friends got the call as well. “We were pioneering lines that had never been done before: in Costa Rica and Nepal, but also stretches of river in Montana in the Crazy Mountains of Big Timber Creek and lots of runs in Beartooths that had never been floated,” Nedved recounted.

“We spent a lot of time looking at maps, hiking around the mountains, finding stuff that was runnable versus not. It was a stage of kayaking community in Montana that we got started. Now the next generation of these kids is blowing my mind—doing things that we didn’t even think was possible.”

Nedved is an athlete’s athlete. “I love competing in just about anything. When I was first in Montana, I found out about Powder 8s at Bridger Bowl. It was a cool event and we got into it,” he said in a typically modest way. “It was just another thing to hone your skills as a ski instructor and a skiing professional.”

Nedved has since won the national Powder 8 competition five times and competed on ESPN at the highest level of the niche sport in the Powder 8 World Championships held at Mike Wiegele’s heliskiing operation in Canada. Even some twenty years later, he is still finding podiums in the aesthetically appealing alpine events with longtime partner Nick Herrin, currently the CEO of the Professional Ski Instructors of America. Nedved credits his year-round athletic pursuits for what keeps him in the condition to still make perfect turns..

The South Dakota-native runs in almost every 5k running race in town but prefers the longer mountain runs like The Rut 28k or 50k race. A few years back, he found a passion for Nordic skiing, which



An avid endurance athlete, Troy Nedved took over as General Manager of Operations for Big Sky Resort last September and looks forward to continuing to improve lift infrastructure and snow-making capabilities on Andesite and Lone mountains. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

he now considers his favorite endurance sport. And this year, he raced the 30-mile Big Sky Biggie course and took home third place.

Last September, Nedved was promoted from Vice President of Mountain Services to General Manager of Operations for Big Sky Resort. Having worked during the winters in some capacity for the resort for 23 years, including roles in Mountain Sports, Guest Services, Base Camp and serving on the resort’s executive team.

In his new role as general manager, Nedved will lead all operations teams at the resort, including mountain operations, mountain services, mountain sports, lodging, food and beverage, IT, human resources, and the rental and retail divisions. He feels up to the task. While the new GM is impressed with the results of the renovation of the Mountain Mall, now dubbed The Exchange, and pleased with how the newly installed RFID technology makes loading lifts a more seamless operation, he is not one to rest on his laurels.

“One thing that is important to me is obviously our lift infrastructure, which our ownership is so committed to growing,” Nedved said about the future of the resort. “As Stephen [Kircher] has said before, we want to be state-of-the-art. We don’t just want to be the best here, we want to be the best in the world.”

Nedved is excited for the plans for the new Swift Current 6 lift next season, which is slated to be the fastest in North America, but he is also working hard on a new gondola lift project which is already deep in the planning stages. The new man-in-charge of the resort also wants to improve snow-making capabilities to keep up with the increased lift capacities.

“Big Sky offers a ski experience unlike any other in North America. It has a European feel to it with the Alpine experience, the exposure, the size and scale are unlike anything else. You have some other unique mountains that are more boutique-ish: the Tellurides, the Jackson Holes, the Sun Valleys,” Nedved said about why he won’t take a cookie cutter approach to his new job.

None of them have more than an acre per skier for the experience like we do, and I think that matches Montana, who we are and who we’ve always been. I think we need to embrace that and not make a shift to what the rest of the ski industry does because that’s the pattern.”

Life 101

2020 The Year of Seeing Clearly



BY LINDA ARNOLD
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It's 2020. A clean slate—yours to create!

The beginning of a new year is my favorite time, holding the promise of 365 delicious days, 52 wonderful weeks and 12 marvelous months.

A Year of Answers

Taking some creative license with the numeric description of 20/20, I've dubbed it "the year of seeing clearly." The book, "Simple Abundance" says that "some years there are questions, and some years there are answers." With a name like 20/20, I'm thinking this will surely be a year of answers.

My usual tendency is to blast out of the gate with a long list of plans. This year I've developed a discipline I call the One-Thirty Plan. It's a simple yet sustainable model.

Day by Day

We're all creatures of habit. That's why the One-Thirty Plan is built around doing one thing for 30 days:

1. Write down two major goals for 2020. Be as specific as possible.
2. Break down each goal into three steps to get there.
3. Each month take one of the steps and practice it for those 30 days. Resist the temptation to jump in any further.
4. The following month, add the second step to the mix, while continuing the first one.
5. By the end of the first quarter (March), you'll have consistently practiced each of your steps for your first goal for 30 days—more than enough time to form a new habit.
6. Beginning in April, start on your second goal, to culminate in June.
7. July-December: reinforce these two goals or consider adding another.

The path to lasting change is taking baby steps and building on those.

Have You Let Yourself Down Before?

We've all been there. We're gung-ho on Day One. Then old patterns rear their ugly heads.

Maybe you're just not thinking small enough. According to a research study at Stanford University on "Habiteers," you need to think tiny. Instead of vowing to go running every morning, just lace up your running shoes each day for one week.

That's it. You've met your goal. Put an "X" on your chart next to the activity. Just set the bar higher the following week.

Instant Success

The key is building on small successes. Then you can take the next step and the next one. Do one pushup instead of ten. Floss one tooth, not all of them.

The secret is you're "rewiring" your brain all along the way to register successes from Day One.

Celebration is crucial. Think of those fist pumps athletes use and anchor them in with an expression like "yesssss."

"Your brain wants to feel happy and excited," according to that Stanford study. Do your new habit enough times, and your brain starts saying, "I get happy" when I do this.

It's One Thirty All Year Long

No matter what time your watch shows, it's always One Thirty when it comes to your plan. Every day you "get" to anchor in your success even further.

Even if you rewire your brain for the addition of "only" two major lifestyle changes all year, this could be light years beyond what you've accomplished before.

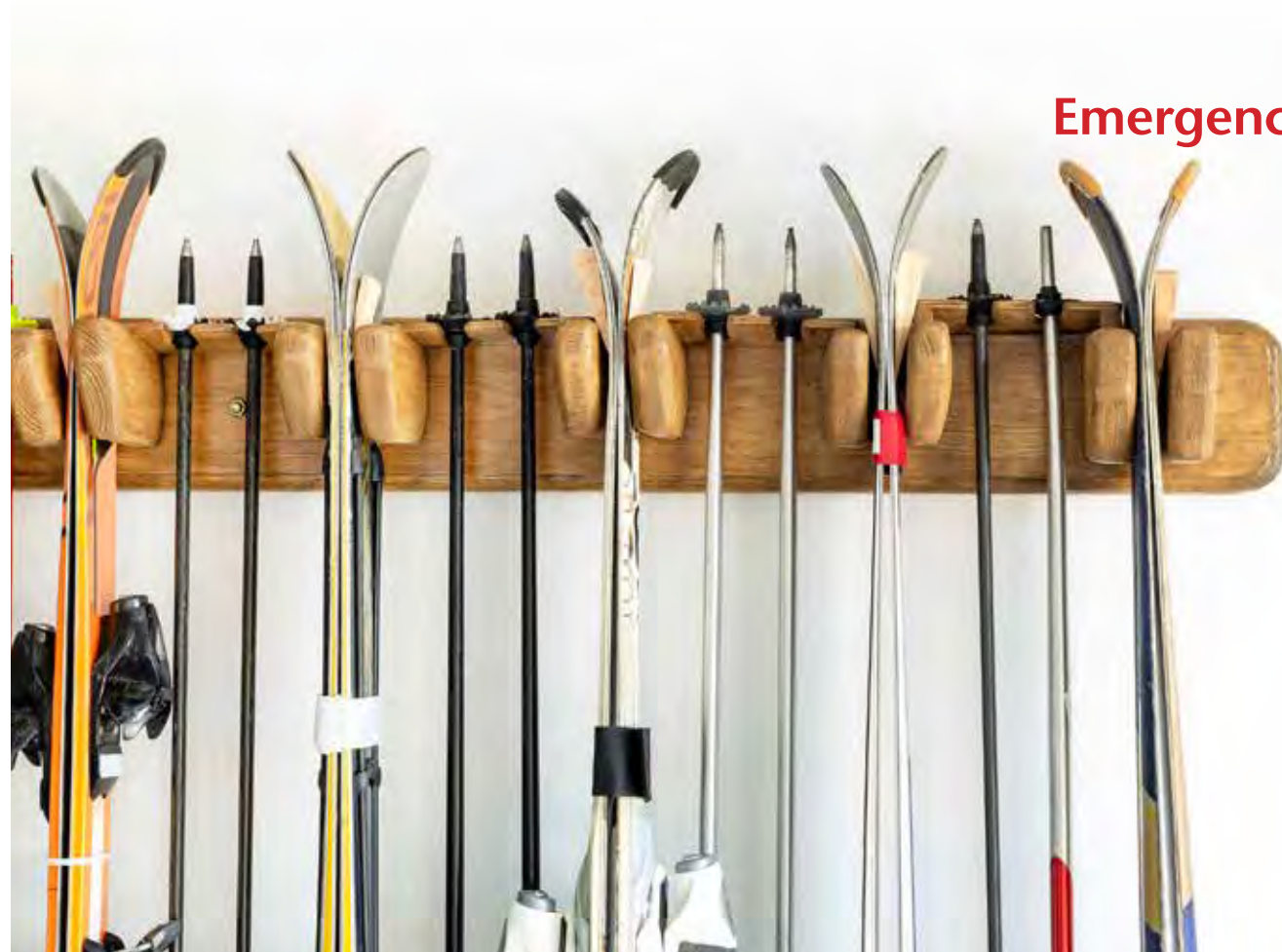
Your internal trust meter starts to believe you really can do it this time. Cue the song, "I Can See Clearly Now."

2020—bring it on!

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 information on her books

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American Life in Poetry: Column 770

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. POET LAUREATE

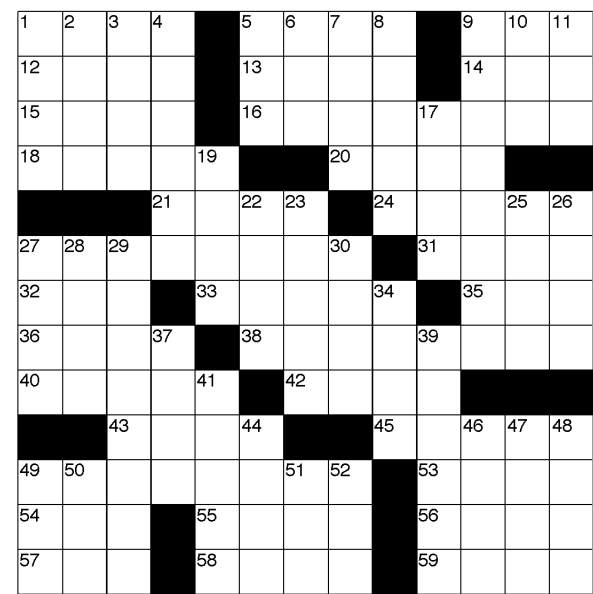
Alberto Rios is a highly acclaimed American poet who lives and teaches in Arizona. I found this poem of community and peace in *Poetry of Presence: An Anthology of Mindfulness Poems*, published by Grayson Books of West Hartford, Connecticut. The most recent book by Alberto Rios is *A Small Story about the Sky*, Copper Canyon Press.

<p>We Are of a Tribe</p> <p>We plant seeds in the ground And dreams in the sky,</p> <p>Hoping that, someday, the roots of one Will meet the upstretched limbs of the other.</p> <p>It has not happened yet. We share the sky, all of us, the whole world:</p> <p>Together, we are a tribe of eyes that look upward, Even as we stand on uncertain ground.</p> <p>The earth beneath us moves, quiet and wild,</p>	<p>Its boundaries shifting, its muscles wavering.</p> <p>The dream of sky is indifferent to all this, Impervious to borders, fences, reservations.</p> <p>The sky is our common home, the place we all live. There we are in the world together.</p> <p>The dream of sky requires no passport. Blue will not be fenced. Blue will not be a crime.</p> <p>Look up. Stay awhile. Let your breathing slow.</p> <p>Know that you always have a home here.</p>
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Celtic land measure</p> <p>5 Blood (pref.)</p> <p>9 Sheep's cry</p> <p>12 Scientific name (suf.)</p> <p>13 Wings</p> <p>14 Warp yarn</p> <p>15 Asterisk</p> <p>16 Wildly talk</p> <p>18 Humpback salmon</p> <p>20 Time period</p> <p>21 Afresh</p> <p>24 Dwelling</p> <p>27 Ban</p> <p>31 Opening</p> <p>32 Mulberry of India</p> <p>33 Boston airport</p> <p>35 Promise to pay</p> <p>36 Old-style verb</p> <p>38 4th incarnation of Vishnu</p> <p>40 Yataghan</p> <p>42 Assam hills</p> <p>43 Region</p> | <p>45 Stand</p> <p>49 Hemp</p> <p>53 Heb. measure</p> <p>54 Darya River</p> <p>55 Course</p> <p>56 Son of Ruth</p> <p>57 Loose woman (abbr.)</p> <p>59 Pulpit</p> | <p>ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE</p> <p>D W I R A T E S S</p> <p>H E A D O R E A C C T</p> <p>A L L S P I C E T H A R</p> <p>B E E A S A N A O B I</p> <p>L I T S A D O</p> <p>P I C U L E T M O N A D</p> <p>A C E R R I N B E M A</p> <p>C A L I N P O O L R O D</p> <p>A D I T S M A</p> <p>E E N B A D E N E S K</p> <p>T A E L C O G I T A T E</p> <p>E S S E T A A R E A</p> <p>T E A T H Y C N N</p> | <p>DOWN</p> <p>1 Money</p> <p>2 Eight (pref.)</p> <p>3 Loyal</p> <p>4 Low caste</p> <p>5 Exclamation</p> <p>6 Guido's note (2 words)</p> <p>7 S.A. rodent</p> <p>8 Home of Circe</p> <p>9 Flowering tree</p> <p>10 Father: Arabic</p> <p>11 Presidential nickname</p> <p>17 Cribbage term</p> <p>19 Indigo dye</p> <p>22 Black</p> | <p>23 Stiff fabric</p> <p>25 Entry</p> <p>26 Needle case</p> <p>27 Overshadow</p> <p>28 7th incarnation of Vishnu</p> <p>29 Frankincense</p> <p>30 Buddhist female deity</p> <p>34 Hindu cobra</p> <p>37 Coastal bird</p> <p>39 Sandstorm</p> <p>41 "Giant" ranch</p> <p>44 Down with (Fr., 2 words)</p> <p>46 Cordage fiber</p> <p>47 Think</p> <p>48 Mother of Brunhilde</p> <p>49 Vehicle compartment</p> <p>50 Male friend (Fr.)</p> <p>51 Amazon tributary</p> <p>52 Sanskrit (abbr.)</p> |
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Corner Quote

“Stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice. One may protest against evil; it can be exposed and, if need be, prevented by use of force. Evil always carries within itself the germ of its own subversion in that it leaves behind in human beings at least a sense of unease. Against stupidity we are defenseless. Neither protests nor the use of force accomplish anything here; reasons fall on deaf ears; facts that contradict one’s prejudgment simply need not be believed—in such moments the stupid person even becomes critical—and when facts are irrefutable they are just pushed aside as inconsequential, as incidental. In all this the stupid person, in contrast to the malicious one, is utterly self satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous by going on the attack. For that reason, greater caution is called for when dealing with a stupid person than with a malicious one. Never again will we try to persuade the stupid person with reasons, for it is senseless and dangerous.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*

BIG SKY BEATS



“The Gospel of Mary”
– Josh Ritter, *The Milk Carton Kids*

In October, singer-songwriter Josh Ritter set aside his acclaimed romantic narratives at an NPR Tiny Desk appearance to express political commentary through three beautifully composed songs, which he performed as part of a power trio alongside Jason Isbell and Amanda Shires. His lyrics, which explore the tragedy incited by current U.S. border patrol policies, paired with the expert strum of Isbell’s guitar and Shire’s violin, is enough to bring one to tears. Ritter’s new song, “The Gospel of Mary,” debuted at the Tiny Desk performance, parallels the journey of Mary, Joseph and Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt to that of modern-day refugees. After releasing one of the other songs Ritter played for NPR, the Moscow, Idaho native commented that he often avoids writing “overtly political songs,” but recently his frustrations prompted him to express his dissatisfaction through chosen craft.

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SECTION 4: ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & DINING

Album review pg. 46

Adult coloring pg. 50

The Spicy Goat Dip pg. 54

Local author pens ‘Elkwood,’ a Montana fable

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – When Big Sky local Tracie Pabst set out to write her novel “Elkwood” seven years ago, she wasn’t trying to change the world. The story, largely inspired by Pabst’s 15-year residency in Montana, follows the adventure of an English elk, aptly named Elkwood Elkington III, whose travels throughout Montana allow for meetings with various amicable wildlife characters—with equally cheeky names to boot.

The narrative was initially simple, a way to express fun and whimsical ideas that came to Pabst as she wrote. What “Elkwood” evolved into, though, was something that would not only transform Pabst but undoubtedly the many others who read it.

“Through the lives of these animals, [you are forced] to take an introspective look at your life, at your friendships, at change,” Pabst said. The author emphasized that among many themes that support the fable, friendship is the most evident.

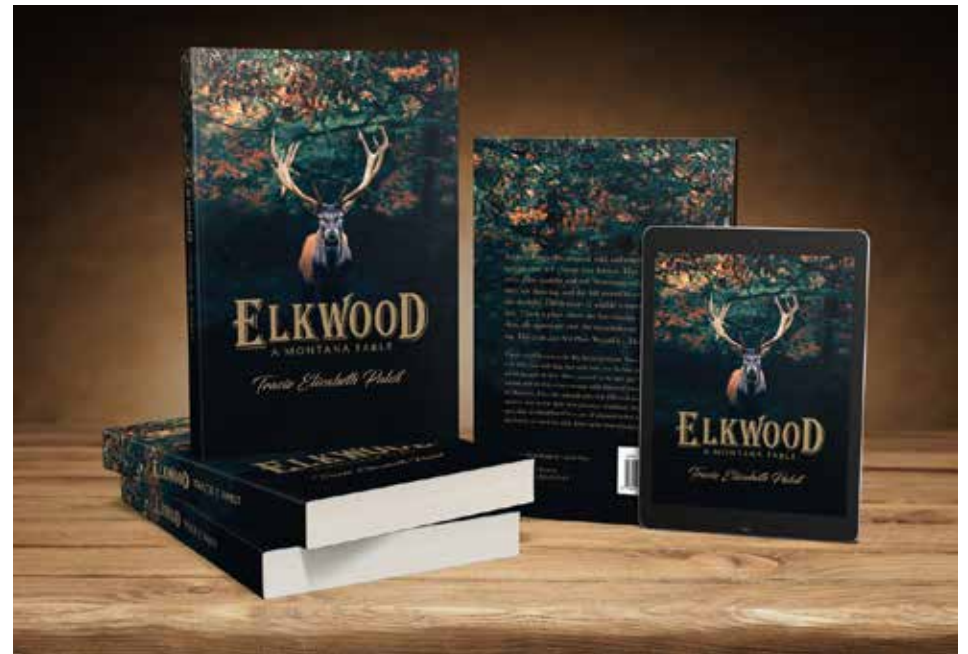
Pabst, after neglecting the finished first half of her story for a few years, returned to it after having been inspired by the line “never let go of a friend.” To her amusement, she found the same exact phrase was already present in a previously composed chapter.

Pabst asserts, after having completed the book and seeing how the motif of friendship ultimately bound the narrative together, the messaging surrounding the importance of friendship is one that could serve society particularly well. “Especially in today’s climate, friendships are broken. We need to be reminded of their importance.”

Pabst wasn’t always a writer, in a past chapter owning the Eat Me Cookie Company, formerly located in the Gallatin Valley Mall. Still, a



Author Tracie Pabst self-published “Elkwood” roughly seven years after putting ideas to paper. Now, she hopes to get her book in the hands of as many people as possible to inspire them with the story that changed her life. PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACIE PABST



“Elkwood,” a newly released book authored by a Big Sky local, chronicles the formative journey of a young elk searching for purpose and identity in Big Sky, Montana. PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACIE PABST

spirit of story was always present—the entrepreneur gave each of the available cookie varieties for sale a wildlife identity. For example, the favored chocolate chip cookie was the “Big Elk,” also available as the “Big Elk with Nuts.”

Those characters, formerly assigned to Pabst’s cookies, found a home in the story of “Elkwood,” where each plays a role in the eponymous protagonist’s quest for purpose.

And not only are the animals recognizable to those acquainted with the Big Sky area, the setting will ring familiar, as well. For example, while hiking one day with her dogs on the summer slopes of Big Sky, Pabst found a trickling stream that cascaded over a lichen-speckled rock slate. Being a baker, Pabst delighted in the resemblance the pattern the plants bore to chocolate chips; she dubbed it the chocolate chip waterfall and wove it into Elkwood’s story.

The climax of the fable, in which Elkwood clings to the cliffs of Beehive Peak, may also prompt knowing smiles from locals.

Friends of Pabst have returned to her after reading “Elkwood,” thanking her for sharing a story that had the power to initiate change in their lives. “I see very clearly that God led me to [publish Elkwood]—this is what my entire life has been about and there is no doubt in my mind,” Pabst said.

A testimonial from the book’s website spoke to Pabst’s belief “Elkwood” is an essential read: “The parables found within Elkwood address common [behavioral] traits prevalent in today’s society and remind us that we are all part of one united herd.”

Now available at multiple locations across Big Sky as well as online, Pabst encourages all readers to pick up a copy and “lose yourself in the story ... find yourself in the herd.”

Pabst will host her second book signing at the Moonlight Lodge on Jan. 3, 3-5 p.m.

'Who' by The Who



BY SAMUEL ORAZEM

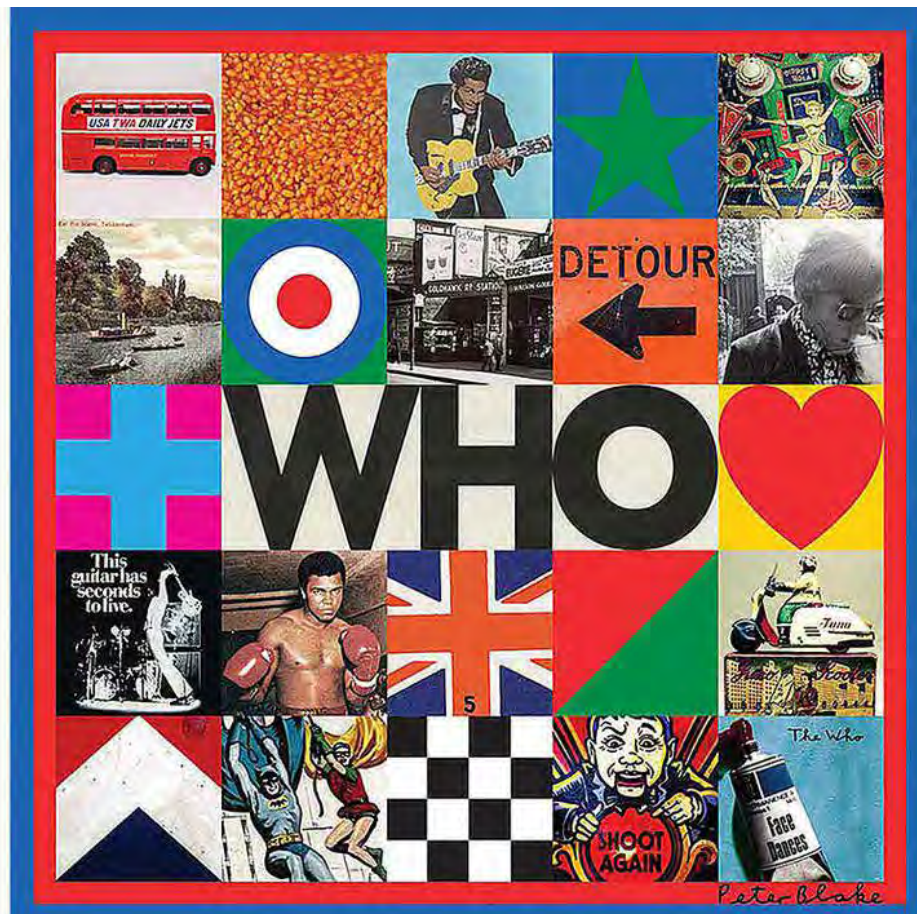
Thirteen years ago, the three surviving members of The Who released an album entitled "Endless Wire." As with almost all reunion albums produced by legendary rock bands, it attempted to both reproduce the vigor of the band's former identity and build upon it with experience gained from decades of artistic growth. "Endless Wire" was met with reception akin to that of most reunion albums—outspoken distaste from disgruntled fans wishing the album had not strayed so far from the band's roots.

Luckily, the Hall of Fame band's latest album "Who," released on Dec. 6, 2019, acknowledged past missteps and fashioned a relatively enjoyable track list. Now down to but two surviving original members, Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey, the band did its best to recapture the spirit that led to their storied careers and indelible influence on the genre of rock 'n' roll. If anything, one could argue this semi-meta offering is a maturation of their iconic style—but in the world of performance, rarely does maturation denote elevation. Perhaps the photo of Muhammad Ali, surrounded by other images signifying decades come and gone on the album's cover, acknowledges their best work will always live in the previous millennia.

The leading "All This Music Must Fade" invokes The Who's characteristic irreverence and rebellious nature with Daltrey declaring, "I don't care, I know you're gonna hate this song." The majority of the album continues to tread on what devout fans will feel to be comfortable, familiar instrumental ground. Meanwhile, the lyrics reinforce Daltrey and Townshend's admittance this may be their final effort. Quite nobly, however, they refuse to let go of The Who's soul in putting their enigmatic approach to pasture.

"Detour" is the album's obvious standout, and if any track from the album stands the test of time, it will be "Detour" on the basis of its dance-inducing vibrancy.

It's quite troubling: The final four tracks close out the album with an uninspiring sleepiness lasting a quarter of the album's total duration. The penultimate song, "Got Nothing to Prove," is an apt commentary on the band's legendary status, but these final fifteen minutes paint Townshend and Daltrey as jaded stars that have nothing they actually want to prove.



'Who' is an enjoyable effort from two aging stars who know they already have a place in the pantheon of rock's greatest bands. ALBUM COVER COURTESY OF THE WHO

On the whole, Townshend and Daltrey have done a wonderful job of adapting to a reality where their compatriots have passed and the scene has radically change, but managing to bottle the last of their winning, youthful charm anyway. The return to their roots makes for a pleasing reunion, but does not quite live up to the exorbitantly high standards set by The Who in their heyday. The novelty of this being new material will soon wear off.

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REEL REVIEW

“Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker”



BY ANNA HUSTED
EBS FILM CRITIC

“Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker” is exactly what fans want it to be. From the first moment when we see the Millennium Falcon light-speed galaxy jumping, to the final double light saber battle, the movie delivers on all the classically fantastic moments of the franchise. But in that sense, it’s also predictable, yet curiously leaves us wondering about a lot.

Rey (played by a somehow more beautiful than ever Daisy Ridley) must finish what Luke started: find the hiding place of the evil Emperor and defeat him. The biggest obstacle is no one knows how to get to the unknown Sith planet without a Sith wayfinder, which only Kylo Ren has.

As expected, Rey and Ren face off in multiple epic showdowns, yet in this installment their ability to psychically connect reaches new, visually phenomenal levels. There is one instance where Rey transfers feelings to Kylo Ren through distances of space and time that are unprecedented—even by Obi Wan Kenobi standards of Force-wielding.

Throughout the film, we meet with old and new faces, such as an introduction to an adorable, yet scarred, Sith droid—my new favorite—who speaks bluntly and says “no thank you” when approached by strangers. While Rey, Poe, Finn, Chewy, and droids C3P0 and BB-8 travel from planet to planet trying to obtain the wayfinder, we also discover that Rey’s kindness is even more powerful than the Force. Admittedly, it’s almost as cheesy as it sounds.

Yet, it’s hard to forget that it will always be the characters and their often corny relationships that make the Star Wars franchise great. They are why we watch these movies across generations, and “The Rise of Skywalker” gives us some touching and fun moments with those intergalactic souls.

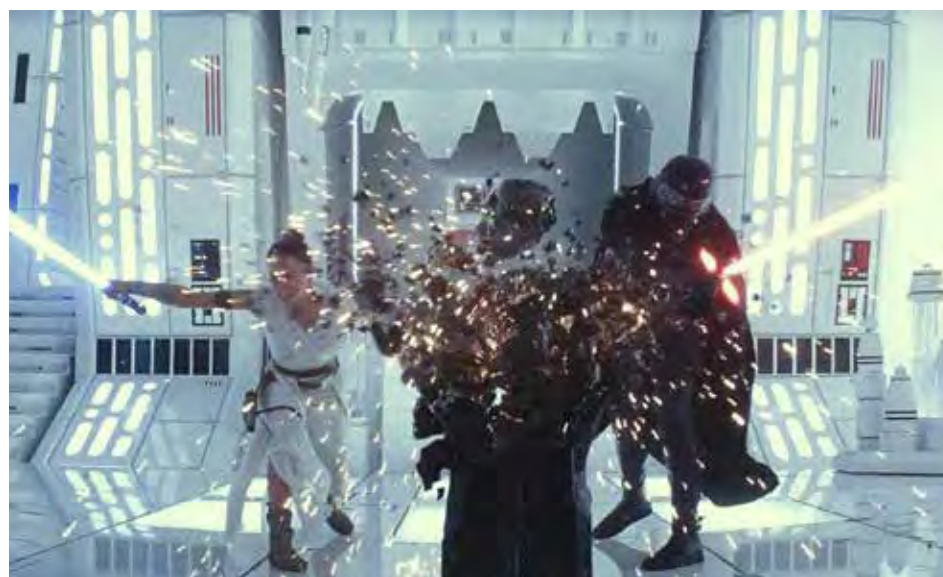
Unfortunately, unanswered questions make “The Rise of Skywalker” fall short of the prestige of most of the other Star Wars films.

Try this frustrating example for size: At one point, Finn mentions something seemingly leading to Rey that he never brings up again, and there’s no explainable reason for director Abrams to not revisit the thread. Worse still, it wasn’t something we, the audience, were even looking for. When the film is tied up in a mostly neat little bow, why leave a dangling question?

Overall, “The Rise of Skywalker” is entertaining and fun. The Star Wars world building continues to impress and the flying and fighting choreography reaches a new level when comparing the last three Star Wars installments.

You’ll find most moviegoers satisfied, but I continue to wonder if there isn’t something greater Disney and Abrams could have achieved, something more thematically spiritual and mentally stimulating that would have left fans astonished by this epic story’s conclusion. Or maybe we’ve come to expect too much from what was once just kids in costumes and George Lucas playing with model toys—although I doubt that. After all, Lucas was a master storyteller and filmmaker. He gave us a world that didn’t exist, a journey we all wanted to go on, and heroes that always shot first.

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



Rey (Daisy Ridley) and Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) battle through space and time, arguably the coolest part of “Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker.” Credit: Lucasfilm Ltd

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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Coloring for holiday stress relief

There's science to back it

EBS STAFF

Remember naptime, those glorious moments in preschool where your teacher not only allowed you to sleep during the day but also mandated the practice?

Well, for those of us still working toward a comfortable retirement, it's rather unlikely that a sanctioned snooze will ever be a part of one's day. Bah humbug.

Hold hope, a pastime of childhood might just be a worthy substitute: coloring. While it might not get back extra hours of missed sleep, studies have shown that adults that color are able to reduce stress dramatically while also boosting creativity.

"The action involves both logic, by which we color forms, and creativity, when mixing and matching colors. This incorporates the areas of the cerebral cortex involved in vision and fine motor skills," psychologist Gloria Martínez Alaya told the Huffington Post. "The relaxation that it provides lowers the activity of the amygdala, a basic part of our brain involved in controlling emotion that is affected by stress."

According to Neuroscience News, a study conducted at the University of West England

found that every single participant in a 2018 study reported decreases in stress and anxiety along with increases in creativity and mindfulness after just 20 minutes of coloring.

Doodling, free form drawing, on the other hand, did not yield similar results.

And what more perfect timing than the holidays to pick up a marker, crayons or colored pencils for the first time in perhaps decades, with Healthline, a consumer health information site based in San Francisco, reporting that their 2015 study revealed more than 60 percent of Americans report "very or somewhat" elevated levels of stress during the holidays.

The reasons for such spikes range from financial woes in buying gifts and travel to the stresses of gathering family in one place where negative, even toxic, dynamics resurface.

So this holiday season, join the youngsters of the clan for a bit of coloring, starting with this regionally appropriate grizzly. The results might just astonish.

To purchase a self-love gift this holiday season in the form of an "adult coloring book"—yes, they make those—visit amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com or michaels.com, among other vendors, for a wide selection of themes and options.

Color within the lines of this bear—just like they taught you in preschool!





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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, JAN. 3 – THURSDAY, JAN. 16

If your event falls between Jan. 17 and Jan. 30, please submit it by Jan. 8 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

FRIDAY, JAN. 3

Premiere: 'Hocked'
The Ellen Theater, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Live Music: Daniel Kosel
Gallatin Riverhouse Grill, 7:30 p.m.

Live Music: Brian J. Stumpf
Blend Big Sky, 8 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 4

Sweat and Serve Saturday
Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.
Learn more at movingmountainsmt.com

SUNDAY, JAN. 5

Live Music: Hawthorne Roots Duo
Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 8

Presenting Prehistory: Paleontology Speaker Series
Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 9

Big Sky Tiger Grant Public Involvement Meeting
Community Room, Big Sky Medical Center, 5:30 p.m.

Adult Pick Up Hockey
Big Sky Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

Live Music: John Hannahs
Blend Big Sky, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 10

Live Music: Yonder Mountain String Band
Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Trivia Night
Lone Peak Cinema, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 11

Sweat and Serve Saturday
Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.
Learn more at movingmountainsmt.com

Bozeman Winter Farmer's Market
Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture, 9 a.m.

Live Performance: The 5 Browns
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JAN. 12

Live Music: The Travelin' Kind
Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

WORTH THE DRIVE



Humorous, scary and laden with the human condition, 'Parasite' is a Korean export you shouldn't miss—especially on a big screen right in downtown Bozeman. POSTER COURTESY OF IMDB

FILM: "PARASITE"

The Ellen Theater,
Bozeman
Wednesday, Jan. 8,
7 p.m.

Over the last decade, Korean media exports have taken the globe by storm, with K-pop—Korean pop music—netting some \$5 billion alone. On the big screen, it seems that Korean filmmakers have a newfound knack for bone-chilling horror, producing some of the most noteworthy of the decade.

Take "Train to Busan" (2016), a zombie flick that boasts an impressive 93 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, taking in nearly \$100 million at the box office, or "The Wailing" (2016), scoring 99 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, of which "The New York Times" wrote "Handle with care." The recently released "Parasite," which screens at The Ellen Theater in Bozeman on Jan. 8, chronicles a tale of greed and class discrimination, in which two families fight violently over secrets they hold over each other. Claiming the Palm d'Or, the highest award available at the Cannes Film Festival, among other accolades, the film has earned more than \$110 million at the box office—all with a budget of only \$11 million. The film, also earning a 99 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, is a perfect black comedy to shake off the holiday spirit, indulging in something darker and more tangible than reindeer and Mr. Claus.

Visit theellentheater.com for more information

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 15

Science Inquiry Lecture: The Yellowstone Volcano
Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 16

Live Music: Shooter Jennings
Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Adult Pick Up Hockey
Big Sky Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

Live Music: Tom Marino
Blend Big Sky, 8 p.m.

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Annual Auction for the Arts slated for Feb. 29 at Wilson Hotel

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

BIG SKY— Tickets are now on sale for the Arts Council of Big Sky’s eighth annual fundraising art auction event on Saturday, Feb. 29, at The Wilson Hotel from 6-10 p.m.

This event, which is the only dedicated fundraiser for the Arts Council of Big Sky, includes a quick-finish, live and silent auctions, music, food and drinks.

The live auction will feature artwork by renowned artists Kevin Red Star, Carol Hagan, Julie Chapman, Terry Cooke Hall, Rachel Warner, Cyrus Walker, Ben Pease, Amber Blazina, Barb Swartz-Karst, Miles Glynn, Carol Spielman, Harry Koyama, Tabby Ivy, Tom Gilleon and Carrie Wild, among others.

Many of the artists will be completing works during the quick-finish portion of the event, and then those final, one-of-a-kind pieces will be auctioned off later in the evening.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive early and witness the pieces come to life right before their eyes, before being finished and framed on-site. The silent auction includes a variety of work from local and regional artists.

The event is sponsored by Big Sky Sotheby’s International Realty.

Please visit bigskyarts.org or call the ACBS office at (406) 995-2742 for more information and to purchase tickets.



“Dust Storm” PAINTING BY KEVIN RED STAR

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BIG SKY BITES

The Spicy Goat dip

Disclaimer: this recipe contains no goat

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

At Outlaw Partners, EBS staff included, we like to eat.

As proof, the office kitchen table is perennially topped with bags of chips and candies, dips and salsas, donuts and pieces of cake ready for the taking; we find these delights not only sweeten slower moments, but also render a bona fide family atmosphere, bringing us together for conversation and jokes.

But the team is also fiercely competitive in their gluttony, putting taste buds to the test in an annual cook-off. Late this November, coworkers cast their lots in crafting a champion dip in the pursuit of the hardware: a highly coveted token of culinary supremacy.

This year's winner, ME Brown, graphic designer at Outlaw, effortlessly swept the competition with her "The Spicy Goat" dip, a delicious amalgamation of beef, bison, pork, red pepper jelly, Sriracha, brown sugar, cinnamon and a few other choice flavors.

For context, ME's dip received seven votes—the closest competitor received two.

Served with kettle-cooked potato chips, her spicy and sweet dip was easily among the best I'd ever had, if not the best.

Maybe it was the equal parts bison, beef and ground pork, or the liberal application of Sriracha sauce. Perhaps the mounds of goat cheese, scoops of red pepper jelly, and dashes of cinnamon and red pepper flakes were the deciding factors.

In all, this curious and novel synthesis of flavors captured attentions at the dip-off, fixing eyes to a crockpot of mysterious sanguine dip that perfectly complemented the crunchy saltiness of the chips. Some might even allege that collusion garnered votes for any dips other than ME's.

One thing is certain, we are blessed the young design talent decided to share this recipe after graciously receiving her prize.

Recipe:

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

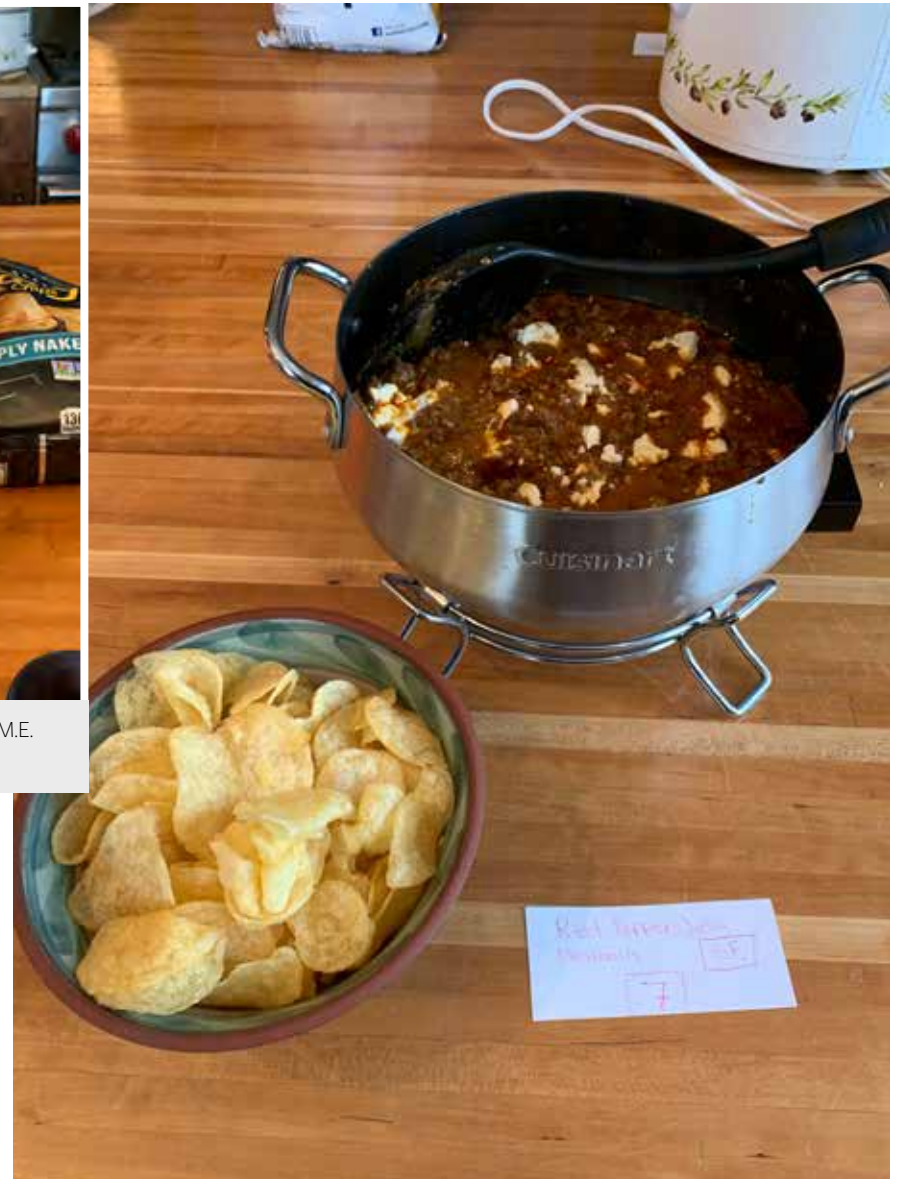
Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1/3 pound ground beef
- 1/3 pound ground bison
- 1/3 pound ground pork
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon



The coveted hardware PHOTO BY M.E. BROWN



"The Spicy Goat," in living color PHOTO BY M.E. BROWN

- 3/4 cup red pepper jelly
- 1/2 cup Sriracha hot sauce
- 1 tablespoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup goat cheese
- 1 large bag plain kettle cooked potato chips

Instructions:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat
2. Add the meat, mincing as you cook until well-mixed and without clumps
3. Cook 6-8 minutes, until cooked-through and browned
4. Reduce to a simmer
5. Mix in brown sugar, cinnamon and red pepper jelly
6. Stir in Sriracha, red pepper flakes and cayenne pepper
7. Refrigerate overnight to allow flavors to settle
8. Reheat in a crockpot or on the stove, stirring in half the goat cheese
9. Top with remaining goat cheese, and serve with chips
10. Enjoy

Tip: Stir in more brown sugar and jelly to thicken dip further, and be mindful of the spice—add as much Sriracha as you can handle.

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.

The mother of all oils



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

One day, butter is good for us. Then it isn't. But wait, then it is again. I guess it just depends on who you ask.

Then canola oil was supposed to be the healthy oil that was easy and inexpensive to produce and was going to save us all. But canola oil, when used as a primary cooking oil, is connected to the most obese nations on earth.

Coconut oil? I once thought I was going to see a fist fight over it between two shoppers in a grocery store. One said it was terrible for you, while the other maintained it was nature's best oil.

There is one oil that has been right in front of us and is used in almost everything—and it continues to stand up to the standards of even the most holistic of naturopaths. I'm talking about olive oil.

Wikipedia would tell you that olive oil is simply "a liquid obtained from olives," but it is so much more than that. In fact, the generic word oil, is a derivative of the Latin word oleum, which was specifically olive oil.

Spain is the largest producer of olive oil in the world, with Italy and Greece close behind, though Greece is the biggest consumer of olive oil per capita. While many of us here in the U.S. consume olive oil and utilize in a variety of ways, North America, northern Europe, and southeast Asia are far behind the aforementioned countries in terms of consumption.

Cultivated as early as the eight millennium B.C., the olive tree is native to the great Mediterranean Basin, but more specifically Greece. However, DNA suggests that Neanderthal man consumed olives.

Today there are no less than 700 cultivars of some form of olive. Not to be confused with variety, which is a group of plants within a species, a cultivar is a plant maintained by horticulturists but does not produce true to seed.

Olive trees grow extremely slowly and can live a long time, with the longest one on record being the Olive tree of Vouves, in Crete, which has celebrated over 3,000 birthdays.

Aside from its many culinary uses, olive oil was and still is used for such things as medicine, fuel for lamps, soap, skincare and even religious ceremonies, specifically the Minoans. In Jewish observance, it was the only oil allowed as fuel in the seven lamps of menorahs during the great exodus of the Israeli tribes from Egypt.

Extra virgin is the highest grade of olive oil—though not just any olive or oil will qualify as extra virgin. It must go through a battery of tests for chemical make-up, including measuring free fatty acids, peroxide levels and a variety of other acids. Additionally, by law, extra virgin oil can have no more than 0.8 percent free acidity, which contributes to its desirable flavor.

Unlike sunflower, safflower, grapeseed, canola or coconut oils, olive oils come with provenance and have distinct flavors, depending on soil, climate, and more than anything, country of origin.

As a general rule:

Spanish olive oils tend to be yellow to golden, with some pale green on occasion. They are most often fruity and nutty.

Italian olive oils are generally of a darker green hue and are a bit more grassy and herbal, and have a higher cycloartenol content. More so than Spanish oils.

Greek olive oil tends to be greener, like Italian varieties, but is usually much stronger in flavor profile. It is the highest in polyphenols.

Cycloartenols and polyphenols are beneficial to our bodies in so many ways that it could be another article. This might give the impression that Spanish olive oil isn't healthy. But I assure you: it is. It's like saying you aren't as healthy as me because I ran a marathon and you only ran 20 miles. Suffice it to say that any olive oil is extremely beneficial to us.

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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10 YEARS



A decade past: Reflecting on the 2010s

The passing of a decade brings myriad feelings: reminiscence, renewal, excitement, trepidation, the reality that those few gray hairs you discovered in 2010 have, well, spread. Most importantly, a new decade brings about reflection. Take a second here: What were you doing in 2010?

Here are a few moments highlighting what the rest of the world was up to:

In 2010, Apple introduced the first iPad tablet and the revolutionary iPhone 4; the first photo was uploaded to Instagram. It was also the year the tragic 7.0 earthquake hit Haiti killing more than 230,000 people.

Since the turn of the last decade, Occupy Wall Street kicked off protests in 951 cities in 82 countries. "Game of Thrones" changed the TV industry; Colorado and Washington state legalized recreational marijuana paving the way for 11 states and the District of Columbia; Donald Trump was elected president of the United States.

Over the past 10 years, Big Sky has witnessed change greater than any other time in its brief history. Major resorts burst through the depths of bankruptcy; development surged in the wake of the Great Depression—to the tune of \$1 billion in economic impact; the

National Park Service celebrated its centennial and Yellowstone saw nearly 40 million visitors pass through its gates.

Now, on the cusp of 2020, I'm reminded of where I was in 2010. As a ski patroller entering my final season at Kirkwood Mountain Resort in California, there was a palpable sense of anxiety: What if I blow an ACL? Or caught in an avalanche? What is my fallback plan?

At the end of the 2010-2011 ski season, my girlfriend (now wife) Emily and I packed up the Subaru and drove east where I enrolled in a master's of journalism program at Harvard University. The decision was terrifying yet it was crucial to my development, both as a journalist and as a person, and it led me to Montana to pursue this career. It was the best choice I've ever made.

Taking a risk to ensure success is a terrifying endeavor. But these are the things we remember and which help us learn and grow as citizens of the world. The past decade has seen some monumental changes—both good and bad—that have changed the course of history. We invite you take gaze back with us at some of the most impactful stories we covered in the past decade. Thanks for reading. —*Joseph T. O'Connor*

2010

LPHS graduates first senior class

When Lone Peak High School opened its doors in the fall of 2009, 20 students were enrolled. In spring 2010, Lone Peak High saw off its first two graduates.

“It was a hectic, heady time,” said Anne Marie Mistretta, the superintendent of Ophir School District from 2005-2010 and current vice president and secretary of Friends of Big Sky Education. “It was unbelievably intense. You could see how tight the timeline was, and how important it was to make it happen.”

Today, Lone Peak High School is the fastest growing—in terms of percent growth—best performing high school in the state. U.S. News and World Report ranked it Montana’s No. 1 school in the state in spring 2019, and the school’s ACT scores were 33 percent higher than the state average.

Last June, LPHS graduated 16 seniors, nine of whom were pursuing diplomas from International Baccalaureate, a rigorous program the high school was authorized to offer beginning in 2017.



2011

Outlaw Partners holds first annual Big Sky PBR



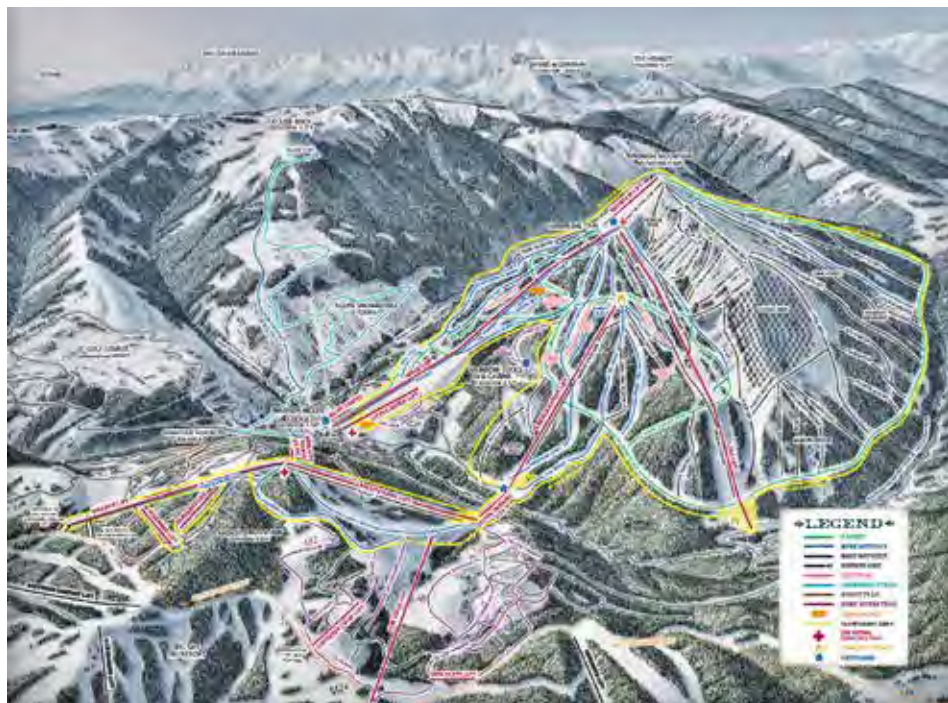
On Aug. 3, 2011, a 2,000-person sellout crowd swarmed to a newly installed arena in Big Sky Town Center for the inaugural Big Sky PBR. It was to be the first of many Professional Bull Riding events hosted in the growing town, and it’s now become a summer staple: tickets sell out within seconds and it’s has been named PBR Event of the Year seven years running.

The event began as a fledgling idea conceived by Continental Construction’s Jim Murphy and Outlaw Partners CEO Eric Ladd—also publisher of this newspaper—and has since picked up massive momentum over the years in terms of fans, sponsors and local support.

The Big Sky PBR, which now sees nearly 8,000 people over three nights of bull riding, music and festivities, celebrates its 10th anniversary on July 23-25 in Town Center: where it all started.

2013

Resorts emerge from bankruptcy



Beginning in 2007 and on the heels of the Great Recession, resorts and clubs in the Big Sky area felt the downturn. Hard. Moonlight Basin, the Yellowstone Club, the Club at Spanish Peaks all filed for bankruptcy protection.

In 2008 it was the Yellowstone Club. In 2009, Moonlight Basin. In 2011, the Club at Spanish Peaks. Oh, how a decade can change things.

Boston-based private equity firm CrossHarbor Capital Partners bought the YC for \$115 million in June 2009 as part of the settlement agreement.

Four years later, in June 2013, a U.S. District Court judge in Butte approved the sale of the Club at Spanish Peaks to CrossHarbor for \$26.1 million at auction. Later that summer, CrossHarbor joined forces with Boyne Resorts to merge Moonlight with Big Sky Resort, effectively creating the largest ski area in the country at the time.

The Rut debuts at Big Sky Resort



After the inaugural event brought hundreds of runners to Big Sky Resort in September 2013, The Rut 50K Mountain Run was chosen as the Skyrunner World Series Ultra Final for the next year.

The 2013 event drew a total of 400 runners for the 50K and 12K races, and the following year saw a new event, the Vertical Kilometer, a Skyrunner-trademarked event that's defined as a 1,000-meter climb in less than five kilometers.

In 2019, the Rut Mountain Runs, as it's now called, had more than 3,000 competitors from around the world. The 2020 Rut will take place at Big Sky Resort from Sept. 4-6.



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2014

New Trails in Big Sky

The Big Sky Community Corporation in summer 2014 received a \$35,000 Recreational Trails Program grant for new area trails from Big Sky Area Resort Tax and the Smith Family Foundation.

The new trails—called Hummocks and Uplands—comprised five miles of varying terrain for biking and hiking. BSCC installed 13 signs on the trails, of the 64 total parks and trails signs that comprised the project. The remaining signs were fabricated and installed in spring 2015.

In June 2017, the Big Sky Community Organization, as it's now known, added Ralph's Pass, a "connectivity" trail that connects two of Big Sky's most frequented paths: Ousel Falls Trail and Uplands.

At a 2017 meeting, BSCO Executive Director Ciara Wolfe said a community needs assessment survey confirmed that trails and parks are "extremely valued in this community" and highlighted the fact that 90-plus percent of respondents to a BSCO survey use Big Sky's trails multiple times every month.



2015

Big Sky Medical Center opens doors

Back in 2013 and following seven contentious months spent discussing whether Bozeman Deaconess Health Services or Billings Clinic was better suited to provide a health-care facility in Big Sky, BDHS announced it was building a critical access hospital.

Two years later, on Dec. 9, 2015, more than 200 Big Sky residents and visitors crowded the atrium in the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center, for what then-Bozeman Health interim CEO, President and CFO Gordon Davidson called a "historic event."

Visitors took guided tours through the 51,625-square-foot facility that includes a six-room emergency department; four-bed inpatient unit; primary care clinic; pharmacy; laboratory services; medevac landing pad; and imaging center with a new cutting-edge MRI scanner.

These days, BSMC is making strides for advancement. BSMC is growing its role in response to calls to make behavioral health programs in Big Sky a priority, with philanthropically sourced funding to kick-start programs at the facility, including adding a licensed clinical social worker to the BSMC team to provide direct on-site behavioral healthcare.



BSSD adopts international academic program

In December 2015, the Big Sky School District School Board voted to adopt the International Baccalaureate program, a rigorous K-12 academic agenda recognized by universities around the world. Approval for the IB program followed a November community meeting where its proponents highlighted the program's merits.

"It integrates academics, experiential international worldview, and 21st century skills—not just learning math times tables and learning how to spell, but critical thinking and problem solving," said Skip Kotkins of the education consulting firm Carney Sandoe and Associates.

BSSD Superintendent Dustin Shipman said an IB diploma could effectively replace the first year of college by granting its recipient college-level credits and admission into a second year honors program at Montana State University, for example.

On June 1, 2019, LPHS graduated its first class of students with full International Baccalaureate diplomas, Sam Johnson and Dawson Raden.



2016

YC wastewater pond spills 35 million gallons into Gallatin watershed

On March 3, 2016 effluent from a failed pipe leading from a wastewater pond located in the Yellowstone Club cascaded into tributaries of the Gallatin River before joining the main stem of the Gallatin. The flow stopped four days later, but not before 35 million gallons of treated wastewater entered the watershed.

The majority of the treated effluent had been piped up to the pond from the Big Sky Water and Sewer District treatment plant, where it joined water treated at the Yellowstone Club's sewer plant. The Yellowstone Club repaired the pond and introduced new elements to its design to prevent a future failure. In summer of 2017, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality levied a \$256,700 fine on the club.

As a result of the spill, the Big Sky Water and Sewer District Board reexamined its wastewater storage and disposal agreement with the Yellowstone Club. The spill also played a role in the reinvigoration of a community forum designed to address the intersection of development and water issues in Big Sky.



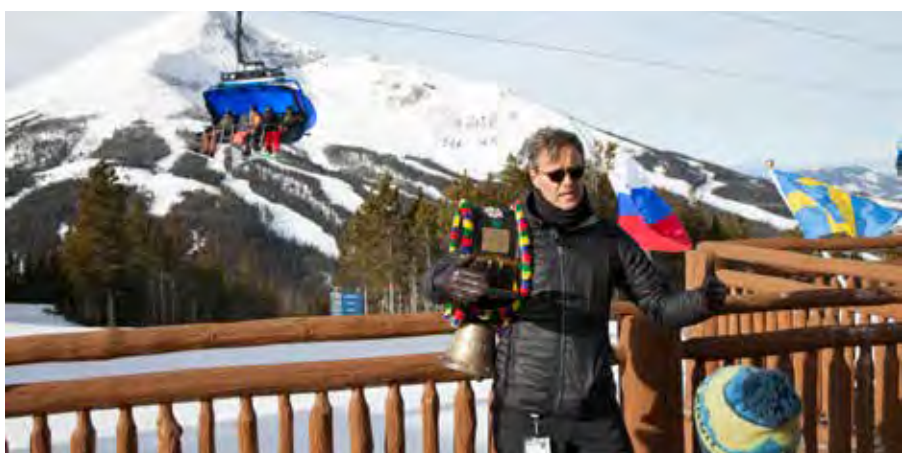
Resort plans \$150 million investment by 2025

Big Sky Resort announced August 2016 a \$150 million investment in a 10-year vision for future improvements to create a European-style ski resort experience.

The plan included 12 new or upgraded chairlifts—including eight bubble-enclosed lifts, a gondola originating at the Mountain Village and a lift on the south face—night skiing on Andesite Mountain, 10 new restaurants, as well as extensive renovations and construction in the Mountain Village.

Stephen Kircher, president of Boyne Resorts' eastern operations laid out the investment in near-, mid- and long-term phases, and many of the near-term projects have been completed or are under construction, including Powder Seeker 6, which now zips skiers up to the Bowl in approximately 3 minutes and grants quick access to the Lone Peak Tram, and the Ramcharger 8 lift whisking 3,600 skiers per hour to the top of Andesite Mountain.

This capital investment will help accommodate an anticipated 650,000 annual visitors by 2025, and give Big Sky Resort international appeal, Kircher said.



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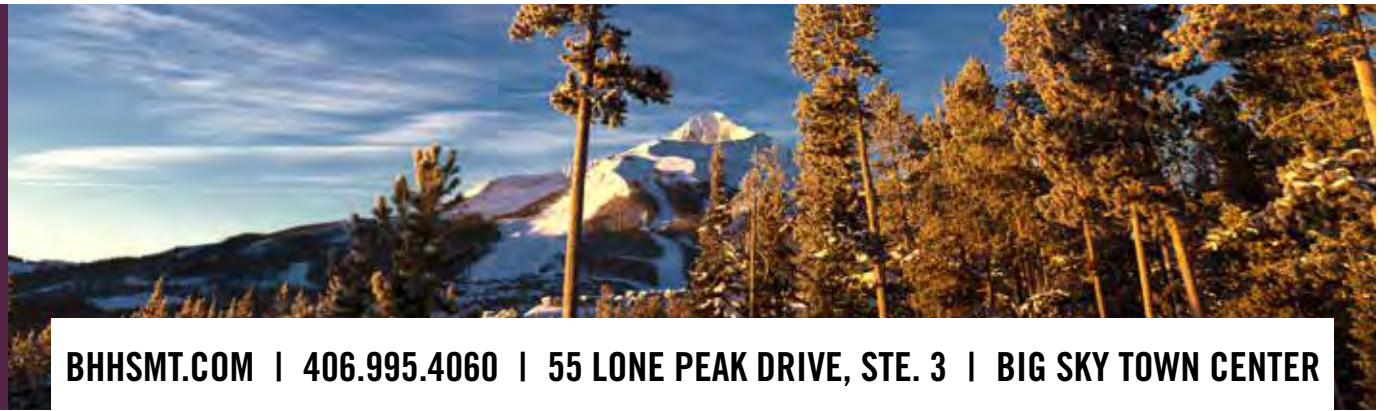
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2017

Big Sky continues boom



The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce reported record-breaking membership with numbers topping 400 at year's end, and a total of 11 ribbon cuttings for a myriad of new businesses that opened in 2017.

Lone Mountain Land Company broke ground on the Wilson Hotel, a Marriott Residence Inn, on July 21, 2017. The 118,000-square-foot building will have 129 rooms, with approximately 6,000 square feet of ground floor commercial, including a full-service restaurant, bar and lounge area. Big Sky's first major hotel brand is estimated to generate nearly \$1 million in resort tax and lodging tax collections combined each year, and opened in summer 2019.

The \$400 million ultra-luxury hotel Montage Big Sky, to be constructed next to the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club clubhouse, broke ground on Sept. 14, 2018, and is set for a 2021 completion. The 520,000-square-foot hotel will have 150 rooms, 39 branded residences and Big Sky's first bowling alley, according to officials.



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2018

\$10.3M TIGER grant awarded for Big Sky transportation

In March 2018, U.S. Sen. Steve Daines announced that Gallatin County had been awarded a \$10.3 million grant for ambitious improvements along Big Sky's Lone Mountain Trail, also known as Highway 64, and to fund the expansion of the Big Sky Transportation District's public transit services.

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant will be used for the construction of approximately seven left-turn lanes, a pedestrian tunnel beneath the highway, and nearly \$2.5 million for the Skyline bus system, which will include adding four buses and six vans to the existing public transport between Big Sky and the greater Bozeman area. "Gallatin County is leading the state in economic growth," Daines said in a statement. "This grant will help the county meet the infrastructure demands of this rapid growth and continue creating good-paying jobs in the community."

The grant might also aid in the advancement of certain affordable housing projects in Big Sky by providing a turn lane at the Powder Light subdivision near Ace Hardware. Protected turn lanes are slated for the intersections at the Big Sky Medical Center, Roxy's Market and the entrance to Big Sky Resort, among others that have seen numerous vehicle collisions in recent years. Gallatin County officials signed the grant on June 11, 2019.



BSCO swaps land, purchases 3 acres in Town Center



According to the results of a 2017 community needs survey that informed the Big Sky Community Organization's Parks and Open Spaces Plan, an indoor recreation facility was high on the wish list of local residents.

The vision was put into action first in October 2017, when BSCO announced plans to purchase 3.3 acres in Big Sky. The parcel, located in Town Center along Aspen Leaf Drive and between Ousel Falls Road and Simkins Drive, includes the current Town Center Park that houses the Music in the Mountains concert series and Big Sky Skating and Hockey Association's ice rink, along with the currently vacant gravel parking area to the east.

By purchasing this property, according to an October statement from BSCO, the community is ensured a permanent place to gather outside and enjoy recreational and enrichment opportunities.

"To be able to anchor 3.3 acres of valuable real estate in the heart of our community for parkland and community facilities is a dream come true," said BSCO Executive Director Ciara Wolfe. On July 27, 2019 BSCO broke ground in Town Center Park for Big Sky's first community center. BSCO has raised nearly \$20 million for BASE, as the facility will be known, set to open in summer 2021.

Warren Miller passes

It is impossible to overstate the impact Warren Miller had on the ski industry, or on the millions of fans he encouraged to carve out an existence in the mountains, and to spend their lives chasing the perfect powder day.

Miller died Jan. 24, 2018 of natural causes at his home on Orcas Island, Washington, sending a wave of mourning around the world that swelled especially high in his winter home of Big Sky.

Born in 1924, in Hollywood, California, during the height of the Great Depression, Miller emerged from a hardscrabble youth to become the most important figure in action sports filmmaking. He purchased his first camera at age 12 for 39 cents, and a pair of skis and bamboo poles for \$2 when he was 15.

"When you come down the mountain from your first time on skis, you are a different person," Miller wrote in his 2016 autobiography, "Freedom Found."

When he and his wife, Laurie, took a chance on an upstart private ski community in Big Sky, the Yellowstone Club, Miller became the director of skiing and the club's biggest advocate.

The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center opened in Lone Peak High School in March 2013 with Miller on the stage, and he subsequently performed at the MOTH event in February 2014. He told two stories instead of one, but no one dared cut him off, according to WMPAC Artistic Director John Zirkle.

"It's really Warren's name that enables us to take big risks, and big leaps into the unknown, knowing there's greater beauty on the other side," Zirkle said.



2019

Peak to Sky hits Big Sky

In the final hours leading up to the inaugural Peak to Sky Festival's Saturday lineup on July 6, Montana was right on brand—predictably unpredictable with a storm rolling mercilessly through the canyons toward Big Sky.

But then, as if by some divine order, the rock gods smiled upon the Big Sky Events Arena in Town Center, the sky cleared and the show commenced for the roughly 4,500 fans in attendance.

Forever more, the histories of the small mountain hamlet of Big Sky and that of rock and roll will be linked. The sheer degree of talent on stage for the culminating performance, which included Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees Mike McCready, Chad Smith, Josh Klinghoffer and Duff McKagan, 11-time Grammy winner Taylor Hawkins of Foo Fighters, three-time Grammy winner Brandi Carlile, members of the all-stars-in-waiting group Thunderpussy, and Paige Rasmussen from Bozeman's Paige and the People's Band, was a genuine sight to behold.

"It was amazing to see that much talent on one stage. The energy in the arena was amazing," said Brian Hurlbut, executive director of the Arts Council of Big Sky. "It was truly a one-of-a-kind, magical moment that those who were there will remember for a long time."



Now, save the date: Peak to Sky returns this summer with an all-new lineup on Aug. 7-8, 2020.

Community Visioning Strategy unveils key issues



Launched in February of this year, the Community Visioning Strategy "Our Big Sky," was a joint effort between the Big Sky Resort Area District and consulting firm Logan Simpson designed to help guide future development in Big Sky. The objective: survey community members about what they deem most important as this unincorporated town undergoes its next stages of growth.

Over the course of the last seven months, Logan Simpson and BSRAD surveyed and interviewed area residents collecting responses hoping to gain a robust representation of the community's voice about plans for development prioritization, capital improvement projects and strategic investments placed in Big Sky over the next 10 years.

The opportunity for the community to engage with the Community Visioning Strategy survey period ended in September with increasingly honed options for responses to strategic priorities and project initiatives under the "Our Recreation," "Our Natural Environment," "Our People" and "Our Character" themes.

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.

Since its 1992 inception, BSRAD has allocated some \$70 million in resort tax collections.

Resort tax bill signed, additional 1 percent tax approved

Senate Bill 241, sponsored by Sen. Jeffrey Welborn, R-Virginia City, will give Montana's 10 resort tax communities the ability to levy an additional 1 percent resort tax should individual communities vote to implement it within their respective boundaries, following Gov. Steve Bullock's signing the bill on May 2.

As opposed to the previously standing 3 percent resort tax levied on luxury goods, which has been in effect since 1992, funds from this additional percentage will only be used for infrastructural projects within said communities.

Over the last months of 2019, subcommittees from both the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board and the Big Sky Water and Sewer District board met four times to iron out details for a plan and proposal, and on Dec. 18 the BSWSD board of directors ratified their joint 1 Percent Resort Tax Proposal.

Under that proposed agreement, the new, full 1 percent resort tax will match the existing charter for 12 years. It would also fund the Water Resources and Recovery Facilities Phase 1 Expansion and Upgrade up to 60 percent of total project cost. The initial total project cost estimate, not including interest, is currently \$35 million.

The community will have the chance to weigh in during a tentative May 2020 vote, should the water and sewer upgrade resolution pass BSRAD vote before a hard Feb. 10 deadline.



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TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Over the last decade, social media has established itself as one of the primary titans of the media world—if not the most influential media source ever. Around the globe, social media has proved a valuable tool in change and information, and a frightening vehicle for discord. At EBS, one of the ways in which we've utilized social media over the years is to feature regional issues and delights through wonderful photography. Here are some of the staff-selected best photography posts of 2019, with accompanying captions or description.



April 17: A beautiful shot of Crazy Peak, the highest in the Crazy Mountain Range north of the Gallatin Valley. An incredible vision of old-time Montana! PHOTO BY WESLEY WHITE PRODUCTIONS @WESLEYWHITEPRO



Mar. 14: Climber Pablo Duran making his way up Genesis I of Hyalite Canyon, a WI3+ climb (water ice grade 3+ climb). PHOTO BY IAN LANGE @IAN.LANGE



Dec. 17: Dawn Patrol. PHOTO BY NATHAN PETERSON @PETENATHANSON

2019



Aug. 7: An incredible shot of two baby mountain goats catching the sunset in the Bridger Range, north of Bozeman. PHOTO BY DAVID JANSSEN @GNARANGUTANG



May 22: Check out this MONSTER brown caught on the Upper Madison River just outside of Ennis. 'The face of pure joy!' PHOTO BY SKYBLASTERS @SKYBLASTERS



Dec. 24: There were once reindeer in Montana. But in January of this year, the last caribou in the Lower 48, and the last surviving member of the woodland herd known as the South Selkirk, was captured in Idaho and moved to a maternal pen in Canada to be introduced into the Columbia North caribou herd. PHOTO BY JOE GREEN @GREENIE



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