Life and land from the heart of the Yellowstone Region

March 13 - 26, 2020 Volume 11 // Issue #6

Explore

# Hank the avalanche dog

# **Passing the Buck's**

Chronic Wasting Disease prevention

**Skijoring: A community effort** 

Local artist influenced by landscape





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#### Hank the avalanche dog

He's 2-and-a-half years old and only 39 pounds, but this Australian Cattle dog is a snow rescue machine. Earning his avalanche certification last year, Hank and his handler, ski patroller Max Erpenbach, work the slopes of Big Sky Resort.

#### Passing the Buck's

A sales agreement involving the historic Buck's T-4 Lodge was recently reached between Lone Mountain Land Company and the owners of Buck's, a staple of the Big Sky community since 1946. The sale will close on May 3.

#### **Chronic Wasting Disease prevention**

Chronic Wasting Disease first appeared in Montana in 2017 when it was found in deer. Currently, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks plans to review Wyoming's CWD management plans in hopes of better preparing the Treasure State for the deadly disease.

#### Skijoring: A community effort

The third annual Best in the West skijoring Showdown on March 7 and 8 almost never was. Thousands of dollars in equipment and labor were donated in order to pull off the competition as warm conditions threatened to melt away the racecourse. Volunteers monitored course conditions to ensure the safety of the record 120 competitors.

#### Local artist influenced by landscape

Each summer, Heather Rapp takes an annual hike up to Beehive Basin in the pursuit of her two passions: adventuring in the outdoors and gaining inspiration from the bountiful Big Sky landscape.





**49** 

CONTROLLER Treston Wold

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#### **ON THE COVER:**

Big Sky ski patrol currently deploys five certified avalanche dog teams with another five in training. Pictured here are ski patrol member and handler Max Erpenbach and his certified avalanche dog Hank. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

34 LPHS students recently competed at the Montana Tech Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Many students received honors for their work, such as the Air Force award winners pictured here: Stacey Fletcher (3rd from left), Lindsey Blackburn (5th from left), and Rin Swenson (6th from left). PHOTO COURTESY OF KATE EISELE

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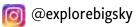
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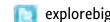
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# St. Patrick's day is March 17. How do you plan to celebrate?



**Stephanie Kissell** *Big Sky, MT* 

"I plan on celebrating with my 5-year old daughter. She has a little leprechaun trap all ready, so we're going to have some sort of mischievous game and hopefully the leprechauns will give her some gold and then they will return to Ireland and won't come back until next year."



**Bernie Dan** Big Sky, MT

"My father-in-law is 98-years old and he loves corned beef and cabbage. So, we're going to have corned beef and cabbage with my father-in-law...and with two of my kids and their spouses, so we're looking forward to that."



Adrian Romero Chicago, IL

"I'll be going back to Chicago and drinking at the Chicago River. Green beer."



Eleanor Crow Newport, RI

"I kind of feel like I've had my fill of St. Patrick's day parades and all that stuff. I may go to the local parade back home, we're in Newport, RI, so probably go to that because it is a big deal. So, if anything, I'll go to that for about 10 minutes until it gets too crowded, but that's probably it."

# **Op-Ed: Big Sky and the novel coronavirus**

#### VISIT BIG SKY

Right now all of us wish we had a crystal ball to see into the future. We want to know how the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) will impact us as individuals, as well as our friends and families, our children's schools, our businesses and employees, our coworkers, our communities, our state, our nation and the world. But no one knows.

What we do know is that travel over the next six months will be affected

"We are monitoring daily developments from the U.S. Travel Association and the multiagency Coronavirus Task Force assembled by Gov. Steve Bullock here in Montana," said Candace Strauss, CEO of Visit Big Sky. "Representatives from the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development at Department of Commerce, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, and Disaster and Emergency Services, and regional and local tourism boards like Visit Big Sky are all working to ensure Montana is prepared to address a local COVID-19 outbreak."

despite the fact that federal public health officials have issued no warnings or restrictions on travel anywhere in the U.S.

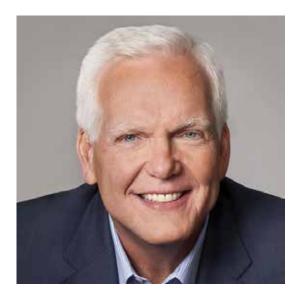
Currently Montana is reporting zero cases of COVID-19, yet the state's tourism industry is bracing for a downturn in nonresident visitation for the upcoming summer season when typically, millions of people from around the world flock to our national parks.

Here in Big Sky, a community born out of a tourist destination, travel is part of our DNA. Visit Big Sky, as Big Sky's official destination management and marketing organization, urges you—the traveling public—to stay informed, to seek information from reputable sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with local and state public health authorities, and to take preventative measures like washing your hands to protect against COVID-19; but we urge you to continue to travel. This May 3-9 is National Travel and Tourism Week when the tourism industry celebrates the power of travel; travel is trade; travel is commerce; travel is jobs. As America's No. 1 service export, #TravelWorks supported 5.29 million jobs and contributed nearly \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy in 2018. In Montana, that equates to 42,000 jobs supporting the 12.2 million nonresident visitors who spent \$3.7 billion here.

In Big Sky specifically, the visitor economy generated \$8 million in resort tax collections in 2018-19 that funded everything from public services including fire and sheriff services, affordable housing, infrastructure development, public transit, parks and trails, conservation, and finally, tourism development and promotion.

Our visitor economy is fragile. Consumers always have a choice of where to travel. When they choose Big Sky that means we can continue to live the life we lead here. It allows us to continue to live the dream.

# **Obituary: R. Franklin Kern III**



R. Franklin Kern III of Big Sky, Montana and Palm Beach, Florida died suddenly on March 2, 2020 in Miami while recovering from surgery. He was 66.

Born January 23, 1954, to Ruth Caroline (nee Selmser) and Raymond Franklin Kern, Jr. in York, Pennsylvania, Frank is survived by his loving wife of 31 years, Kristin Shutes Kern, and daughter, Kelly Huntley Kern. Kristin and Frank met in Denver in 1986 and were married in Vail,

Colorado, in 1989. He leaves behind his sister, Cynthia A. Kern (husband Les Malcovitch) of Elmira, New York; niece and nephew Jenny Malcovitch (Dr. Michael Kuzniewicz) of San Francisco; John Malcovitch (Liz Ott) of Reno, Nevada; brother-in-law Kelly Shutes (Gretchen Shutes) of Twin Falls, Idaho; plus four first cousins and their families; and many devoted friends around the world. He was predeceased by his parents.

Frank's ambition and unrelenting intellectual energy was the catalyst for a remarkable career that began at IBM in 1977 in Syracuse, New York. His fast-track within the company led him to relocate with his family to Los Angeles; Sydney, Australia; Paris, France; Tokyo, Japan; and Shanghai, China. Frank was a well-known champion of diversity in the workplace throughout his career at IBM. In 2008 he returned to the U.S. to Westport, Connecticut, and worked at the company's Armonk, New York, campus. He was a Senior Vice President of Gold Business Services when he departed in 2012 to become CEO of KKR-funded Aricent, an innovation technology company based in Silicon Valley. The company was acquired in 2018 by France's Altran, transforming it into the global leader in engineering and R&D.

After the Aricent sale, Frank's interest and energies turned to Big Sky, Montana, the place that he and his family have always considered to be their home. The long-term economic welfare and quality of life in Big Sky was a priority of Frank's, in part because his wife is the niece of its founder, the famed NBC News anchor, Chet Huntley, but mostly because he cherished the rare natural beauty of the pristine Montana mountain town near Yellowstone National Park. He was committed to ensuring that the current fast pace of growth in Big Sky was steered in constructive, inclusive directions. He and Kristin purchased Hungry Moose Market and Deli in 2019 and immediately launched a major expansion and improvements that were completed last December. Frank also invested in the development of essential workforce housing in Big Sky to ensure that those with year-round employment had a place and a voice in its future.

Frank graduated from Bucknell University with a B.A. in Political Science in 1975, serving as president of the Delta Upsilon fraternity. He earned his MBA in Finance at the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University in 1976. He graduated from Pennsylvania's Carlisle High School. His childhood summers, like those of his father's, were spent at Camp Lenape Blue Sky in the Pocono Mountains from the age of 7 through college, when he served as a camp counselor, and tennis and water-skiing instructor.

Frank was a powerful, passionate and compassionate man, fully devoted to his family, work, and a brilliantly curated collection of loyal friends. Fearless both intellectually and physically, his recreational hours were filled with downhill skiing, riding his Harley Davidson, racetrack driving, sailing, staying fully informed about the world around him and getting lost in his latest book.

The family extends its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Dr. Horacio Asbun, Frank's world-renowned surgeon and friend, who helped him navigate the path toward regaining his health and wellness.

Details about a memorial service this spring in Big Sky, Montana, will be shared soon. In lieu of flowers, please say a prayer for his extraordinary, optimistic soul.



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#### Explore Big Sky



# NEWS IN BRIEF



# Fly Fishing Film Tour returns to Big Sky

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Fly fishing enthusiasts of all ages rejoice: the Fly Fishing Film Tour returns to Big Sky on March 18, thanks to a joint effort between Gallatin River Task Force and Lone Peak Cinema.

F3T, "the original and preeminent exhibition of fly-fishing cinema," is chock full of scenic and awe-inducing casting action sure to cause a feeding frenzy all its own.

Now in it's 13<sup>th</sup> iteration, F3T has fine-tuned the experience, curating a lineup of topnotch films, stories and imagery from fly fishing ventures around the world, forming the appetite-inducing impetus every Big Sky angler longs for as the seasons change and the warm weather leaves local trout mouths hanging wide open.

A donation of \$10 is suggested at the door, but patrons are encouraged to donate \$20 for a ticket in celebration of 20 years of the Gallatin River Task Force.

Two show times are available—5 and 8 p.m.—thanks to sponsorship from Ace Hardware Big Sky, Big Sky Vacation Rentals, Grizzly Outfitters, Haas Builders and Lone Peak Physical Therapy.

Visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org for more information.

# Pace to the Pub melds local beer and ski trails

#### EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – What's better than cross country skiing along the numerous trails wintertime Big Sky has to offer, enjoying the natural splendor only found in our corner of the universe from atop a set of thin planks? Finishing out those runs with a crisp, local beer from Bashing Basin Browery

# 'Finding Good Workers' seminar hosted at Lone Peak Cinema

#### EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce is partnering with the Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research for the organization's 45th annual Economic Outlook Seminar; the final of 10 seminar stops around the state will be hosted at Lone Peak Cinema on March 19.

This year's seminar will have a central theme of "finding good workers," with the seminar website stating, "For many Montana employers, the days of receiving stacks of applications is a distant memory—and it's not necessarily due to a strong economy and low unemployment. In today's knowledge based, social media connected and information rich economy, the rules of engagement between candidates and companies have changed."

Attendees can learn how to navigate the new realities of hiring through a half day of varying presentations from industry experts, tailored to Big Sky-specific economic forecasts.

Relevant industries include tourism, health care, real estate and housing, agriculture, manufacturing, energy and forest products.

Visit economicoutlookseminar.com for more information.

# LPHS sees success at regional science fair

#### EBS STAFF

BUTTE – Ninth grade students from Lone Peak High School recently competed at the Montana Tech Regional Science and Engineering Fair on March 5. Competing for the first time in school history, 34 LPHS students showcased 19 different projects, earning a second-place finish overall in the small school's division.

#### Beehive Basin Brewery.

As part of the bi-weekly Wednesday XC Ski Series, cross country enthusiasts will meet on March 18 at Town Center Stage, where a series of trails consisting of W7 Goldenstone, W6 Town Center South Outer Loop, W9 Brewery Loop, W10 Wilson Connect and W8 Spruce Cone will be tackled before reaching Town Center's sole brewery, which doubles as the finish line.

Participants are required to have basic cross-country skiing skills and must bring their own gear.

The event is made possible through a partnership between the Big Sky Community Organization, Big Sky Town Center, Visit Big Sky and Lone Mountain Ranch.

Don't miss this special seasonal activity, as temperatures continue to eat at the legendary snowfall seen in February. Projects by Lindsey Blackurn, Jaiden Spence and Pierce Farr, Gus Hammond, Max Romney, and Ben Saad earned bronze medal honors. Skylar Manka and Katrina Lang captured silver medal honors with their project, "Holding back a Landslide." Maddie Cone, Avery Dickerson and Myla Hoover brought home gold medal honors for their project focusing on washing machines and microplastics.

Many other LPHS student projects earned various accolades and cash prizes at the event as well. Distinctions included Air Force awards, best water-related science research project, and best ninth through twelfth grade project related to human health and the environment, to name a few.



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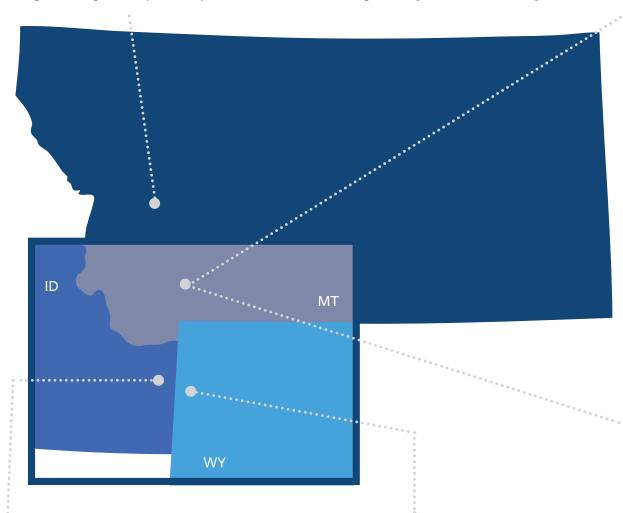
#### Off-highway vehicles now require trail pass

#### MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

HELENA - Montana residents who are off-highway vehicle operators are now required to purchase a Resident OHV Trail Pass. The Montana Legislature passed House Bill 355 in 2019, which created a Resident Trail Pass for OHVs and revenues from each pass will be used to maintain and improve designated OHV routes and trails on public lands in Montana. The funds will be distributed through a grant program beginning in the fall.

The pass is required on all public lands where Montana residents ride OHVs on designated motorized routes and trails. The pass must be attached and visible on the OHV. It is valid for up to two calendar years, expiring on Dec. 31 of the second year of purchase. In addition to the pass, Montana residents must have a permanent registration sticker, which is available through their County Treasurer's office. If a resident purchases a two-year Resident OHV Trail Pass and presents it to their County Treasurer's office while permanently registering their OHV, the resident is eligible for a reduction of \$20 toward the cost of their permanent OHV registration.

The pass can be purchased from many local vendors or online at stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/ohvProgram.html.



### Jackson Hole's largest elk herd grows after slow hunt

#### BY MIKE KOSHMRL JACKSON HOLE NEWS & GUIDE

JACKSON, Wyo. – (AP) Jackson Hole's largest elk herd is thriving and appears to have grown slightly over the past year after hunters had a historically

Wyoming Game and Fish Department harvest data for 2019 estimates that 794 hunters who targeted zones roamed by the Jackson Elk Herd found success and filled their freezer, according to the "Jackson Hole News & Guide."

The 30-year average harvest in the Jackson Herd is 2,098 elk, though the kill hasn't surpassed 2,000 since the early 2000s.

This is a shortened version of the original story. Visit WEBSITE to read the full article.

date with their mother,

Lori Vallow, and uncle,

was traveling in a silver,

2017 Ford F-150 pickup,

with Arizona license plate CPQUINT. Attached

are photos of the missing children, Lori Vallow, and

Alex Cox, that were taken

in the park on September

of the vehicle.

Alex Cox. The group

#### Wet February brings Montana snowpack up to normal and above

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOZEMAN - Mountain snow moisture is near to above normal in Montana. Record-setting snow in February made up for dry weather in November and December, the "Bozeman Daily Chronicle" reports.

Statewide, snow moisture was 137 percent of normal compared to just 93 percent of normal around this time last year, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Water Supply Outlook Report for March 1.

Precipitation and temperatures over the remainder of winter and into spring will be critical for determining how much water will be available for irrigation and other uses this year, NRCS water supply scientist Lucas Zukiewicz said.

"Streamflow prospects for spring and summer look to be near or slightly above average at this time due to the healthy snowpack totals we have in the mountains," Zukiewicz said in a release.

Snowpack in the Gallatin River headwaters was 120 percent of normal, while snow feeding the Madison River was 99 percent of normal.

# MSU ski teams host NCAA skiing championship March 11-14

#### BY MEAGHAN MACDONALD-POOL **MSU NEWS SERVICE**

BOZEMAN — The Montana State University men's and women's ski teams spent more time in planes and hotels at the end of last season than they did in



their own beds. This season, however, the team will travel just 18 miles from campus to compete during the final week of the season, as the Bobcats host the

tough time finding animals and filling tags.



#### PHOTO COURTESY OF MSU ATHLETICS

# **FBI**, Rexburg Police seek images in missing children's case

#### YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

REXBURG, Idaho – The FBI and the Rexburg Police Department are asking visitors to Yellowstone National Park on Sept. 8, 2019, to submit any photos and video that may assist in the investigation into the disappearance of 17-year old Tylee Ryan and 7-year old J.J. Vallow.

An ongoing investigation has determined that the children were in Yellowstone National Park on that

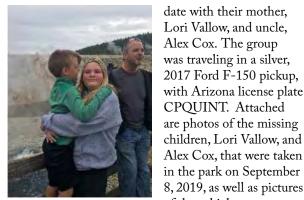


PHOTO COURTESY OF FBI

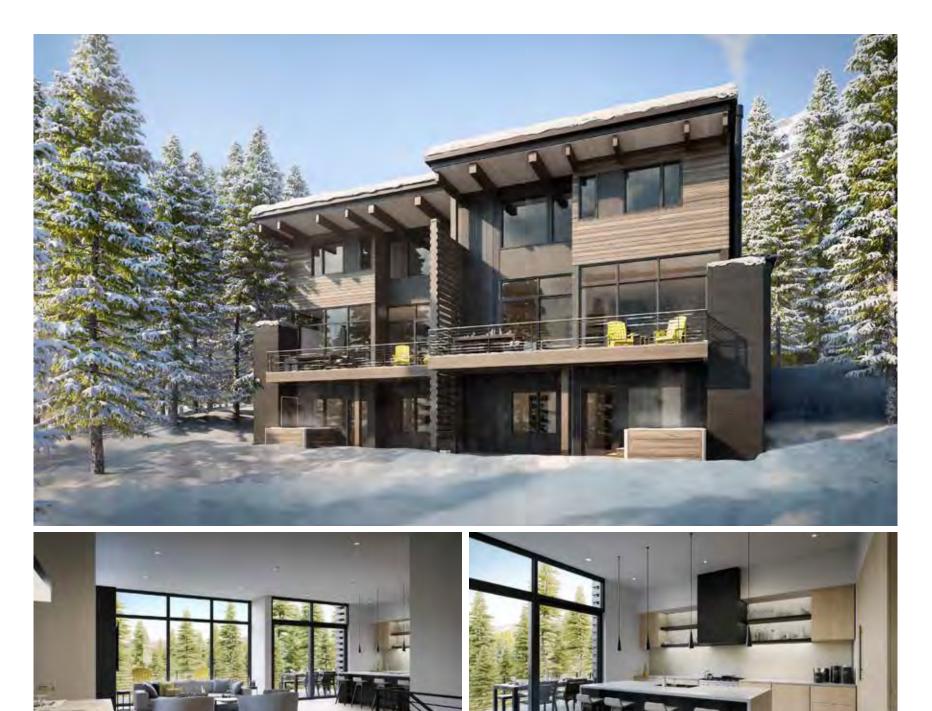
The FBI has established a website for the public to upload photos and video at FBI.gov/Rexburg. Tips can be reported to the Rexburg Police Department at (208) 359-3000 or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-8435678 (1-800-THE-LOST).

NCAA National Skiing Championships March 11-14 at Bridger Bowl Ski Area and Crosscut Mountain Sports Center. MSU also hosted the NCAA West Regional Championships Feb. 27-29, giving the alpine and Nordic ski qualifiers three weeks to practice on their home hill and Nordic course.

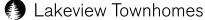
This is the seventh time MSU has hosted the national championships and the first since 2012. There are 148 athletes from 23 universities competing in alpine and Nordic skiing. Alpine events took place March 11 and again on March 13 at Bridger Bowl, while Nordic events ran March 12 and will conclude March 14 at Crosscut Mountain Sports Center.

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# **Introducing: Civic Engagement Sidebar**

#### EBS STAFF

Here at the Explore Big Sky office, we occasionally have folks in the community reaching out and wondering why our reporters did (or didn't) ask a specific question at a public Big Sky board or organization meeting.

Our team strives to report accurately and fairly on each public meeting we attend, but the reality is that people will always have questions outside of what we ask.

What we can promise, however, is that in our reporting we've found that most board members and staff hosting these meetings are eager to engage with the public. They don't want an "us versus them" relationship—they seek transparency and conversation; in the end, deeper understanding only strengthens our community and its initiatives.

So we're calling on you, the public, to do your part too: become civically engaged.

Are you frustrated with a policy? Want to congratulate an organization on its successes, and add a piece constructive criticism? Simply want to meet and listen to the people that make decisions that directly impact you and, in some instances, your finances?

Then become civically engaged.

The EBS team is introducing a new feature to the newspaper, the "Civic engagement sidebar," which will announce the various public meetings occurring within our two-week paper cycle, along with a location and start time.

We hope to see more of you in the crowd, asking the questions that matter most to you. The future of a healthier, happier Big Sky depends on it.

Want to include your organization's meeting? Email us at media@outlaw. partners with a subject line "CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SIDEBAR"

# Civic Engagement Sidebar: March 13 – 26

Big Sky County Water and Sewer District March 17, 8 a.m., Big Sky County Water & Sewer Conference Room

Big Sky School District March 17, 3:45 p.m., Ophir School Conference Room

Visit Big Sky March 26, 8:30 a.m., Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

# Canyon wastewater feasibility study results are in

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – As the looming May 5 vote for a 1 percent increase in resort tax approaches, two Bozeman-based engineering groups recently presented the findings of a feasibility study regarding the financial and environmental impact of a possible canyon water and sewer district.

The Gallatin River Task Force contracted the study, funding research by engineering firms WGM Group and AE2S, with resort tax dollars.

On the evening of March 5 at Buck's T-4 Lodge, representatives Mace Mangold of WGM Group, and Scott Buecker from AE2S, presented two different avenues that the theoretical canyon water and sewer district could take. The glaring difference between the two was from a cost standpoint.

The first scenario, entitled 'Go it alone' in Buecker and Mangold's presentation, detailed the formation of the new district with no assistance or collaboration with the existing Big Sky County Water and Sewer District. In this instance, the new district would not benefit from the \$12 million allocated to the construction of a lift station, which would be funded by the proposed resort tax increase, if passed. Instead, that cost, as well as all other necessary expenditures, would fall onto the shoulders of canyon district homeowners alone.



The second scenario, entitled 'Co-Solution' in the presentation, covered how everything could unfold if the new district worked in collaboration with the BSCWSD. In addition to covering the \$12 million lift station price tag, a portion of the financial load would also be dispersed between BSCWSD clients as well as those in the new canyon district.

In total, if the proposed canyon water and sewer district were to proceed without the assistance of BSCWSD, it would be saddled with a nearly \$30 million bill, according to the Buecker and Mangold's presentation. That number is just shy of a \$3 million difference in total cost, between the more expensive 'Go it alone' scenario and the 'Co-Solution' scenario, which totals \$26.2 million. Aside from the larger overall price tag, if the new canyon district didn't work in conjunction with BSCWSD, they would also miss out

Mace Mangold of WGM Group presents to the crowd at Buck's T-4 Lodge on March 5. Bozeman engineering companies WGM and AE2S recently concluded a study on the feasibility of the possible canyon water and sewer district. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

on benefitting from the \$12 million dollars set aside for the aforementioned lift station, if the resort tax increase passes.

"I think, in a traditional setting where resort tax isn't available, these projects would stall in the feasibility phase, and they wouldn't move forward," Mangold said. "In the resort tax setting, they're already showing support with this \$12 million option to voters. I sense they are behind this effort in terms of...looking to motivate it."

Currently, Mangold said the general public in the canyon is tasked with the process of the formation of their own water and sewer district. "There's no entity right now to steer it. It has to be a general public within this potential service area," Mangold said.

# BSRAD board talks 1 percent, collections compliance, budgets

#### BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Resort Area District tax board has some major fish to fry in the coming months, chiefly educating the public about a potential 1 percent increase in the resort tax and ensuring area businesses comply with resort tax collections—such were the topics of discussion at their March 11 open board meaning.

The resort tax, which has funded numerous capital improvements and organizational efforts in the growing mountain town since its 1992 genesis, could potentially see a temporary uptick effective July 1—a 1 percent increase in the resort tax, which would be used expressly for critical upgrades to Big Sky's strained wastewater treatment facilities.

A May 5 community vote will decide the fate of such a change, and while payees classically oppose taxation increases—a phenomenon not unique to Big Sky—BSRAD District Manager Daniel Bierschwale says the very nature of Big Sky's resort tax bares good reason to attempt to palette it.

"What we want people to understand is that, unlike a county or federal tax, 100 percent of the resort tax collections are used entirely in Big Sky for community identified needs," Bierschwale told EBS in a March 10 interview.

A 1 percent increase to the existing 3 percent may generate some frustration, but the alternative would be Big Sky County Water and Sewer District increasing rates by as much as two-times the current rates to help offset the cost of the upgrades should the 1 percent fail to pass the vote in May. A failure to pass would also have an impact on appropriation shares from the existing 3 percent collections.

A number of educational opportunities have been scheduled, including three "plant update open houses"—held at the BSCWSD office March 24, April 1 and 16, respectively—along with four "education booths" on April 2, 9, 23 and 30, operated at the Big Sky Post Office (see pg. 53 for a full roster of dates and locations).

The board unanimously approved a first reading of a new compliance ordinance, which will hold accountable the roughly 1,000 businesses registered to collect tax on qualifying luxuries, goods and services within the district. The measure aims to

give these businesses the opportunity to provide accurate reporting and full transfer of funds to BSRAD, which ultimately redistributes those collections through appropriations each summer.

"It creates equity in our community for our business owners," said board member Ciara Wolfe.

Bierschwale echoed the sentiment: "Fairness within the community is what we're striving for."

As of EBS press time, the top of the ordinance document read that the measure is "an ordinance describing the procedures for enforcement and collection of the Big Sky resort tax."

Other agenda items at the March 11 meeting included discussion of a draft strategic plan, a blueprint of sorts for BSRAD's operations.

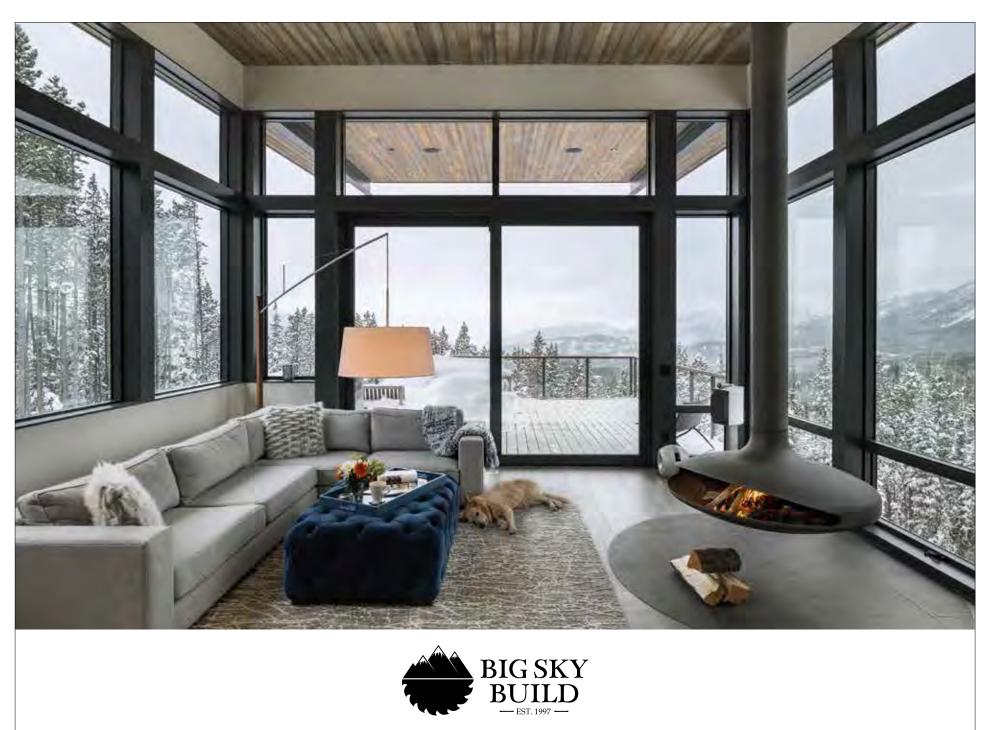
District board members commended Bierschwale and his staff for the detail included in the three-year plan, but caveats of regular revisions and review followed.

"I like that it's a very actionable plan," said BSRAD Chairperson Kevin Germain, "but strategic plans have a tendency to be stuck on shelves so I look to you, Danny, to ensure we look at this plan and update it every six months."

The board also addressed its "Draft Budget FY21," with hopes of formal adoption at the April 8 meeting. Members of the board acknowledged that historic rates of growth in collections as a result of increases in residency and tourism over the last decade might slow with current economic trends.

Living in Big Sky can at times feel insular, but nothing underscored the community's tether to the outside world better than a comment from BSRAD Secretary Buz Davis regarding COVID-19, officially classified as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11.

"If [COVID-19] continues to grow at the rate it's growing," Davis said, "we may need to rethink how to keep our community safe."



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# LMLC to purchase historic Buck's T-4 Lodge

#### BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

BIG SKY – An institution is changing hands in Big Sky, Montana. Again.

Buck's T-4 Lodge, the iconic hotel and restaurant on Highway 191 that first opened its doors in 1946, is selling to Lone Mountain Land Company. The deal comes 14 years after the lodge was sold to Yellowstone Hotel Management LLC, a subsidiary at the time of the Yellowstone Club, and then reacquired by the original seller.

The aim of the latest sale, according to a March 4 statement, is to "help address the shortage of workforce housing options in Big Sky."

The deal is slated to close on May 3, the statement said, but Buck's current co-owner David O'Connor says they plan to lease the restaurant building back from LMLC from early June through October in order to honor the events and commitments they've made through mid-autumn. LMLC will assume hotel operations following the close of the deal and prior hotel commitments will be honored, according to O'Connor, though it's unclear how long LMLC will continue to operate the hotel beyond the May 3 closing date. Calls to LMLC representatives requesting comment

were not immediately returned.

"It's definitely one of the most difficult decisions of our lives," said O'Connor, who together with business partner Chuck Schommer worked with former owner/partner Mike Scholz until they assumed full ownership in 2017. "I think as a business with commitments to its clients, employers with commitments to its employees, and residents with commitments to this community ... nothing with Buck's could just be a business deal."

LMLC approached O'Connor and Schommer with a proposal earlier this winter.

"This agreement is part of LMLC's ongoing effort to provide housing for its employees, including contractor, seasonal, and year-round staff, while helping address overall demand for employee housing in and around the greater Big Sky area," the statement said.

"We have buildable land," said O'Connor, adding that the property sits on 17 acres, though half of that is being used for its water system



Buck's T-4 Lodge, which first opened in 1946, is changing hands yet again in a sale to Lone Mountain Land Company. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

What LMLC does know, Dominick added, is that it wants to maintain the famous eatery on site. "It's important to us to keep the restaurant open," he said. "We think it's an amazing place and we want it to keep going."

The 2006 sale of Buck's to Yellowstone Hotel Management LLC was based on a similar situation: a shortage of employee housing, though the particulars of the latest deal are different.

LMLC is an ancillary arm of Yellowstone Club owner Cross Harbor Capital Partners, which brought the club out of bankruptcy in 2009. Scholz, Buck's former owner, sold the property to Yellowstone Hotel Management LLC in 2006 only to buy it back when the club filed for Chapter 11 three years later.

"Blixseth was motivated [to buy Buck's] at the time because Madison County commissioners were concerned about employee housing if they were going to continue to subdivide," Scholz said referring to former Yellowstone Club owner Tim Blixseth. "It's a different circumstance [now], but employee housing is a big challenge in Big Sky and it's a bigger challenge now than it was then."

including irrigation. The 72-room hotel can currently accommodate approximately 144 people, according to O'Connor.

Bayard Dominick, LMLC vice president of planning and development, said the company is looking into expanding options to accommodate its employees, but is still researching density options.

"Buck's is a staple in our community, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to partner on this solution," Dominick said in the statement. "Our long-term goal will be to expand the housing options on this site for an additional 100 people."

In a March 5 phone interview, Dominick said LMLC is checking into the possibility of building additional housing options on the property.

"Right now we're looking at three-, four- and five-bedroom apartments with kitchens and living rooms [but] we're not sure how many units we can build yet," Dominick said. "We're still trying to qualify what we can do." For O'Connor, Buck's is a hallowed space that he says will live on in whatever form it takes after the deal closes. "There's so much history and so many stories and nothing changes that about the past or the future," he said.

This storied history includes the original owners, Buck and Helen Knight, who opened the property first as a hunting camp and eventually sold it to the Scholz family in 1972. Mike Scholz constructed each of the buildings with the exception of certain components of the restaurant space, and operated Buck's, later with the help of Schommer and O'Connor, until he stepped away from daily operations in 2013. Four years later, Scholz sold Schommer and O'Connor his interest in the real estate.

O'Connor remembers the words Helen Knight told Scholz about Buck's T-4 Lodge: "Don't forget," she said, "it's still mine. You're just watching it for a while."

# Into the storm: Big Sky Resort's avalanche dogs

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – I couldn't help my mind from wandering as I lowered myself under the snow. After the final shovel-full capped off the exit, the silence was ominous. This was only a training exercise, but I was still overwhelmed imagining how helpless it would feel to be trapped in an avalanche.

How long could this take? Would the avalanche dog find me?

Hank, a 2.5-year-old, 39-pound Australian Cattle dog, earned his avalanche certification last year. His owner and handler, Max Erpenbach, picked him up when he was only 9 weeks old.

"He's my personal dog, ... so I care about him a lot and I want the best for him," said Erpenbach who's originally from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and has been patrolling at Big Sky for six years. It can be stressful to have Hank in crowded scenarios on the hill, Erpenbach said, because he worries the dog could get hurt. "But keeping him under control and watching him progress every day has been super rewarding."

In about a minute, I heard Hank's paws digging at the snow above me. When he broke through, he climbed into the hole to join me for a celebratory game of tug of war. A newfound appreciation for these dogs, what they do, and their handlers who spend countless hours training them, consumed me.

According to Erpenbach, tug of war isn't simply a reward for Hank. His canine companion enjoys the activity so much that he limits when he allows Hank to do such. "It's a huge party. The dogs tugging, and everybody is making high pitched noises kind of mimicking like a howl,"





Hank enjoying himself after successfully completing a training exercise. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

Erpenbach said. "So, we're tapping into like super primal instincts, but to them it's just a game, and it's all about the tug."

As early as 1750, monks began using dogs for snow rescues on the Great St. Bernard Pass in the Western Alps. Their breed of choice was the St. Bernard, and during a span of a little less than 200 years the animals rescued more than 2,000 individuals, according to a 2016 article on smithsonianmag.com.

Avalanche dogs made their debut at Big Sky Resort in the 1980s. "The dog program became recognized as a viable resource industry-wide, and ski areas with avalanche programs started rescue dog programs across the West," said Big Sky Ski Patrol's snow safety director Mike Buotte. Forty years later, the program, which is funded by Big Sky Ski Patrol, continues to grow with the resort. Currently, the squad has five certified avalanche dogs, with another five in training.

A typical day for Hank begins at the base area kennels. From there he rides the lifts with Erpenbach up Lone Peak to where he will be on-duty for the day, fitting in a brief training exercise at some point. "When he's coming back up here, he's a pretty sassy dog. [He] barks at me a lot when we're clicking into the skis, and he's definitely very stoked to come to work every day," Erpenbach said.

Health is paramount for a dog to be able to perform properly, and Erpenbach rests Hank as much as possible, including on weekends, even discouraging play with other avalanche dogs to conserve his energy. To keep Hank's skills sharp, the pair typically does one training drill each day, lasting between 10 and 15 minutes. Drills can range from the live burial I experienced, in which an individual enters a pre-dug hole, to burying an article of clothing that the dog has to locate.

Erpenbach and Hank train every day to maintain their skills. At only 2.5-years-old, Hank became a certified avalanche dog last year. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

To become certified, a dog and handler team must find multiple live burials in 30 minutes, similar to what Hank did when he found me. "They usually can find those live burials in five to 10 minutes, but they want to see you work with the dog for the whole 30 [minutes] and watch you, the handler, run the scene," Erpenbach explained. "So that's where a lot of the test is—on you, and not so much the dog." With this certification, Hank can help with search and rescue efforts anywhere in Gallatin and Madison counties.

Thanks to preventative avalanche efforts, avalanche dogs are actually rarely called in to assist, Buotte said in an email to EBS. "[There are very] few, if any, documented cases in North America, mostly due to robust avalanche mitigation," he wrote. "Dog teams are used routinely locally and across the West to search for backcountry burials where the subject was not wearing an avalanche beacon."

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#### News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

# Sheryl Crow, Wilco and Sleater-Kinney to headline Peak to Sky Eight acts round out festival weekend Aug. 7-8

#### BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – Peak to Sky ticketholders can expect to "soak up the sun" with Sheryl Crow this August, when the ninetime Grammy Award-winning artist and her band takes the stage as the summer festival's headliner on Friday, Aug. 7.

Crow, a bona fide American music icon, has been dominating charts and winning hearts of millions worldwide for nearly three decades since the 1993 release of her debut album "Tuesday Night Music Club," which peaked at No. 3 on Billboard's Top 200 and remained ranked for 100 consecutive weeks.

That was just the beginning.

Her first nine studio albums have sold 35 million copies worldwide; seven of them charted in Billboard's Top 10 and five were certified for Multi-Platinum sales. In addition to such No. 1 hits as "All I Wanna Do," "Soak Up the Sun" and "The First Cut Is the Deepest," Crow has logged some 40 singles on the Billboard Hot 100, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Mainstream Top 40 and Hot Country Songs charts, with

more No. 1 singles in the Triple A listings than any other female artist.

"We set the bar pretty high last year, and we're excited to continue that momentum," said EJ Daws, VP of Sales and Marketing at Outlaw Partners, the Big Sky media, marketing and events company producing the event in collaboration with Mike McCready, the festival's curator and guitarist from Pearl Jam.

Headliners for Saturday, Aug. 8 include Grammy Award-winning Wilco and Sleater-Kinney as part of their newly announced "It's Time" Summer 2020 co-headlining tour.

Fronted by alt-rock legend Jeff Tweedy, and with 2 million monthly listeners on the popular music-streaming app Spotify, Wilco has a massive and dedicated worldwide following, and their alt-rock, folksy sound will be a perfect match for the groove-loving folks of southwest Montana (and anybody lucky enough to fly in for a taste).



Sleater-Kinney, comprised of Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein, who also starred in the hit TV show "Portlandia," formed in the '90s in Olympia, Washington. The female rock band has been dubbed "punk rock heroes" by fans and critics alike, including Rolling Stone, which noted the fusion as "radical feminism and challenging, fiery punk."

"To have a music event anchored by Sheryl Crow and Wilco, Sleater-Kinney will bring the highest level of performance to our little mountain town," Daws said.

On Friday, guests will be treated to a comedy and music show by Fred Armisen, actor, comedian, writer, producer and musician best known for his role in Portlandia and as a cast member on Saturday Night Live. Warming up the stage for their Nashville neighbor, Jamie McLean Band will open for Crow, bringing the Americana, folk, Delta blues, Southern soul and New York City funk sounds that have made him a regular and a favorite in Big Sky over the last decade.

> Saturday's lineup will also include the desert disco band KOLARS, and Peak to Sky curator Mike McCready & Friends who will take the main stage following Wilco and Sleater-Kinney. Earlier in the afternoon, McCready will present a glimpse into his coffee table book, "Of Potato Heads and Polaroids" offering a perspective into his world inside and outside of Pearl Jam.



WIICO PHOTO BY SHERVIN LAINEZ

A family-friendly show by Casper Babypants, also known as Chris Ballew, twice Grammy-nominated lead singer and songwriter for the Seattle band The Presidents of the United States of America, will take place Saturday morning under the venue's "big top" tent.

"It's exciting Peak to Sky has evolved into a true festival this year," said Megan Paulson, Chief Operating Officer at Outlaw Partners. "The caliber of artists and a lineup as diverse and talented as we have planned, along with a few surprises, will be an event you won't want to miss."



# JULY 23-25 BIGSKYPBR.COM















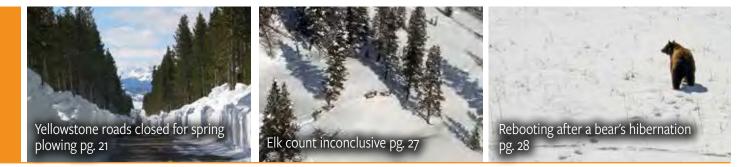
#### Explore Big Sky

**SECTION 2:** 

OUTDOORS

**ENVIRONMENT &** 

#### **ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS**



# **Stemming the tide** Managing chronic wasting disease in the Greater Yellowstone

PART 2: HOW HUNTING PLAYS A ROLE IN CWD MANAGEMENT

#### BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

As the deadly wildlife disease known as chronic wasting disease, or CWD, spreads into Montana, EBS is looking closely at what that means for the Greater Yellowstone Region and how wildlife managers will respond. This is the second in a series about CWD in Montana.

LIVINGSTON – As March ushers in the warmer temps and melting snow of spring, deer and elk hunters are already applying for special fall-season permits, which are due April 1. A growing consideration is how chronic wasting disease, a fatal infection found for the first time in Montana's wild deer herds in 2017, will change things for the future.

CWD first emerged in Colorado in 1967, and has since spread to 24 states and two Canadian provinces. Caused by a prion that can be passed through saliva, urine, feces and blood, the so-called "zombie deer disease" breaks down brain and spinal tissue, resulting in weight loss, incoordination, drowsiness and death over a period of roughly two years. Deer, elk, moose and caribou are susceptible to it, and some Wyoming, managers are starting to see population-level impacts.

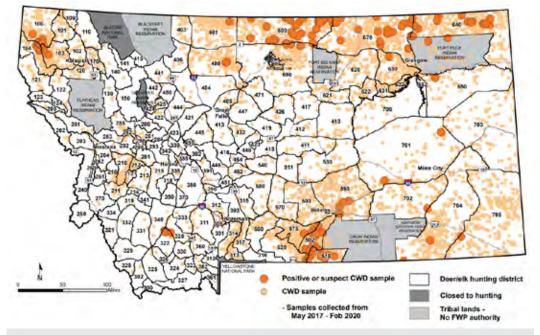
Wildlife disease specialist Hank Edwards is seeing a decrease in survival as well as a decrease in the number of older bucks in some highlyinfected herds. Edwards is the supervisor of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Wildlife Health Laboratory.

The disease infects as many as 50 percent of the animals in some herds, while in others, it stays around 30, 10 or even 5 percent. "I think every herd responds to CWD differently," Edwards said. "We [don't yet] understand why some herds are more resilient."

What we do know is that CWD can remain in the environment for years at a time.

"It's a little scary," said Jeff Heppner, a sportsman and taxidermist in Helena. "It's something we should all be paying attention to." Heppner owns Big Sky Taxidermy, formerly based in Belgrade, and says since CWD emerged in Montana in 2017, he's closely followed regulations and how it has spread.

#### **Chronic wasting disease in Montana**



Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks offered free voluntary testing for CWD to hunters throughout the state during the 2019-2020 season. This, combined with FWP's surveillance efforts in high-risk areas along the state's borders found 86 white-tailed deer, 53 mule deer, two moose and one elk infected with CWD out of a total of 6,977 animals sampled. MAP COURTESY OF FWP

population. Heppner, like many, wonders how CWD will change the future of hunting.

In Wyoming, even in herds with high infection rates, the state hasn't seen a drop in the number of annual hunting licenses purchased. This is important for management, said Edwards of the Wyoming Wildlife Health Lab, because some data suggests carefully managed hunter harvest could reduce the disease's spread.

Managers from other states agree that stakeholder involvement is key. In addition to hunters, that means landowners and conservationists, says Kelly Straka, the supervisor of the wildlife health section of Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Straka has watched CWD take hold in Michigan, as well as her home state of Minnesota, and in Missouri, where she helped create the Missouri Department of Conservation's first wildlife health program.

"We cannot do it on our own," Strika said, speaking as a wildlife manager during a 2018 panel discussion on CWD held in Bozeman. "We are all accountable, I don't care if you're a deer farmer, you're a hunter, you're a wildlife watcher. What can we do to make sure we don't make things worse?"

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has routinely surveyed high-risk populations on the Wyoming and Canadian borders since the '90s, and when a positive test came back from the lab three years ago, they ramped up surveillance efforts.

A microscopic look at lymph nodes—which can only be obtained from a deceased animal—is the only way to confirm CWD, and in recent years, FWP has given sampling kits to Heppner and other taxidermists, so they can provide agency biologists with tissue from animals their clients harvested in high-risk or CWD-positive areas. Heppner doesn't receive many animals from these areas, but he says knowing CWD is out there on the landscape—and the fact we don't know if it can infect humans—is a serious reminder to follow sanitation practices like using gloves.

Even with these concerns, Heppner says he'd still hunt in areas where CWD has been found but hasn't yet negatively impacted the deer

Strika stressed that managers need to think long term. "This is an ultramarathon. This is something that we are in for the long haul, and management has to stop being so reactive."

Wyoming Game and Fish and MT FWP are currently revising their CWD management plans. These state documents will be considered by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission on March 19-20, and in Montana on April 23. The draft documents will be made available for public review before final adoption and will address CWD surveillance efforts, management goals, and tools for reducing the spread of CWD.

Read the next edition of EBS to learn more about CWD in the Greater Yellowstone. Visit explorebigsky.com/stemming-the-tide/33159 to read the first installment in this series.

# THE NEW WEST



#### BY TODD WILKINSON

Pick apart almost any contentious issue reflecting the so-called "urban-rural" divide in isolated corners of the American West and invariably it boils down to a couple common denominators.

Changes are happening so fast that local residents feel their once-reliable compass points for interpreting the world are

vanishing; humans left unsettled, anxious and alienated; young people fleeing communities of their upbringing in search of better economic opportunities; old people left behind feeling the deep heartache of that loss which manifests as a sense of abandonment.

On top of it, the economics of globalization have only yoked workingclass rural Americans with greater levels of indebtedness.

These are the underlying foundations of social unrest and yet they get masked by other things. The tendency is to find outside entities to blame or scapegoat. It could be the government, or a certain political party, or environmentalists, immigrants or virtually any kind of other human being unlike "us."

The truth is that we have a profound psychological need to find another group at fault for our own suffering. We do this in order to explain away the reasons why transformation is changing our culture, traditions, identities and memories. Yet even after we point the finger, it doesn't make reality go away.

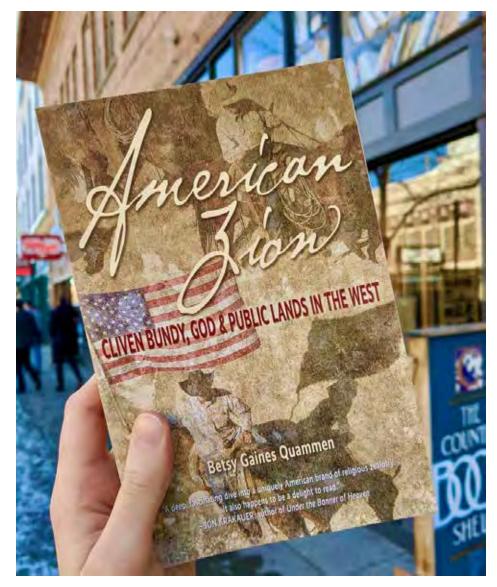
In a nutshell, these are some of the underlying themes that newly-minted Bozeman author Betsy Gaines Quammen explores in her fascinating debut book, "American Zion: Cliven Bundy, God & Public Lands in the West."

Quammen takes readers deep into the mindset that sparked the nownotorious Bundy-related standoff at their cattle ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada, and the armed takeover of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. She explores the convergence of radical Mormonism and the catalysts of the modern Sagebrush Rebellion.

Apart from natural resource interests wanting to exploit more public land for profit, there are other influences driving the Trump Administration's move to undermine the conservation legacy of Theodore Roosevelt and shrink back the size of national monuments in Utah. In "American Zion," Quammen offers both a disquieting rhyme and reason.

Here I must disclose a bias in the writing of this review. The author has been a longtime neighbor. For a few years I was enthralled by conversations we had on the street in front of our homes as she worked on achieving her Ph.D. in environmental history from Montana State University. The topic: Mormon settlement and public land conflicts.

# Betsy Quammen's new book 'American Zion' examines how West being torn asunder



Their agenda is not about abetting freedom, liberty and democracy; quite the opposite, Quammen notes. With whacky reasoning they have set out to subvert the legitimacy of government itself and its ability to steward public lands that belong to all citizens.

Turning logic and reason on their heads, the Bundys have perpetuated a new version of history that commenced when their kinfolk came into the West, ironically dismissing the rights of indigenous people who were there first. It also rationalizes a distorted interpretation of Christianity in which the Golden Rule—treat others as you would want to be treated creates a new trope of victimhood.

"The Bundys ... have defied and rejected these principles—Golden Rule, land ethic, stewardship, or conservation—in their fight to possess and use American public land," Quammen writes. "They have insisted upon being anarchic atop fragile landscapes harboring vulnerable species, and they have done it in a most anti-social way. They have bullied the public and federal agencies, broken laws and brought guns to their fight. And they have browbeat those who haven't fully embraced their level of lawlessness."

"American Zion" is the fruit of Quammen's exhaustive research and it is delivered with a page-turning narrative. One thing readers might not know: During her fact-gathering process of talking with a diverse range of people, Quammen was treated to a strange twist of fate. She chatted with the Bundys at their kitchen table in Bunkerville months before they became iconic figures of rebellion.

Are they heroes, villains or symbols of something else far more insidious?

As noted at the top of this column, rural Americans everywhere are struggling. There is a lot of pain and hurt out there. "American Zion" reveals how the Bundy movement has opportunistically preyed upon fear to conceal an ulterior motive. Quammen draws upon insights she gleaned to illuminate why the threats to public lands of the American West are very real. If such radicalism and its hidden motives are not confronted, or if they are allowed to metastasize, it will be our civil society and the rule of law that suffers most, she warns.

Rural people more than ever need our empathy and our ears but even that will not stop the only constant in life, which is unrelenting change. President Ronald Reagan once said, "The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted. It belongs to the brave."

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.



# BY DAVID TUCKER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

As you may or may not know, the Big Sky Water and Sewer District is looking for another source of quality, accessible water on Lone Mountain for the Mountain Village. Household water comes from groundwater sources throughout the area, and while these sources are not rapidly declining, they likely will not be enough for projected growth, especially considering warming temperatures and a declining snowpack.

"Up to this point, there is no alarming downward trend in our local aquifers," said Mike Richter, a Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology research specialist. "We watch the water levels with our long-term monitoring network, available to the public through our Ground Water Information Center website. What we see in Big Sky is groundwater levels closely tied to precipitation and snowpack."

BSWSD draws all of its water supply from aquifers in the Meadow and Mountain villages, and while these sources see good recharge from deep winter snowpacks, projected consumption puts the pressure on to find more soon. So far, the district has not found a large source of easily accessible clean water, and so their quest continues.

While the effort does not include surface waters like the Gallatin River and its tributaries, groundwater withdrawal can be connected to decreased surface water flows, and we are learning more about the connection between the two all the time.

"Groundwater and surface water used to be thought of as different resources," Richter said. "But now we know it's a single system." Locally, "surface waters are naturally losing water into the aquifer at the top end of the system, and gaining water lower down. The relationship is heavily dependent on our geology and topography," he said.

Because of this connectivity, withdrawal could start intercepting groundwater recharge, decreasing groundwater flow and changing the surface-groundwater relationship. "Stretches of streams gaining water from groundwater tend to be where fish seek refuge from temperature extremes, meaning they're essential for healthy fisheries," Richter added.

# Supply-side conservation

Healthy fisheries are essential for our community, which is why drought-planning and building a resilient water supply are critical. "That's where conservation becomes so important—we need things in place before the next drought cycle," Richter advised.

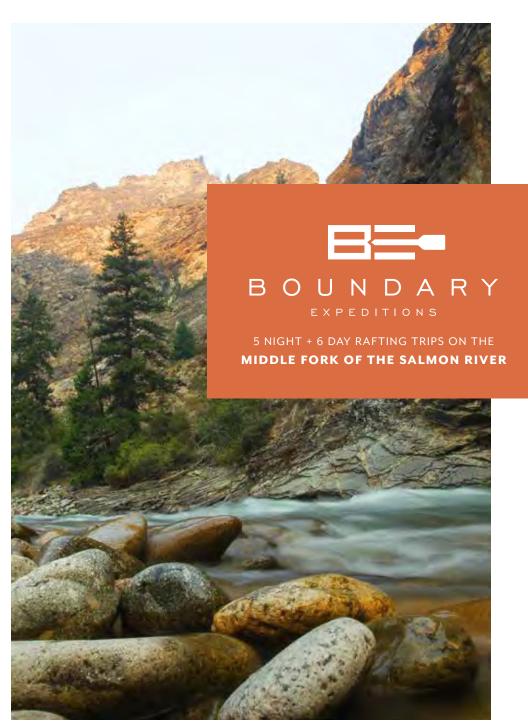
Planning for drought is challenging, and even above-average snow years can lead to dry, low-flow summers. In 2018, the Gallatin Watershed's snowpack was well above average in late winter. By early summer, several hot, dry months had melted most of the snow and all that water ran off downstream, leaving us low and dry. This winter, we sit at 116 percent of normal on March 5, but who knows what spring has in store?

One way BSWSD is encouraging conservation is through its tiered water rates. Summer water use is at least seven times higher than winter, due largely to landscaping irrigation. The new tiered system hopes to discourage excess water use with higher rates once a user goes above a certain threshold. The Gallatin River Task Force also encourages conservation through a rebate program for residents, wherein participants get paid to upgrade their water-using appliances to more efficient models.

While these measures likely are not enough to keep BSWSD from needing another supply of water, it is a critical tool for a functioning community. "The cheapest, most river-friendly water they can find is the water people don't use," Richter said, reinforcing the notion that conservation is the best way to combat the worst case of a supply shortage.

For now, abundant snowfall continues to keep the Meadow Village aquifer full and clean. Surface waters are sufficiently recharged by groundwater flows, keeping fish happy and healthy. Happy and healthy fish are keeping anglers engaged and entertained. But all this doesn't mean we shouldn't keep our eyes on the future, because we aren't certain what it'll bring, and there simply isn't enough water to not conserve.

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



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#### BY SARA MARINO EBS CONTRIBUTOR



The author's dog, Sammy, enjoying the South Fork Loop. PHOTO BY SARA MARINO

The first day of spring is right around the corner and while Big Sky will surely see springtime snowstorms, we will also be starting to thaw out in the coming weeks. Don't let the slushy conditions stop you from getting outside, just be prepared with these tips.

#### Trail Etiquette

As the snow melts, trails become wet and messy, and most susceptible to damage. Although it's tempting to walk along the sides of the trail to avoid that big mud puddle, stick to the center of the path and walk through it to protect vegetation and avoid widening the trail through erosion.

Also, do all your fellow trail users a favor

by picking up after your pet. When the snow melts, we see what happens when our best friends have been pooping on the trail all winter long.

Consider helping the whole community out by participating in the second annual Runoff Cleanoff on April 25 at the Big Sky Community Park hosted by Big Sky Community Organization and Gallatin River Task Force. Prizes will be awarded to those who pick up the most weight in pet waste.

#### Wildlife Awareness

Last year, the first grizzly bear sighting in Yellowstone National Park occurred March 8,

# Spring thaw

so it's time to start being bear aware. Bear Smart Big Sky has some tips for hiking and biking in bear country on their website at wcscommunitypartnerships.org/bear-smart.

#### Remember to:

- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return
- Travel in groups of three or more and stay together
- Make sure everyone has bear spray
- Carry bear spray in an accessible location (hip or chest holster) and know how to use it - Stay alert
- Always keep children and pets close and within sight
- Make noise to avoid surprising a bear

#### What to Bring

This time of year, we see warm, sunny days followed by cold nights. That means slick trails in the morning. Yaktrax or trekking poles can be useful to help you stay on your feet in icy conditions.

Make sure you're prepared with weather-proof boots, clothing layers you can add or subtract, and don't forget basic items like sunblock, sunglasses and of course a snack and hydration. One great benefit to hiking this time of year is you can probably leave the bug spray at home.

Keep in mind that a slushy or muddy trail will slow your pace, so give yourself enough time to finish your hike without rushing and possibly twisting an ankle, or just plan for a shorter trip. Most important, enjoy taking this time for yourself to connect with nature and leave your worries behind at least for a few hours.

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

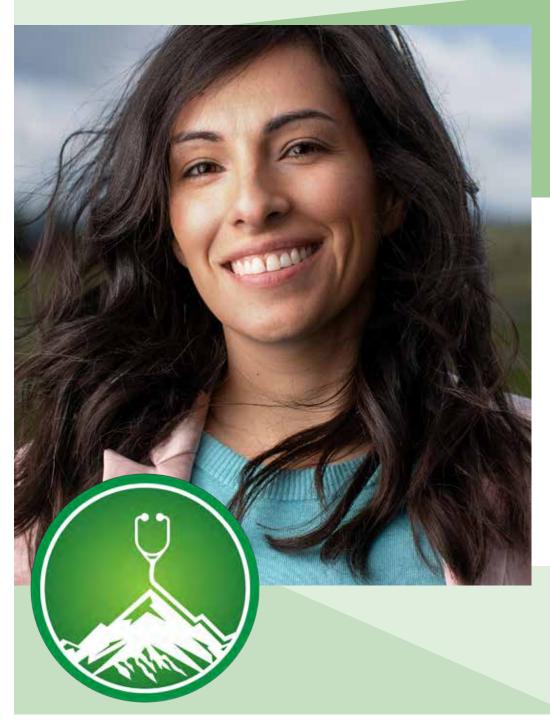
Sara Marino is the Big Sky Community Organization community development manager. BSCO engages and leads people to recreational and enrichment opportunities through thoughtful development of partnerships, programs and places.

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# INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



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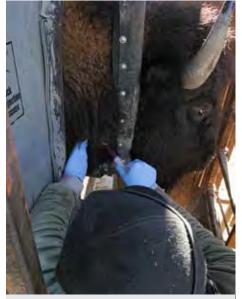
MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, Wyo. – Bison operations began March 1 at the Stephens Creek administrative area in Yellowstone National Park. Bison capture and shipping operations begin each spring when bison migrate from the interior of the park into the Gardiner Basin and may continue through late March.

The work at Stephens Creek happens on behalf of all Interagency Bison Management Plan partners which include federal, state and tribal groups. In December 2019, the IBMP partners agreed to a 2020 winter operations plan that recommends removing 600 to 900 animals from Yellowstone's estimated population of 4,900 bison.

The population will be reduced using three methods: 1) public and tribal hunting outside the park, 2) capturing bison near the park boundary and then transferring them to Native American tribes for processing and distribution of meat and hides to their members, and 3) a quarantine program that results in brucellosis-free bison being moved to tribal lands.

Located in the northern section of the park near Gardiner, the Stephens Creek administrative area includes park corral operations, equipment storage, a native plant nursery, and the bison capture and quarantine facilities. The administrative area is closed to the public year-round and the National Park Service reminds visitors that unmanned aircraft like drones are prohibited.

Bison captures for the 2020 season come shortly after Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks announced support for establishing a wild bison herd in Montana.



A number of bison migrating out of Yellowstone Park in late winter are captured each year and shipped to partnering tribes for slaughter or held for quarantine and future release on tribal land. The animals are all tested for brucellosis via a blood test. Pictured, a park wildlife manager collects blood from a captured bison for testing. NPS PHOTOS



A selection of bison that test negative for brucellosis are loaded onto horse trailers for shipment to slaughter.

Visit nps.gov/yell/learn/management/bison-management-faqs.htm to learn more about bison management.

# **Roads in Yellowstone close for spring plowing** All groomed roads close March 15

#### YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, Wyo. – Roads in Yellowstone National Park began closing to oversnow travel on March 1 for spring plowing operations. All oversnow travel will end for the season March 15, at 9 p.m. Roads will open to automobile travel on April 17 at 8 a.m., weather permitting.

As plowing crews progress, portions of the park will open for biking ahead of automobile travel, typically by the beginning of April.

At Mammoth Hot Springs, the Gift Shop, Ski Shop and food service closed March 2. The Mammoth Hot Springs Campground, Yellowstone General Store, Post Office, Medical Clinic, Albright Visitor Center and self-serve fuel pumps remain open all year.



At Old Faithful, Old Faithful Snow Lodge and Cabins closed March 1. The Bear Den Gift Shop, the Geyser Grill and the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center will close March 15.

At Tower Junction, self-serve fuel pumps are available all year.

The road from the park's North Entrance at Gardiner through Mammoth Hot Springs to Cooke City remains open to automobiles all year.

Visitors driving to and in the park during the spring should have flexible travel plans and be prepared for changing weather conditions. Temporary travel restrictions or closures can occur at any time.

Visit nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/parkroads.htm or call (307) 344-2117 for the most current information on road conditions and closures. In addition, sign up to receive Yellowstone road alerts on your mobile phone by texting "82190" to 888-777. An automatic text reply will confirm receipt and provide instructions.



A plow makes a first cut through snow accumulated on Sylvan Pass. NPS PHOTOS



Snow cleared from the road headed toward the South Entrance.

# **Grizzly council talks funding, recreation and bears in Libby** Working groups begin to consider recommendations

#### BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

LIBBY – Last summer, a woman living by a trail that meanders along the Tobacco River was startled by a scream. Afraid someone had been mauled by a bear, she called the police in nearby Eureka.

"Everybody's worried [that] sooner or later somebody's gonna get grabbed," said State Sen. Mike Cuffe (R) as he described the incident. The response team included sheriff's deputies, a Montana Highway Patrol trooper, U.S. Border Patrol, an agent with the U.S. Forest Service, and a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks game warden.

What they found was concerning, but not in the way they expected: A black bear cub and a grizzly cub were in separate trees as their mothers prowled below.

"The two sows were squaring off and swiping at each other, and it was the two cubs that were screaming and crying," Cuffe said, speaking in Libby during the fifth meeting of Gov. Steve Bullock's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council. During the Feb. 26-27 meeting, the 18-member citizen panel heard concerns from the greater Libby community.

"I believe there's room for bears, I believe there's room for humans, and we just need to find a way to coexist," said Yaak Valley resident Ashely South during a public comment session. "Everything that is connected to bears is connected to this landscape and connected to the people within it. We can work together, and we can find ways to have preventative actions with bears. We want these recovery zones to be recovered."

Conflict prevention and human safety are two of the five objectives Bullock tasked the council to address during its eight meetings, which began in October 2019 and will conclude this July. In August, the panel will submit recommendations to the governor and FWP on how the public would like the state of Montana to respond to and manage grizzly bears. The other objectives Bullock asked the council to address are ensuring a healthy, sustainable grizzly population; improving conflict response; and improving intergovernmental, interagency and tribal coordination. Bullock selected the council members to represent the public from a pool of more than 150 applicants and they come from communities scattered about western Montana and as far east as Big Timber.

It's admittedly a daunting task, and council members have expressed concern about how quickly the August deadline will come. So far, the council has heard from experts on bear biology, land conservation efforts, and conflict prevention, among other topics.

During the Libby meeting, the council discussed how state and federal budgets relate to bears, and how the funding picture could change if the Yellowstone population is removed from the Endangered Species List. They also heard from Wayne Kaseworm of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and FWP bear manager Kim Annis on connectivity challenges in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem. Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation Director Rachel VandeVoort presented about the state's recreation industry. and working near bears; finding creative solutions for funding deficits; and improving conflict prevention efforts on private and public land.

"We've got to educate people about the bear, about bear habitat, how to live with them and also where they are," said council member Greg Schock, a retired dairy farmer from St. Ignatius. "A lot of people don't realize bears have been in their backyard for a long time until they have a conflict."

A particular challenge the council is grappling with is how to promote bearsmart thinking in communities where bears are starting to expand, and how to educate those who live where bears already are.

"You can do everything possible to [secure attractants] on your property, but if your neighbor doesn't do it, then the bear's still going to come to your house looking for food," council member Michele Dietrich of Hamilton said. "How do we support communities to start conversations about finding a way to become bear wise? Education is a huge part of that, and the funding is a huge part of that."

The council closed its February meeting with plans to continue talking as smaller working groups, and report back in March. The council is accepting and reading individual comments online, as well as hearing public input during meetings.

The next Grizzly Bear Advisory Council meetings are scheduled for March 18 in Browning and March 19–20 in Choteau. Visit fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/ management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html for more information about the Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisor Council, to view meeting minutes and to submit individual comments.



VandeVoort is working on programming that will promote recreation and natural resource education in public school curriculums, as well as update a 1999 inventory compiling research about how recreation impacts wildlife in the Rockies.

Since the council's January meeting in Polson, small working groups have been meeting via conference call to discuss emerging ideas, challenges, opportunities and solutions. The working groups met in person on the second day of the meeting to brainstorm initial recommendations. These brainstorming sessions covered more than 80 ideas the council developed in January. Facilitator Heather Stokes with the University of Montana said these ideas will continue to develop and new ones may be added as the council continues to hear from experts and Montana communities during the March meetings in Browning and Choteau, the May meeting in Red Lodge, and the July meeting in Dillon.

Among the council's initial ideas are finding ways to incentivize large-acre landowners that provide habitat to grizzly bears but carry the burden of living Lone Peak Performance + Fitness is a full-service gym that offers gym memberships, physical therapy, personal training, and nutrition consultation dedicated to helping you reach your personal summit. Drop in and join us.

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# REFLECTIONS Thoughts for sustainable living

# Preserving Big Sky's dark skies

# BY KATHY BOUCHARD EBS CONTRIBUTOR

For nearly a week each winter month, fair skies are rinsed of all but the brightest stars by the gleaming splendor of the full moon. It is the perfect time to strap on skis or snowshoes and experience the ethereal vistas of cool white mountains touching the blue-grey heavens. Everything casts deep moon shadows and all the contours of landscape are rendered otherworldly by lunar brilliance on the snowy world. The often bitingly cold night absolutely glows.

None of this happens without pure white snow, one of the most reflective substances known. Snow bounces about 90 percent of any light which strikes it in all directions, mostly up, thus dimming the stars, but thoroughly illuminating a good deal of real estate. The reflective quality of a substance is named albedo. The albedo of the polar caps during summer months once prevented melting by bouncing light away. The albedo of loamy black dirt is almost non-existent. And perhaps our snowy albedo is under appreciated by perfectly wonderful planners and designers who don't spend six months every year happily living with snow as we (mostly) do.

How else to explain the loss of darkness in Big Sky? Despite the need for security, publicity or safe streets, Big Sky is overlit because every watt from any bulb is nearly doubled in the presence of snow. Virtually every new commercial building is made festive with what once looked like fairy lights, but now have a more determinedly industrial aspect. Big Sky is suffering from light pollution. I can't believe it is intentional, but it needs to be remedied. Before a single new home or business is built or completed anywhere in our community in the future, please let it be dark-sky compliant. Please let it have just enough soft lighting to be snug and cozy and no more. For those who recently built and have more light than you expected, blame the snow, and please reduce your wattage.

I have heard from a number of residents about this issue. One told me he actually moved recently to escape the lighting situation. There really is no reason for this problem to continue or worsen. If you are developing property, speak to your architects. If you are in a subdivision, including commercial subdivisions along Highway 191, learn about the International Dark Sky Association and reduce your wattage. With all the newest technology of cameras, motion detectors and security apps, bright unshaded lights are wasteful and unneighborly. If you are a concerned resident becoming more aware of the glories of darkness, share your values with your neighbors and home-owner associations. Like tanning, glittering city lights are so last century.

Preserving dark skies is one way to preserve wilderness. It increases the value of the Montana experience. Many people treasure what we are in danger of losing—the dark. We can't control the spheres but we must control our lights, because for nearly a week each winter month, fair skies are studded with all the brightest stars in the absence of the moon, and the night absolutely glows.

One way to monitor your light is to turn on your indoor and outdoor lights per your normal usage. Walk around the perimeter of your property and see if you can see the filaments, the light producers, in any of your bulbs. If you can, then light is escaping from your property. Shades or curtains could help for indoor lighting, dark-sky compliant fixtures will help outside. And don't forget the light magnifying quality of snow, which means a little goes a long way in winter.

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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# Big Sky and Bozeman area elk count inconclusive

# Early season shoulder hunt added near Norris

#### BY JESSIANNE CASTLE



BOZEMAN -Wildlife biologist Julie Cunningham took to the sky this February to count elk. During two flights she documented a continued change in herd behavior in hunting district 311 north of Highway 84 near Norris and spotted fewer elk in Gallatin Canyon. Cunningham attributes seeing fewer elk near Big Sky to the timing of the fight.

Bull elk trudge through snow in the Buffalo Horn area during area biologist Julie Cunningham's flight survey of the elk population. PHOTO BY JULIE CUNNINGHAM

As a wildlife expert for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Cunningham is responsible for

keeping tabs on the greater Bozeman area's wildlife. She monitors population trends and health, and recommends hunting regulations and objectives.

On a Feb. 13 flight over Gallatin Canyon with pilot Rob Cherot, Cunningham counted 382 elk. During the 5.5 hours they were in the air, they buzzed up and down, drainage by drainage, from Porcupine Creek south to Black Butte, then from Sage Creek north to Big Sky, covering portions of hunting district 310 and 360. It's the lowest count since 2016.

Cunningham says there were occasions where they couldn't get visuals on elk, even though they spotted tracks.

"This flight was probably done too late in the season," the biologist said in her report. "Later in winter if snowpack is heavy, elk tend to conserve energy by staying under tree cover and not moving into the open in response to the noise of the helicopter or airplane."

Other flights and necessary wildlife capture work caused her to delay the flight until mid-February this year, she added.

"I suspect elk numbers are slowly increasing, but HD 310 is still markedly below the objective of 1,500 elk, and I continue to support conservative management in this district," she said.

FWP conducted a cooperative flight earlier in February with the Flying D Ranch northwest of Gallatin Gateway near the mouth of the Gallatin Canyon, ultimately documenting elk numbers within the target range of 2,000-3,000. Cunningham flew with pilot Joe Rahn north of Highway 84 from Norris north to Three Forks, while an observer and pilot from Flying D Ranch covered the southern end of hunting district 311 from Highway 84 south toward Big Sky. In all, the parties counted 2,219 elk.

This was the fourth year FWP has worked in partnership with Flying D Ranch to count elk, an effort Cunningham says is valuable for wildlife management as it gives a better picture of elk numbers and distribution, while saving money and flight time.



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Cunningham said it's notable that she continued to observe two separate elk herds in the district. The newer, 800-head Red Mountain herd was documented in 2008 and lives year-round on private land west of the Madison River. It wasn't described in the 2005 elk plan, which guides how FWP manages elk populations in the state.

The Spanish Peaks herd, which Cunningham counted at nearly 1,400, is documented in the state's elk plan. These animals live east of the Madison River on the Flying D Ranch and within the Spanish Peaks Wilderness. According to Cunningham, GPS collar data suggests the Red Mountain and Spanish Peaks herds seldom mix.

Since 2009, the Spanish Peaks elk have moved north of Highway 84 onto private land, where they've caused crop damage. The presence of the elk near cattle also poses a risk for ranchers, as some elk populations are known to carry the abortion-causing disease brucellosis. More than 1,000 elk frequent these smaller properties and agricultural lands in the winter, Cunningham said.

In 2017, the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a shoulder season hunt in the north half of the hunting district to reduce the number of elk on private land and reduce conflict for landowners. During the Fish and Wildlife Commission's Feb. 13 meeting, commissioners elected to continue the shoulder season for the 2020 hunting season, and added an early season option so hunters can pursue elk on private lands north of Highway 84 from Aug. 15 to the start of archery season on Sept. 5.

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# Rebooting after a bear's hibernation

### BY KRIS INMAN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Welcome to the spring, the days are getting longer, the temperatures warmer, drawing us outside. Bears too are feeling these changes, and between February and May, bears emerge from their dens.



A cinnamon black bear in Yellowstone recently emerged from its den. NPS PHOTO

Between February and May is a wide range for bears to emerge from their winter slumber. Why the variation? Weather, reproductive status and food play a role. In mild years, with low snow, bears emerge earlier. Males and females without cubs are the first to emerge; females with cubs the last. In years with an abundance of natural foods or in communities where trash is regularly available, some bears, as noted in the December column, may not den and actually take advantage of a readily available food source.

Contrary to popular belief, bears don't awaken from their dens in desperate need for food. As bears emerge from their den's they are undergoing several physiological changes: their body temperature, heart rate and metabolic rate is gradually returning to normal. They will rest periodically as everything gears back up, move slowly, and begin looking for food.

As bears begin moving around Big Sky, some will be at different stages of "rebooting" after their winter's sleep. It is a good time for you to gear back up and minimize your chance of having a negative encounter with a bear.

Bears, for the most part, avoid people. But when they become accustomed to people after having regular access to trash, they become bolder around people.

To keep bears wild, use a bear-resistant trash can. Never store food or trash outside or in an unlocked car or bed of your truck. Feed pets inside. Keep your garage doors closed. Taking these bear-smart actions will help keep yourself, your property and bears safe.

If you see a bear, do not approach it. Always keep your distance. Move away slowly and have bear spray handy and ready to use. Know how to use bear spray, and look for bear spray training sessions at the farmer's market this summer and events throughout the season. Most of Big Sky home-owners associations and businesses have pledged to be bear smart. The Big Sky Community Foundation, Big Sky Homeowners Association, Big Sky Resort, Fire Light Meadows, Moonlight Basin, Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, Big Sky Town Center and Yellowstone Club require bear-resistant trash cans. Gallatin Canyon homes and businesses are also required to use bear-resistant trash receptacles or keep it in a secured building. It takes a village and everyone in the community doing their part to be bear smart and keep Big Sky wild.

Visit fwp.mt.gov/recreation/safety/wildlife/bears for more about bear safety.

Kris Inman is a wildlife biologist who's spent more than two decades studying black bears and wolverines. She leads the Wildlife Conservation Society's Strategic Partnerships Program where she takes science to community-led conservation action. Visit wcscommunitypartnerships.org/bear-smart to learn more.

#### **Bear Tips**

- Use a bear-resistant trash can
- Never store food or trash outside, in an unlocked car or in the bed of a truckFeed pets inside
- Keep garage doors closed
- Keep your distance from bears
- Know how to use bear spray

# Yellowstone biologists spot first bear of 2020

#### YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

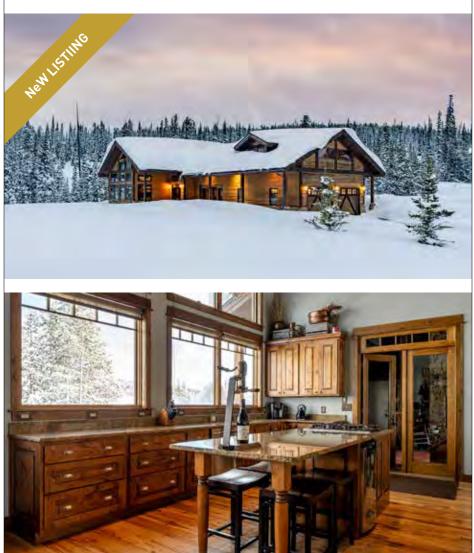
The first confirmed grizzly bear sighting in Yellowstone National Park of 2020 occurred on March 7. The bear was observed from the air by biologists during a radio telemetry flight near Grand Prismatic Spring just one day before last year's first sighting.

"Now that bears are emerging from winter dens, visitors should be excited for the chance to view and photograph them, but they should also treat bears with respect and caution," said Kerry Gunther, the park's bear management biologist. "Many visitors think bears are ravenously hungry and more likely to attack people for food after emerging from hibernation, but almost all bear attacks result from surprise encounters when hikers startle bears at close distances and the bears react with defensive aggression. Hikers, skiers and snowshoers should travel in groups of three or more, carry bear spray, and make noise."





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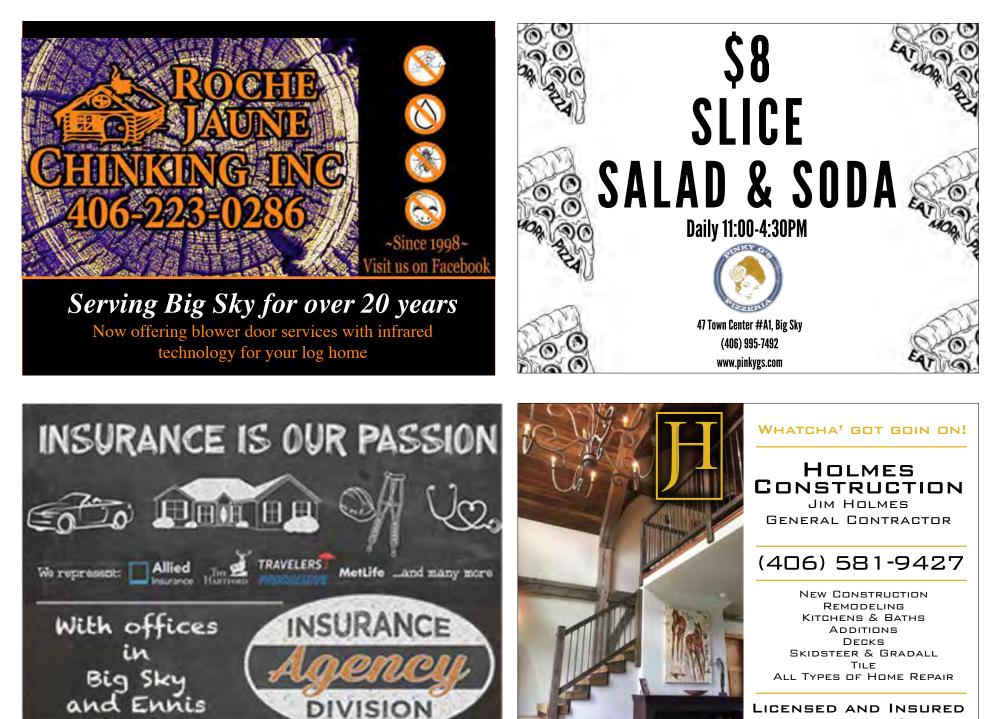


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# A depressed town fights back

#### BY DAVID MARSTON **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

PUEBLO, Colo. - For nearly half a century, coal powered the blast furnaces of the 1,410-megawatt Comanche Power Generating station in Pueblo, a city of 110,000 in southern Colorado. You can't miss Comanche, the state's largest coal-fired power plant; it dominates the flat landscape for 40 miles in each direction, just as its plume of smoke dominates the sky.

That's why residents shuddered in August 2017, when Xcel Energy announced that Comanche would shut down Comanche boilers 1 and 2, by 2025. Pueblo had already suffered through steel-mill layoffs and closures in the late 1970s and early 1980s, losing 8,000 of 9,000 jobs. This is a place that knows the pain of an industry cutting back. Yet what's happening in Pueblo today offers some hope to other towns experiencing the death of a fossil-fueled economy.

That's because a new industry has come on the scene in Pueblo. Vestas, a Danish windmill factory that employs some 900 people, makes tower bases for giant windmills. And business is booming: Wait time for a new Vestas windmill is five years, says Colorado Public Utilities Commissioner John Gavan. For Pueblo Mayor Nick Gradisar, who is focused on employment, Vestas' existence helps to ease the pain of losing Comanche's jobs. "We're gonna lose good jobs when Xcel shuts down those boilers," he says of Comanche's coming closure, "but our air will be cleaner."

What does it mean when two of three boilers sit idle? Each boiler devours trainloads of coal along with millions of gallons of water bought from the town, which makes good money on the deal. Comanche used to run flat out, with coal-powered steam spinning the turbines that make electricity, but the rise of renewables means coal plants power up intermittently. "Coalfired plants are running at 54 percent these days ... and plants are built to run at capacity," reports Bloomberg News.

Frank Hilliard, who helped build the plant's third boiler, is a roll-your-own-cigarette-type guy who lives in Walsenburg, a busted coal mine town 50 miles south of Pueblo. Hilliard says the remaining boiler at Comanche is young and powerful, shipping out 857 megawatts. But he fears it's on the chopping block, too.

"We just built Comanche 3 and they want to shut the damn thing down," he complains. He wishes that Xcel and the other big utilities didn't hate coal. "Coal created damned good work," he says, "and most jobs require college now."

But hate isn't the problem; it's the market. Three hundred coal plants have closed in the past 10 years, representing half of U.S. coal generating capacity, reports the research firm S&P Global. 2019 was the second-biggest year ever for coal plant closures, and utilities are pushing early shutdowns for remaining coal plants.

To comply with Colorado's 2040 goals of 100 percent carbon-free electricity, the smart money predicts that Comanche 3's closure will happen sooner, perhaps much sooner.

When Hilliard worked on Comanche 3, it was one of the last coal turbines built in the country. He's still proud of what he accomplished. "We built Comanche 3 with the plan that it would power Colorado until well after my kid died. These plants are really something. How can we just destroy them?"

It happened fast, this economic turn away from fossil fuels and toward renewables. Along with Vestas Windmills symbolizing a new economy, Xcel is building the state's largest solar installation, a 240-megawatt solar farm, which will surround the 139-year-old Pueblo steel mill, now Russian owned. Mayor Gradisar says his Slovenian immigrant grandfather worked there for 50 years making steel using coal, yet he embraces the town's new future.

"Pueblo will be one of the first steel mills run on renewables," he says, "and the Pueblo Mill is already the biggest recycler in Colorado, using nothing but scrap metal."

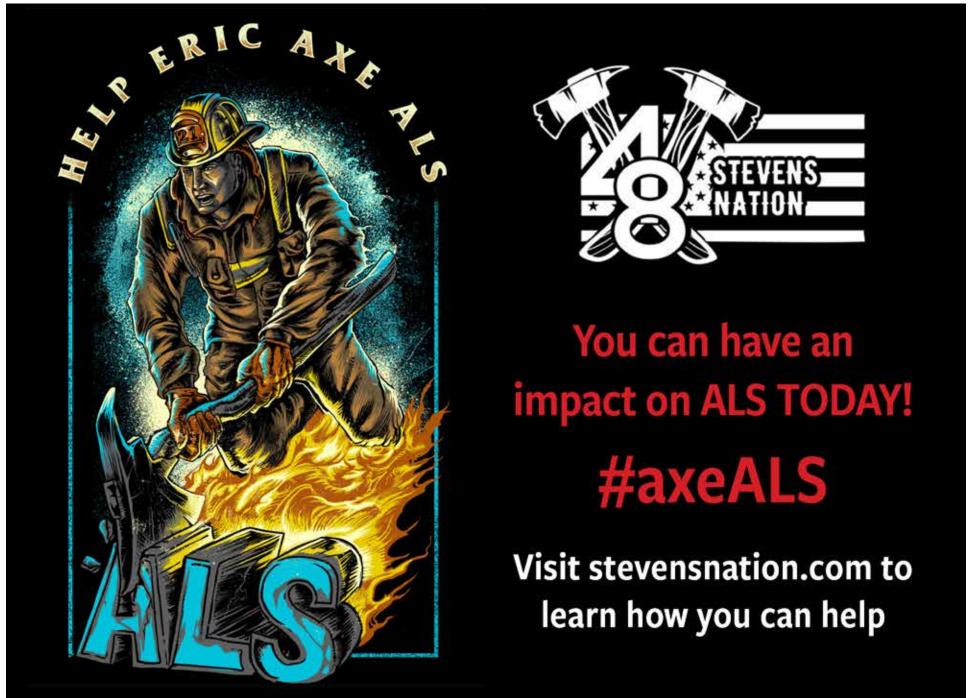
Gradisar is counting on Pueblo's grit: "This is a city built by immigrants," he says. "The mill had 40 languages going-hard work is in Pueblo's DNA."

These days, Pueblo needs all the economic help it can get as it leads the state in all the wrong categories: mortality, crime and high school drop-out rates. The rapid layoffs in the 1970s and 1980s slammed Pueblo on its back, and the town has never really recovered.

Meanwhile Mayor Gradisar is banking on the new economy. "If the citizens approve, we'll municipalize the electricity grid and home-grown wind power will cut our electrical bills by 15 percent," he says.

As for Hilliard, he continues to miss the good old days. "I don't like change, but I'm not gonna fight it," he says. "I'm too old and too broken-down to look for a new job. "It's time to move on."

David Marston is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a private nonprofit organization dedicated to lively discussion about the West. He lives in New York and Colorado.





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#### **SPORTS**



# Community rallies for Best in the West skijoring

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Mother Nature did not cooperate for the third annual Best in the West Showdown skijoring event on March 7 and 8 in Big Sky Town Center. Hovering around 50 F, the warm conditions were less than ideal for maintaining snow on the racecourse, but, thanks to an impressive community effort, the event went off without a hitch.

After six other skijoring events were canceled across Montana this season, some worried the Best in the West Showdown would join the growing list—events in Butte, Helena, and Whitefish, were all nixed due to a lack of snow—but the Big Sky Skijoring Association wouldn't hear of it.

That said, the Best of the West required hefty amounts of effort and support from local companies and community members to pull off according to BSSA race organizer Justa Adams.

"I'm overwhelmed with the community' generosity," Adams said in a phone call with EBS after the event. "My entire team's effort to ... divide and conquer ... made this a successful event. My volunteers that showed up stayed there and stuck [it] out through the mud."

Area businesses supplied a loader, rock truck, dump trucks and operators free of charge to ensure enough snow remained on the 800-foot course to make it suitable for competition. Dick Anderson Construction, Rent Biz, TMC Transport and American Excavation each donated supplies and labor, moving 300 loads—or 2,000 yards—of snow onto the track over the week leading up to the event.

The effort equated to about \$25,000 for the Best in the West Showdown. "I wouldn't have been able to do any of it without our original sponsors, but specifically [without] the additional \$25,000 in time and donations last week, we wouldn't have had a race," she said.

A record 120 teams came out to compete, up from the 92 that raced in last year's event, according to Adams. Six different levels of competition were on display and competitors had to navigate through 15 to 20 gates on the course, dependent on their level of competition. Each gate a team missed resulted in penalties that added time onto their run.

Safety was paramount for the BSSA team throughout the weekend. Former skijor competitor-turned-BSSA member and course designer Colin Cook, volunteer equipment operator Patrick McVey and



A record number of competitors, such as skier John Anderson and rider Audrey Williams pictured here, took to the course for the third annual Best in the West Showdown. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

Gallatin Gateway, competed in 11 competitions last year. "We just don't have any snow and it's been really hard for a lot of races trying to make it work," she said.

Adams, grateful to have held the Best in the West Showdown in the spring-like conditions, is already looking toward next season and perhaps some cooler weather.

"White and fluffy snow and no mud," she said. "Hopefully."

### **Division Winners:**

Open ...... Skier – RJ Klotz Rider – Josh Abbott Horse – Elvis **Combined Time: 33.87 seconds** 

veterinarian Jacy Cook were constantly surveying the course to ensure it was safe to race on. The competition was stopped a handful of times for fresh snow and salt to be added to the course, and for a groomer to scrape away excess slushy snow as temperatures rose.

In the highest level of competition, the Open Division, skier RJ Klotz and rider Josh Abbott stormed back to claim the top spot in the overall results, with a combined time of 33.87 seconds between the two days, just ahead of Aaron Griffen and Claudia Schmidt, riding Clyde, who finished at 33.99 combined.

A difference of nearly two full seconds between Klotz and Abbott's Saturday run compared to their time on Sunday made up the ground that they originally trailed. Griffen and Schmidt also took home third place overall with a combined time of 34.02 seconds riding Schmidt's other horse Zeek.

"It's awesome because this is only the fourth race I've made it to this year," said Schmidt, the 2019 National Skijoring America Champion, of competing at the Best in the West Showdown. Schmidt, who lives in

Sport ...... Skier – Lang Schuler Rider – Dennis Alverson Horse – Scooter Combined Time: 35.03 seconds Novice .....Skier – Cole Pampe Rider – Brittany Delehant Horse – Sheeza Combined Time: 44.20 seconds Women .....Skier – Alina Gemza Rider – Monica Plecker Horse – Zeta **Combined Time: 42.45 seconds** Snowboard......Skier – Kalei Pitcher Rider – Kristen Beck Horse – Lefty Combined Time: 56.82 seconds Junior ...... Skier – Russell Douglas Rider – Arley Douglas Horse – Dead Line **Combined Time: 50.91 seconds** 

# Big Sky's basketball future bright

#### BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Having attended a large portion of home basketball contests for the Lone Peak Big Horns boys' and girls' programs this season, it's easy to overlook the pipeline those players came through before ever taking the court at the high school level. The Ophir Miners middle school boys' and girls' basketball programs recently finished encouraging seasons, leaving anticipation high for the future of basketball in Big Sky.

On the boys' side, the fifth- and sixth-grade team as well as the seventh- and eighthgrade team finished their respective seasons with winning records of 9-5. Each team boasted a large roster with a combined 35 athletes between the four grade levels, 21 from grades five and six, and the remaining 14 from seventh and eighth grades.

The fifth- and sixth-grade team finished their season strong, winning their final three games. "I see a group that...will either be able to maintain a standard of a program, or even raise it some," said fifth- and sixth-grade Miners coach Al Malinowski. "It's interesting in talking to the kids because they're capable of more than they realize. I feel fortunate now to be working with them at the age they are, where I can help them to understand that they can compete at a pretty high level."

The winning streak followed a 1-point loss to Anderson School, according to Malinowski. "I think we learned something from that experience, so I would probably point to that loss as better for us than even some of our wins," he said.

Malinowski said the team chemistry the boys exhibited played a pivotal role in coming close to a season goal of having all 21 athletes score a point. "We were off by a couple," Malinowski said. "But I love that the team bought into it and even in the last game, when one of the guys that hadn't scored had a couple opportunities, you could see everybody was into it and hoping that would happen."

The seventh- and eighth-grade team finished their season with a Cinderella story run in the Rural District tournament. Entering the tournament as the fifth seed, the Miners went on to upset fourth seeded Petra at the buzzer by a point and No. 1 seed Anderson by a basket in the semifinals. School let out early so that students could attend the championship game where Ophir fell to third-seeded Monforton by only two points but secured a second-place finish.

"It was packed with everybody from the school and it was a really cool experience for them to be able to be a part of and kind of see what's going to happen, hopefully, moving forward," said seventh- and eighth-grade Miners coach Matt Jennings.

The tourney victories over Petra and Anderson were especially significant, according to Jennings, because they avenged double-digit losses to both teams earlier in the season.

Six eighth graders will be departing for the high school level and Jennings is intrigued to see what the future will hold for the team. "I think it'll be good timing because we'll have a good core of kids coming up that have played together for a while and that tougher challenge, I think, will be met pretty well," he said.

Buzz Tatom and Alan McClain co-coached the seventh- and eighth-grade Ophir Miners girls' team, leading them to a record around .500. "[There were] two things that Alan and I were looking for"Tatom said. "It was treating each other as a team. In other words, there's not an eighth grade [or a] seventh grade, we're all on the same team. When somebody gets knocked on their rear end, we piack them up and we're supportive of each other and that was the first thing that was important to us. The second thing was effort. I would say that everybody on the team gave everything they've got pretty much every night."



The 2019-2020 Ophir Miners fifth- and sixth-grade boys basketball team. PHOTO COURTESY OF AL MALINOWSKI



The seventh- and -eighth grade Ophir Miner girls compete in a game this season. PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZ TATOM



As was the case with every Ophir Miners team this season, sickness played a large role in the team's season. Tatom said the team had a winning record before injuries and maladies kept athletes sidelined. A closely contested victory over West Yellowstone was a highlight for Tatom. "We always, as a school, enjoy beating West [Yellowstone] and we had a close game near the end of the season [and] I think we won it by one point," he said. "It went down to the very last second and we pulled it out."

Four eighth graders are headed for the high school program next year. "It'll be fun to watch them the next three years. As kids play together longer and longer and develop kind of that team attitude, I just think that they get better and better," Tatom said.

The fifth- and sixth-grade Ophir Miners girls' nearly strung together a perfect season, finishing with an impressive 8-1 record. One of the milestone victories throughout the year for head coach Heather Morris was a gritty victory over rival West Yellowstone.

"We were playing girls who were a little bit older than we were and they were definitely bigger," Morris said. "We handled ourselves really well and we played terrific team defense and really helped out when somebody was able to slip by one of our players."

The team fielded 10 players on their roster, eight of which were sixth graders combined with a couple of fifth graders. "The girls played great all season and they are athletes," Morris said. "It makes Jenny [Wilcynski's] and my job very easy."

The 2019-2020 Ophir Miners fifth- and sixth-grade girls basketball team. PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER MORRIS



The 2019-2020 Ophir Miners seventh- and eighth-grade boys basketball team. PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT JENNINGS

# Athlete Profile: Caleb Unger

Local ski racer overcomes injuries, caps astounding season

# BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – Over the last two years, Caleb Unger has struggled with injuries. He suffered a torn ACL in 2017 and a broken tibia and fibula in late 2018 causing him to miss nearly two seasons of training and racing. But it turns out Unger is resilient. After working through his injuries in physical therapy for many months, Unger was able to rejoin the Big Sky Ski Team (BSSEF) for the 2019-2020 ski season.

Coming off a stellar season where he took three first places and four podiums in local races, Unger qualified to compete in the 2020 Junior Alpine National Championships in Snowbasin, Utah, on Feb. 24. And he performed exceptionally well placing 38th in the slalom, 46th in the super-G and 58th in the giant slalom. The race was by qualification only and Unger competed against 80 of the top racers in the nation.

EBS recently caught up with Unger to talk blasting gates, racing Division 1 in college and the importance of bouncing back.

### **Explore Big Sky:** Did you expect to have such a great season when you came back from your injuries?

**Caleb Unger:** I knew I worked hard in PT over the summer and I had high hopes for the season, but I didn't expect it to go as well as it did.

#### EBS: What did you do in preparation for this season?

**C.U.:** I made sure to get into the gym at least once a day and spent lots of time analyzing videos of skiing. I also kept myself occupied during the summer season with various outdoor activities to keep a positive mental attitude.

### **EBS:** How was your experience at the Junior Alpine National Championships in Snowbasin?

**C.U.:** It was extremely eye-opening in terms of seeing how hard I need to work and train to be able to compete with the best kids in the United States. It put ski racing in a completely new perspective for me seeing such good



Caleb Unger leans in during the GS discipline in Big Sky. PHOTO BY TATE MARSHAL

skiers and makes me want to work even harder. My time in Snowbasin was also really amazing because I had the time and was able to freeski and explore the mountain and the old Olympic downhill track which had to have been a highlight of the trip.

#### EBS: How do you think you will perform next season?

**C.U.:** With my new sense of perspective on how hard I need to work to be able to compete next season with the best kids, I know that it's not going to be easy and I'll have to fully dedicate myself and be extremely focused on my goals to become able to compete with the best. I'm looking forward to an even better season than this year.

#### EBS: What is your long-term goal for ski racing?

**C.U.:** My long-term goal for ski racing is to be able to hopefully someday start in NorAm [North American Cup] races. I also would like to race Division 1 in college.



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# Making it in Big Sky: Big Sky Post Office

Q&A with Al Malinowski

BY BRANDON WALKER

The outside the Big Sky Post Office resembles nearly every other U.S. postal location across the country, but there's more to it than meets the eye.

Al Malinowski is the contract manager of the post office for Gallatin Partners. Operating on a contractual basis, the Big Sky post office receives roughly 80 percent of its funding federally, while the remaining 20 percent of operating costs is covered by Big Sky Resort Area District tax funds.

Per the contract, Malinowski said the post office operates under the same regulations as any other federally run establishment, and he hopes it will become a federally run operation in the future. Meanwhile, unlike many post offices throughout the U.S., mail is only picked up and dropped off one time each day.

Gallatin Partners and Malinowski, a native of Detroit, Michigan, entered the scene nearly 18 years ago when the Big Sky Owners Association announced it was relinquishing its contract with the U.S. Postal Service. At that time, the Big Sky post office operated where BSOA sits today, only relocating after GP was granted the post office contract and completed construction of the new building in 2002.

Malinowski, a graduate of Michigan State University where he earned a degree in accounting, first experienced Big Sky when he came to work seasonally in December of 1994. He continued to work on and off in Big Sky, working occasionally at a summer camp in Massachusetts before relocating to Big Sky permanently in 2001. Before Gallatin Partners, he held the role of financial controller for Big Sky Resort for about two years.

An avid sports fan, Malinowski vividly remembers hearing that Gallatin Partners had been granted the post office contract while preparing to attend an NCAA final four men's basketball game in 2001. He's quick to praise the employees who work at the counter and sort through the daily mail, and recently sat down with EBS to discuss his role and how the sausage gets made at the Big Sky Post Office.

**Explore Big Sky:** *How long have you been involved with the postal service?* **Al Malinowski:** We took over operations before we moved into this space, so I believe it was Sept. 1 of 2001. But this facility wasn't complete, and you know part of it was some construction delays, but the other part of it was we weren't going to take the risk of building a post office and then find out we didn't get the contract. So we couldn't really put a shovel in the ground until we were awarded the contract.

#### EBS: What steered you down this career path?

**A.M.:** Overseeing the post office operations is just a small fraction of my regular day. When it's running smoothly, it's probably a smaller fraction of my day. When it's not, when we're going through transitions it becomes a bigger portion. Mostly what we [Gallatin Partners] do is real estate development.



Al Malinowski of Gallatin Partners has been the contract manager of the Big Sky Post Office for nearly 19 years. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

# **EBS:** What's the reasoning behind general delivery instead of mail delivered door to door in Big Sky?

**A.M.:** When BSOA decided to give it up, the post office [polled] the community and the community really liked the idea of having a post office somewhere. Not switching, even to delivery, because they kind of liked the small town feel of a place that you go to and get your mail and maybe a little gossip in the lobby or just knowing what's going on and people knowing you.

**EBS:** *What difference does it make, if any, that Big Sky is unincorporated?* **A.M.:** I don't believe it does. I think those get linked but I think you can have a federal post office without incorporation. Maybe having incorporation would create a body that could put more pressure on it to happen, but I don't think you have to have incorporation to get the other.

EBS: What's the biggest obstacle that you face as a business in a Montana ski town? A.M.: I think one of our struggles that we're consistent with everyone is [that] we have some incredibly loyal employees, but when we have transitions, finding a new person [is hard]. The people that we have are awesome. They're loyal, they're smart, they're patient ...We're looking for people that are committed, that enjoy working with customers [and] working with the general public. It has a lot of fun aspects to it but it can get stressful at times too. Finding those key people is one of our biggest challenges.

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

**A.M.:** I think that having the same business standards, or morals, that you have personally. That there's not one set of rules on how you behave when it comes to your personal life and a different set of 'Oh, that's just business.' I don't subscribe to that. I was told that a long time ago and I try to live by that. I think it's good advice because then even though you're going to run into conflicts, even though you're going to have times where things don't go as smoothly as you'd hoped. You're going to make mistakes [but] at least you tried to make the right decision.

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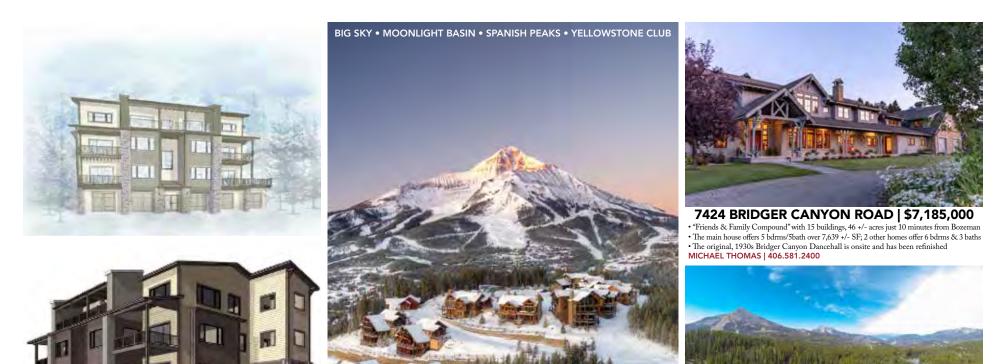




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### Word from Big Sky Resort

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



Record snowfall in the month of February, combined with the warm temperatures of late, have locals and visitors alike itching to get out for spring-like ski conditions at Big Sky Resort.

With 96 inches of fresh February snow at the top of Lone Mountain, and 81 inches at mid-mountain, the resort is fully prepared to welcome spring-breakers and locals as the season heats up heading into the home stretch.

Big Sky Resort has numerous events taking place over the next month. They recently hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Snowshoe Shuffle, in which dog owners and their canine companions took snowshoe-clad jaunts around the mountain, and proceeds benefitted Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter.

Here's what's on deck from March 13-26. - *The Editors* 

### 2020-2021 Big Sky Resort season passes on sale



Next year's season passes for Big Sky Resort went on sale on March 12. Offering a condensed pass selection for next year, the resort is offering four passes with varying levels of access and blackout dates, accompanied by the Ikon Pass and the Mountain Collective to get you on Lone Mountain. The Gold, Black, Blue, and Flex 5 + prices range from \$449 to \$1,699. Visit bigskyresort.com/seasonpass for more information.

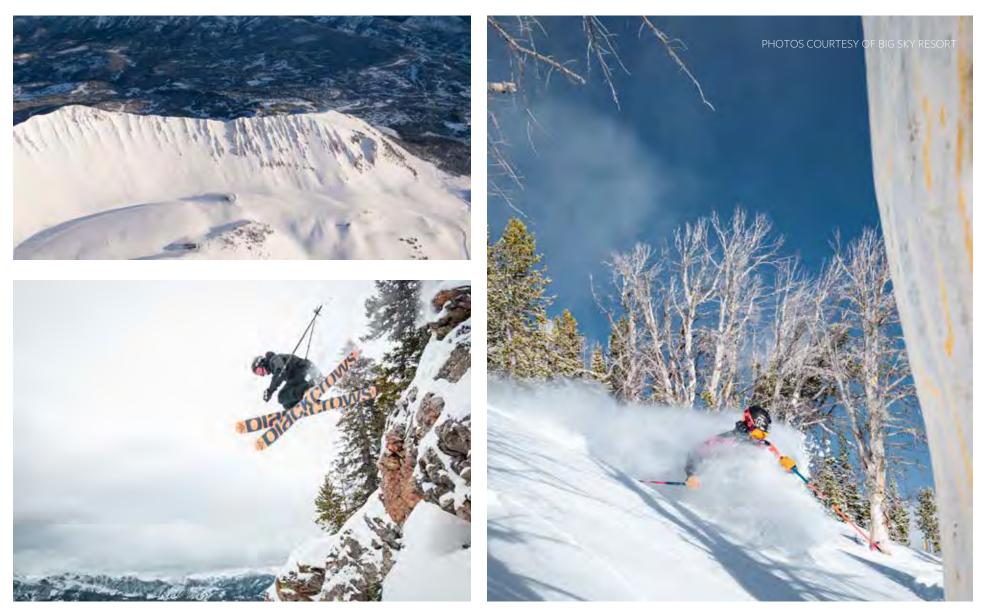
### **BIG SKY RESORT APRÈS ENTERTAINMENT MARCH 2020**

CARABINI	ER LOUNGE	MONTA	NA JACK	CHET'S BAR	WESTWARD SOCIAL		
4pm-6pm	8:30pm-11pm	3:30pm-5:30pm 10pm-12:30pm		4:30pm-6pm	3рт-6рт		
	Fri. March 13 <b>Mike Haring</b>	Fri. March 13 Leslie Fox			Fri. March 13 Josh Lewis		
Sun. March 15 <b>Mike Haring</b>		Sun. March 15 Lauren & Brian		Sun. March 15 <b>Mathias</b>	Sat. March 14 <b>Micheal Natal</b>		
		Mon. March 16 <b>Mathias</b>		Tues. March 17 Brian & Ben	Mon. March 16 <b>Jen Steele</b>		
	Wed. March 18 Lauren & Brian	Wed. March 18 Kent Johnson		Wed. March 18 Lauren Jackson	Wed. March 18 <b>Micheal Natal</b>		
Thurs. March 19 <b>Mike Haring</b>		Thurs. March 19 <b>Mathias</b>	Thurs. March 19 <b>Karoke</b>		Thurs. March 19 Josh Lewis		
	Fri. March 20 <b>Mike Haring</b>	Fri. March 20 Leslie Fox		Fri. March 20 Lone Mountain Duo	Fri. March 20 Micheal Natal		
Sun. March 22 <b>Mike Haring</b>		Sun. March 22 Lauren & Brian	-	Sun. March 22 <b>Mathias</b>	Sat. March 21 Josh Lewis		
		Mon. March 23 <b>Mathias</b>		Tues. March 24 Brian & Ben			
	Wed. March 25 Lauren & Brian	Wed. March 25 Kent Johnson		Wed. March, 25 Lauren Jackon	Wed. March 25 Micheal Natal		
Thurs. March 26 <b>Mike Haring</b>	Fri. March 27 <b>Mike Haring</b>	Fri. March 27 Leslie Fox	Thurs. March 26 <b>Karoke</b>	Fri. March 27 <b>Leslie Fox</b>	Thurs. March 26 Josh Lewis		



### Word from Big Sky Resort

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



### **CHECK OUT:**



### **Sno-Go bikes**

If you want a change of pace, Sno-Go bikes are available to cruise down runs in unique fashion. The bikes are available for rent at the Madison Base and Mountain Village. And you can even hit the slopes after dark. Equipped with a headlamp, you can make your way down Ramcharger 8 after hours. Visit bigskyresort.com/rentals-demos-and-repair/sno-go-bikes for details.

### **The Innocents Escape Room**

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 raid your supplies, imprison the local law enforcement and promise to kill anyone that stands in their way. You have to work together to uncover The Innocents' plan, bring justice to your town and escape! Will you make it out in time before this ruthless gang closes in?

### Big Sky lifts go green

Big Sky Resort recently announced that its ski lift operations are now in alignment with "The Big Picture," the ski area's initiative to reduce operating impact and become carbon neutral by 2030.

What is an escape room?

An escape room is a real-life puzzle where participants work together to solve clues, logic puzzles, riddles and physical challenges. Challenge your wits and creativity before time runs out: Simply assemble your team of brightest minds, check in at the Basecamp to the Yellowstone in the Mountain Village Center, take a step back in time and let the puzzle solving begin. Book online or contact Basecamp to reserve your spot: (406) 995-5769



The resort recently purchased Renewable Energy Credits equivalent to the annual electrical consumption of its 38 chairlifts.

"Lifts are obviously essential to our business," said Big Sky Resort Sustainability Specialist Kryn Dykema, "and they are responsible for nearly a third of our total electrical consumption. As we navigate both on-site reductions in energy use and cleaner sources, buying RECs is the best practice strategy in the near term."

RECs also have a broad impact by creating a market demand for clean energy, Dykema added. "The money used to purchase these RECs is used to support renewable energy creation."

The resort has completed its carbon audit and is coming close to publishing its roadmap to carbon neutrality in 2030.

#### SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB



Royal Coachman Ranch 160 ACRES / \$5.9M

#### **BIG SKY - LAND**



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



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail 1.27 ACRES / \$800K

**BIG SKY** 

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



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





8 Little Thunder 4,321 SQ FT / \$3.1M





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



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



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



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



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

### **RECENTLY SOLD**



Yellowstone Ranch Preserve List Price: \$19M

### **RECENTLY SOLD**





Mountain Meadows 120 Acres / \$3.495M

SOLD



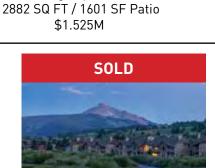
**Big Sky Corner Property** List Price: \$3.24M

SOLD



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

SOLD



223 Town Center Avenue

Big Sky, MT

Crail Ranch Unit 40 List Price: \$1.35M





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



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



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

Summit 911/912 List Price: \$595K



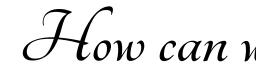
Lot 39 Diamond Hitch 1 ACRE / \$595K



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

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





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30 Beehive Basin Rd. 6,203 SQ FT / \$2.8M



49820 Gallatin Road 3,677 SQ FT / \$1.895M



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211 B Pheasant Tail \$692K

**UNDER CONTRACT** 



Hill Condo 1321 440 SQ FT / \$185K

#### **BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA**



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



SxS Ranch Bozeman, MT 483.78 ACRES / \$6.95M



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



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



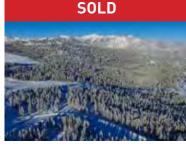
Lone Peak Cinema or Entire Building Big Sky, MT Call for details



Airport Garages Bozeman, MT \$29.9K per unit Taking reservations for building G



2078 Little Coyote List List Price: \$1.079M



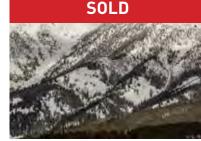
Ski Tip Lot 10 List Price: \$975K



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



Lot 64 Goshawk 1.04 ACRES / \$775K



Lot 44 Diamond Hitch 1.25 ACRE / \$699K







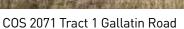
Hill Condo 1278







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



3.14 Acres / \$299K



440 SQ FT / \$195K

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

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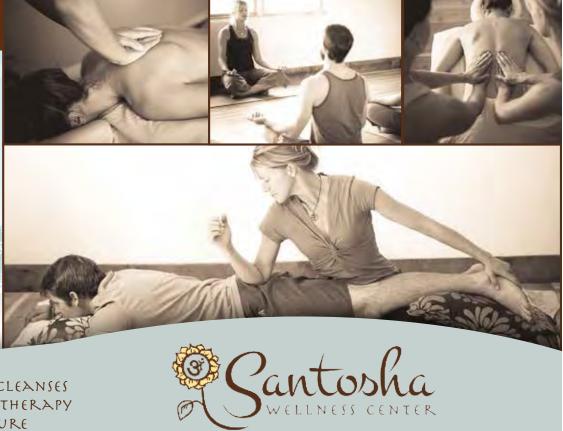
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Check our website for details on our upcoming special events including: Awareness Wednesday, March 18th 7:30-8:30 and our next Full Moon Women's Circle.





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8:30-9:15am Free Your Mind Meditation (Donation Based) 9:30-10:45am All Levels Yoga 5:00-6:15pm Warm Yin Yoga	9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga 12:00-1:00pm All Levels Yoga 4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga 5:45-7:00pm All Levels Yoga	7:30-8:30am Rise & Shine Yoga 9:00-10:00am All Levels Yoga 11:00-12:00pm All Levels Yoga 5:45-7:00pm Heated Flow	6:30-7:30am Rise & Shine Yoga 9:00-10:15am Level II Yoga 12:00-1:00pm All Levels Yoga 4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga 5:45-7:00pm All Levels Yoga	7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga 9:00-10:00am All Levels Vinyasa Flow 11:00-12:00pm All Levels Yoga 5:45-7:00pm Level II Yoga	7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga 9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga 12:00-1:00pm Heated Flow 5:45-7:00pm Kundalini Yoga (All Levels)	9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga 5:00-6:15pm Heated All Levels Yoga



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### Chakras: Part 2

BY DR. ANDREA WICK EBS CONTRIBUTOR

If you read my last article about an introduction to chakras and want to learn more, here it is.

Chakras are energy wheels in the body and can influence physical, mental and emotional health. In my last article, I discussed the first chakra, the root, base or muladhara. The second chakra, known as the sacral chakra or svadhisthana, is associated with the color orange. Almost all back and hip pain along with sciatica resides within this chakra. The reproductive system—ovaries, uterus, gonads and testes—is also included.

Imbalances in this chakra are related to relationships, sex and money. Having a balanced second chakra will bring creativity and passion. If you have stress with money and finances, low back pain could very well be connected. Hormonal issues reside here as well, especially in women that have trouble with their monthly menstrual cycle. Emotional stress includes low self-esteem and low self-confidence. Dancing and exploring creativity help to rebalance. Using essential oils on the lower abdomen such as clary sage, jasmine and sweet orange are beneficial to restoring this energy center.

The third chakra is called the manipura, or solar plexus. It relates to the digestive system, stomach, liver, pancreas, gallbladder and small and large intestine. The color associated with this chakra is yellow. It is where our will power, self-esteem and self-control reside. The emotions harbored in this chakra include anger, rage, resentment, low self-esteem and lack of control. Feeling powerless or having a victim mentality can cause an imbalance. This can be overcome by becoming empowered and taking action. Essential oils best used for balancing the solar plexus include ylang ylang, bergamot and peppermint.

The fourth chakra, anahata or heart chakra, includes the heart, hands and circulatory system. Heartache and the inability to forgive will imbalance this chakra. It is the seed center for unconditional love and self-acceptance. Poor circulation and cold hands and feet can be symptoms of an energy imbalance in this chakra. Essential oils that are helpful for this energy wheel include, rose, lemon and helichrysum. Sound therapy can be a helpful tool in healing heartache. Our bodies and cells are made up of water and vibrational sound can influence the cells. According to Masaru Emoto, a Japanese scientist, sound frequency can change cells and crystalline water structure. The frequency of the heart chakra vibrates at 639 hertz, and listening to music that vibrates at this energy may help with healing emotions involving the heart.

Reiki is a form of hands-on healing. Its purpose is to channel energy and this therapy can rebalance the chakras. Reiki has been found to relieve pain, help with anxiety and depression, and is offered as a free service in over 800 hospitals in the United States. Qigong, a body-mind-spirit practice, may also help guide the body to rebalance through movement and breath.

The purpose of this article is to teach about different energy centers in the body and is not meant to be used as medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of your physician regarding a medical condition or symptom.

This article is the second in a series that explores the seven chakras and how to balance them. Watch for the next edition of Yours in Health published in EBS on April 10 to learn more.

Dr. Andrea Wick is a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist. She graduated from Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and now practices at Healing Hands Chiropractic in Big Sky. She has a passion for holistic health care and being active in the outdoors.



Advanced bookings recommended 32 Market Place, Big Sky 406-995-7575 www.ozssage.com Winter: 7 days 10:00 - 6: 30pm

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### **BEST FISHING OUTFITTER**

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### **American Life in Poetry:**

### Column 781

#### BY TED KOOSER **U.S. POET LAUREATE**

Lest we forget our vegetables, here's a poem by James Bertolino about one of our dearest and healthiest ones. The poet lives in Bellingham, Washington, and this is from his book, "Every Wound Has A Rhythm."

Carrot

The carrot says don't be confused

by appearances. My lacy green

friendship with air gives me the confidence

to make demands of dirt. Consider me

a prospector probing with my own gold.

We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2012 by James Bertolino, "Carrot," from "Every Wound Has A Rhythm," (World Enough Writers, 2012). Poem reprinted by permission of James Bertolino and the publisher. Introduction copyright 2020 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as U.S. Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006.

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"Look ... Reality is greater than the sum of its parts, also a damn sight holier. And the lives of such stuff as dreams are made of may be rounded with a sleep but they are not tied neatly with a red bow. Truth doesn't run on time like a commuter train, though time may run on truth. And the 'Scenes Gone By' and the 'Scenes to Come' flow blending together in the sea-green deep while 'Now' spreads in circles on the surface. So don't sweat it. For focus simply move a few inches back or forward. And once more ... look." -Ken Kesey, "Sometimes a Great Notion"





"The Sounds of Silence" – Simon and Garfunkel

Simon and Garfunkel released "The Sounds of Silence" in October of 1964 and was such a colossal failure it led the duo disbanding; Paul Simon returned to England and Art Garfunkel went back to study at Columbia University in New York City. Originally recorded as an acoustic duet, Simon and Garfunkel's producer decided to remix the track by adding electric guitar, bass and drums, all without their knowledge, then rereleased it in September of 1965. After reaching No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and becoming a top-10 hit in multiple countries worldwide, the duo hastily reunited to capitalize on its success.

The song's origin is equally befuddling—released just three months after the JFK assassination, many mistakenly believed it was a commentary on the event. But this was impossible since Simon wrote it in 1963 at the age of 21, prior to the tragedy. In an interview, the great jazz musician Wynton Marsalis asked Simon, "How is a 21-year-old person thinkin' about the words in that song?" Simon's reply: "I have no idea."





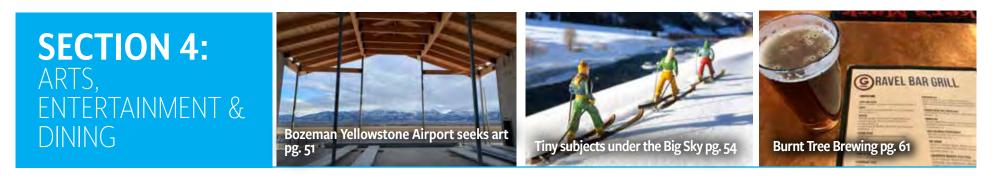


### **DAVID YARROW** "ROLL THE DICE" THE SILVER DOLLAR SALOON - BUTTE MONTANA 52H X 61W | PHOTOGRAPH EDITION OF 12

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### **ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**

#### March 13 - 26, 2020 49



### Artist's paintings fueled by Big Sky beauty

#### BY MIRA BRODY

**Explore** Big Sky

BIG SKY—Each summer, Heather Rapp takes an annual hike up to Beehive Basin in the pursuit of her two passions: adventuring in the outdoors and gaining inspiration from the bountiful Big Sky landscape. The painter, known for her vibrant, abstract mountain scenes, estimates she's painted Beehive Basin, in particular, about once a year, yet each version is unique.

Rapp was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and has lived in vista-shadowed cities most of her life, from Amsterdam, Montana, to Portland, Oregon, where she got her BFA in Graphic Design from the Art Institute. Ironically, she disliked her only painting class and never quite took to graphic design after graduating, but it was that very same frustration that fueled her to irrevocably define her unique style.

"I felt like I had so much more in my head that I wanted to create. If anything, it sparked my passion to paint the things that I wanted to, and it happened while I was in that class," Rapp said of the still life painting class she took in college. "While I was frustrated, I was able to focus on honing my skill in my own unique way. It's always a challenge to try and separate yourself from other people's work."

After graduating in 2007 and moving back to Big Sky Country, she began to focus on painting with the encouragement of the area's natural beauty, which she refers to as her "most influential muse." Rapp basks in not only the stunning landscape, but also the support of the community including the Arts Council of Big Sky, with whom she worked with to wrap a couple utility boxes last year. One challenge she notes, however, is rapid growth.

"I do feel lucky to be able to live in Big Sky, but I think it's important for people to know how hard it is to be a small business owner and live in this town," she said, speaking of the importance of maintaining a diverse,





Heather Rapp's paintings are known for their vibrant color palette, an abstract take on familiar landscapes. PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER RAPP

business-friendly community. She worries commercial and residential rental markets are stifling locals and small businesses. "The struggle needs to be out in the open. It's important to not stop talking about it. There's room for us all."

Yet true to her favored bright palette, Rapp does not dwell on the negative for long. She does her part to leverage her craft to not only bring joy to the community, but also empower others during her Paint Parties hosted at Beehive Basin Brewing, where students can enjoy a brew and a painting lesson.

"Trying to paint even when you have no formal training can really empower you," she said. During Paint Parties, she keeps instruction openended, allowing aspiring artists to apply their own style, but is adamant about one thing: dispelling your inner critic.

"You can see them light up as they connect with other people as they're creating together. Art allows them to express themselves in a positive way," said Rapp.

Rapp felt empowered by art in school growing up and hopes to pass on that energy during her group Paint Parties hosted at Beehive Basin Brewing. PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER RAPP

Rapp's style utilizes the roughness of a palette knife, a spray bottle for dripping techniques, and mixing bright saturated colors with animal forms or abstract landscapes. She says her choice of palette channels not only her colorful personality, but also the positive energy and imaginative nature of a dreamland brought to life.

Her work can be found hanging in Beehive Basin Brewing, Eastslope Outdoors and Lone Peak Caregivers, as well as on the utility box on the corner of Lone Mountain Drive and Ousel Falls Road. She has also collaborated with PROBAR to create limited edition packaging for their meal bars in which part of the proceeds of each box go to support the U.S. Ski and Snowboard teams. She has also been featured in the Arts Council of Big Sky's Auction for the Arts and was voted Best Artist in the Best of Big Sky of 2019.

Rapp's work is a process of discovery, and oftentimes she begins without knowing what it will become. There is, however, always a singular driving force behind every piece—to add joy and vibrancy to her community.

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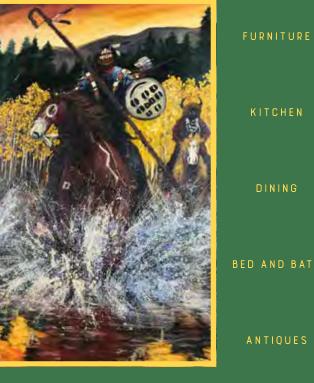


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### Bozeman airport seeks artists for new terminal addition

#### BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN—Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport is the busiest airport in the state, bidding welcome and farewell to over 1.5 million visitors a year; for many, the airport walls are their first glimpse of the culture and peoples of the Yellowstone Region.

With construction underway on a new concourse expansion—adding 70,000 square feet, four additional gates, a third food and beverage location, room for additional outbound baggage handling, inside security and retail space—the airport is seeking local artists to help bring this new terminal to life.

Piece submissions will be considered for the inside and outside of the terminal building, and should be compatible with the airport's existing architectural style. Qualifying conditions: An original piece that represents a sense of the region, western scenes and the recreation offerings of the area, with particular emphasis on wildlife, skiing, fishing and aviation.

"When our passengers land in Bozeman, we want them to know they've arrived in a special place," said Lisa Burgwin, the airport's Administrative and Marketing Assistant. "Whether it's their first time here or they're coming home, they will get that sense right away thanks to the beautiful work of our many spectacular local artists."

Scheduled expansion viewing times will provide an opportunity for artists to see the space, so that they might include in their proposal a recommendation for placement. Those viewings will commence 11:30 a.m. on March 10 and March 31.

Final proposals should include the finished art piece, a high-quality photograph or a rendering of the piece in the suggested space, dimensions, materials and any background information.

The deadline for proposals is April 15, 2020.



Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport's new terminal building is well underway. A number of local artists have expressed a desire to donate or exhibit various works of art for its walls once it is finished. PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA BURGWIN

If your donated art is accepted, there will be a contractual agreement between the airport and the donor agreeing upon the value of the art work and upon acceptance, the airport is the sole owner and has the full and absolute right to dispose of the art work as determined appropriate.

#### Submit your art and become a part of Bozeman Airport's history!

Art Proposal Deadline: April 15, 2020 Contact Lisa Burgwin with any questions (406) 388-6632 ext. 104 lisa.burgwin@bozemanairport.com



The Clark's nutcracker has a unique pouch under its tongue used to carry seeds long distances. The nutcracker collects seeds from pine trees and carries them away to hide for later use.



.



This bird hides thousands of seeds each year, and studies have shown that they can remember where they have hidden nearly all of their seeds.

The Clark's nutcracker is one of the only members of the crow family where the male incubates the eggs.

Local declines in Clark's nutcracker populations may be due to a pine beetle epidemic and the arrival of white pine blister rust, both of which kill the whitebark pines that many nutcrackers depend on.

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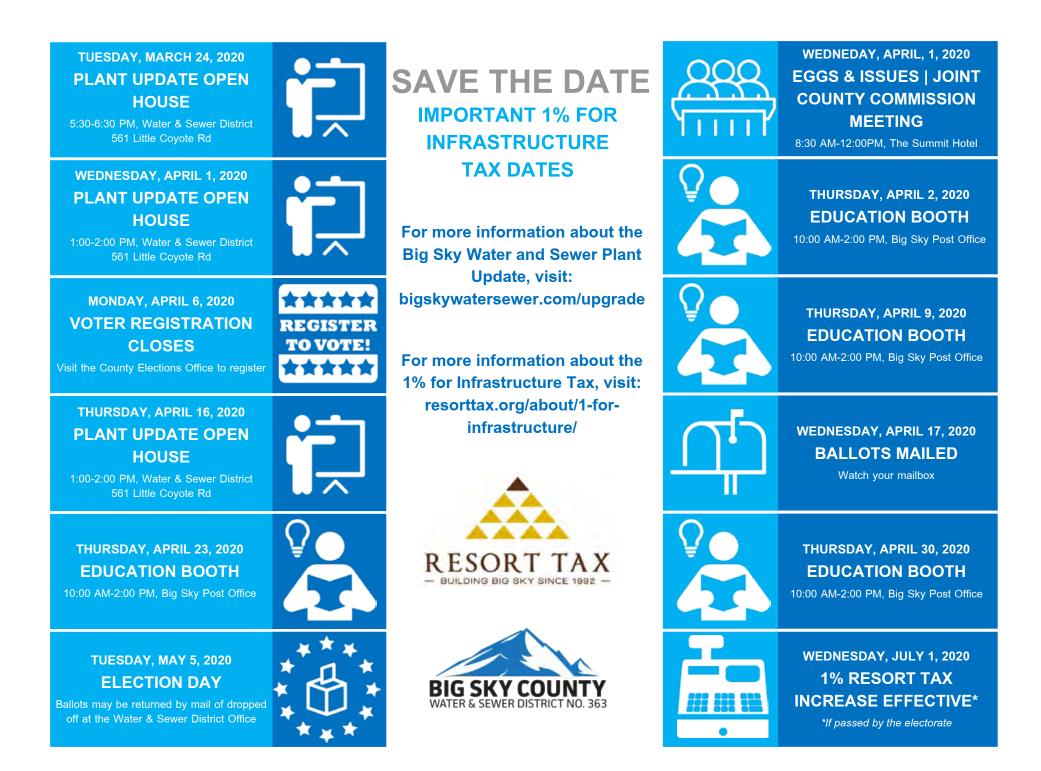
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#### Explore Big Sky

## Connecticut photographer captures tiny subjects under the Big Sky

### BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY—Hooey Wilks might be the only person on the ski hill with her pockets full of antique toys. When she's not flying down a mountain somewhere in the Northwest, you can find her flat on her stomach, skis still on foot and with a camera pointed at the tiny, ski-clad human figurines as they partake in an adventure of their own, most recently on our home mountain in Big Sky.

They're small, standing just under two inches, and date back to the 1930s and 40s. The collection, which has grown to nearly 100, were gifts to her husband purchased from local antique shops. The inspiration of photographing them began on a whim when, having just shoveled her driveway back in her home in Conn., she took the toys outside with her and propped them along a rock wall. Realizing the little skiers were worthy of a more spectacular landscape, she took them along on her next ski trip out West.

"Last year I took a couple of them with me to Utah in my pocket when I skied, and there was something about that bluebird sky with the mountains in the back," said Wilks. "So I started packing them up in my suitcase and bringing them out West."



Hooey Wilks and her husband Jeff travel the Northwest chasing the best ski hills and building her Skier Series portfolio. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOOEY WILKS

Wilks is living the life many of us dream of—after retiring from her corporate job and finding herself an empty nester, she and her husband, armed with a passion for skiing and years of collected frequent flyer miles, began prioritizing ski-centric travel, hitting destinations such as Alta, Jackson Hole and, of course, Big Sky. Her newfound photography project is a marriage of her creativity, whimsy, passion for the slopes and entrepreneurial skills.



Hooey Wilks' Skier Series features antique toys recreating in familiar mountain landscapes and resorts, marrying the beauty of the mountains and whimsy and nostalgia of the vintage figurines. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOOEY WILKS

All of Wilks' photographs are taken on location with real snow, never photoshopped, marrying the joy of skiing and nostalgia while also showcasing the beauty of a day in the mountains.

Although the figurines are often backdropped by a well-known scape, Wilks is purposeful in maintaining its anonymity in hopes that viewers focus less on their tie to the location, and more on the theme of adventure.

Wilks hopes to expand her project to other sports—possibly mountain climbers and bikers—still with an alpine bent.

Meanwhile, Wilks will continue to seek out new mountains to ski with her collection of mini skiers in hand as they adventure together along Hooey Mountain.

Want—need—to see more of her work? Browse Hooey Mountain Photography on her Instagram @hooeymountain, hooeymountain.com, or locally at Melanie Turner Home and Erika & Company Interior Design in Big Sky Town Center.

While the journey began decades ago, when she purchased a camera in high school with her first paycheck and began taking photography courses in college, the photog only truly launched her commercial Hooey Mountain series last August. Good call, too: for Wilks, finding more excuses to ski and spend time in the mountains was a dream come true.

"It's challenging because you're doing this on the mountain and in order to get the shot, you're laying down on your stomach, often with your skis on," she said. "It's complicated and it's freezing and it's windy. It's not as easy as being in a studio taking pictures of models where it's warm, but it is more fun."



Hooey Wilks' photography subjects are small, standing just under two inches. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOOEY WILKS

### Music on Main fundraising for new stage

#### BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN—In the summer of 2001, 500 people gathered along S. Bozeman Ave in Downtown Bozeman to listen to local bluegrass favorite Kane's River and dance in light of the long summer evenings at the city's first ever Music on Main. Nineteen years later, the free, family-friendly event has grown to nearly 3,000 attendees, including a variety of children's activities, non-profit booths, local food vendors and eight different bands a year. One thing that has not changed however, is the sponsor-funded platform that allows those bands to play.

The Downtown Bozeman Association, the nonprofit that organizes Music on Main along with 25 other beloved events such as Christmas Stroll and Bite of Bozeman, recently launched their campaign "Give MoM Some Love" in hopes of raising \$40,000 for a new stage.

"The growth of the community is the largest contributing factor to the growth of this event and the need for additional revenue sources," said Ellie Staley, the DBA's Director, emphasizing that Bozeman's ability to provide so many free public events is truly unique for a city of its size. "The demand for additional equipment, security, staffing, event amenities, higher quality production and other items all have greatly increased over the past several years right along with the growth of our community."

Platform, in this case, bares a double meaning.

In years past, lumber and hardware company Kenyon Noble has generously provided the flatbed truck on which the Music on Main bands perform. Yet, consistent weekly access to these truck stages and the staff necessary to transport them is no longer a practical option and the DBA believes the Bozeman community deserves a higher level of production in accordance with event growth over the years.

The stage the organization is eyeballing for purchase is a Stageline SL75, small in relation to the overall staging and outdoor music industry, but incredibly safe and sturdy and fitting for the needs of the DBA. It would benefit other Downtown hosted functions such as Christmas Stroll, Bobcat Fest and MSU Pep Rallies and allow for rental opportunities at partner events such as Sweet Pea, SLAM Fest and Run to the Pub half marathon and 10K.



The current Music on Main stage is a large, portable, flatbed truck generously provided by Kenyon Noble. The Downtown Bozeman Association hopes to raise \$40,000 for a new, larger and more sturdy stage to use for various Downtown Bozeman events. PHOTO COURTESY OF DOWNTOWN BOZEMAN ASSOCIATION

"These free community events that promote gathering in our core will hopefully never go away and will continue to be a catalyst for community assembly and cultural awareness," said Staley. "They're a chance to have a great time with all your neighbors and friends in a community you love. They're a good reminder of why you chose to live here."

To help the DBA reach their goal and maintain the long-term sustainability of Music on Main, they are accepting financial or in-kind donations through their GoFundMe campaign aptly titled "Give MoM Some Love." Any donations will be matched by generous Music on Main sponsors.

Providing free events that harbor a sense of community and togetherness in the heart of the town is important to the DBA, an objective expecting no alteration no matter how much growth the city experiences in the coming years.

Visit gofundme.com/f/give-mom-some-love for more information.



**Explore** Big Sky

### **BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR**

Friday, March 13 – Thursday, March 26

If your event falls between March 27 and April 9, please submit it by March 18 by emailing media@outlaw.partners with a subject line beginning with "EBS EVENTS CAL SUBMISSION: ..."

#### **FRIDAY, MARCH 13** A Day for Jake Group Ride

Big Sky Resort, 8 a.m.

40th Annual Pie Auction The Wilson Hotel, 4 p.m.

Book Reading: A Night to Forget Bozeman Public Library, Bozeman, 6:30 p.m.

Live Music: Magic Beans Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Live Music: Everyone in Harmony Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Dance: Teahouse Tango Townshend's Teahouse, Bozeman, 7:30 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Hunting and Shed Hunting Seminar Mtntough Fitness, Bozeman, 7:30 a.m.

Point and Chute Video Competition Bridger Bowl, Bozeman, 8 a.m.

Fitness: Sweat and Serve Saturday Moving Mountains Big Sky, 8 a.m.

Family Activities: Women in STEM Montana Science Center, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

**DINO-LIGHT WARREN MILLER PAC, 5 P.M.** Lightwire Theater presents a glow-in-the-dark tale of a scientist who brings to life a friendly dinosaur and what happens when it wanders away from home.

6th Annual Shedhorn Skimo Big Sky Resort, 6 p.m.

80's Dance Night Starlite, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Live Music: The Montana Shamrocks Bozeman Taproom, Bozeman, 9:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 15** HAVEN Community Listening Session Big Sky Medical Center Community Room, 5 p.m.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 17** St. Patrick's Day Celebration Bunkhouse Brewing, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

Live Music: Boy Named Banjo The Filling Station, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18** Wednesday XC Ski Series: Pace to the Pub Town Center Stage, 2 p.m.

### **WORTH THE DRIVE**



### **RUN TO THE PUB 10K**

#### Saturday, March 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The perfect combination of running, beer, music and scenery, Run to the Pub in Bozeman is everyone's favorite late winter, St. Patty's tradition, enough even to bring out the most devout anti-runners. Voted the No. 2 best halfmarathon in the country by Runner's World, it has become a one-of-a-kind St. Patrick's Day celebration hosted by Pub 317, attracting thousands of participants and even more spectators who come to see the costumes and annual raffle to the Dublin Marathon at the finish line. Good luck. And, of course, sláinte.

A 2019 run to the Pub participant jogs toward the finish line in festive attire with a pot of gold. PHOTO COURTESY OF RUN TO THE PUB

Bamboo Ski Pole Brew and Build Bridger Brewing, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Moonlight Community Foundation Spring Social Moonlight Basin Lodge, 5 p.m.

An Old West Murder Mystery Party Devil's Toboggan, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

Parenting Workshops: Roots of Resiliency and Resourcefulness Discovery Academy, 5:30 p.m.

Live Music: Ryan Acker Outlaw Brewing, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Author Talk: Betsy Gaines Quammen Country Bookshelf, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Live Music: Aqueous Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 26

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

Family Activities: Gym Days Willson School, Bozeman, 10 a.m.

Gallatin Conservation District's Annual Meeting Gallatin Gateway Community Center, Gallatin Gateway, 5:30 p.m.

History: Expanding the Arc of the Suffrage Story Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Cooking: Down Home New Orleans with Chef Mary

Live Music: Jess Atkins & Joe Knapp Bridger Brewing, Bozeman, 5:30 p.m.

#### **THURSDAY, MARCH 19**

Economic Outlook Seminar: Finding Good Workers Lone Peak Cinema, 8 a.m.

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 20

Live Music: Spafford Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Beer + Yoga SHINE Beer Sanctuary, Bozeman, 12:30 p.m. Olivelle, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Beginner Bike Maintenance Owenhouse Cycling, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Live Music: G. Love & Special Sauce Rialto, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Live Music: Mix Master Mike of Beastie Boys and Cypress Hill The Filling Station, Bozeman, 9 p.m.

#### **TOCCATA: MASTERWORKS FOR ORGAN**

**BIG SKY CHAPEL, 7:30 P.M.** A free concert featuring the talented Matthew O'Sullivan, head organist of Hope Lutheran Church in Bozeman, including pieces by Widor, Elgar, Franck and much more.

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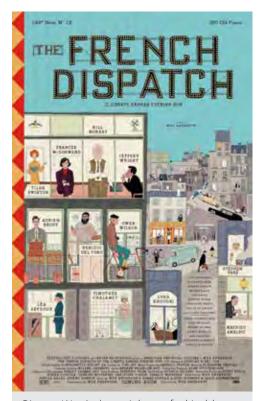
### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

March 13 - 26, 2020 57



### 2020: The year in film

BY ANNA HUSTED EBS FILM CRITIC



film as 2007—which brought us "No Country for Old Men,""There Will Be Blood,""The Assassination of Jesse James," "Knocked Up," and many more acclaimed movies-it still appears as though 2019 will be stronger than 2020.

While 2019 was not as good a year for

That being said, 2020 will be a year of strong directors, particularly female directors and directors of color. Check out this sneak peek of what to look for this year:

"Onward" – Pixar – In theaters now Let's all agree to go see the latest Pixar movie this week. You'll laugh, you'll cry and love Ian and Barley Lightfoot, the two elf brothers in search of their father.

"First Cow" – Kelly Reichardt – March 6 Director Kelly Reichardt is known for creating beautiful, still cinematic masterpieces based in the Pacific Northwest. "First Cow" promises to be no different, creating conflict out of almost nothing.

"Mulan" – Niki Caro – March 27 The animated version of Disney's "Mulan" was released after I stopped watching animated movies because, as a middleschooler at the time, I was "too old" and

"too cool." Eventually I got around to seeing the original "Mulan" and I cannot wait for this live-action remake, especially with director Niki Caro at its helm. Caro's "Whale Rider" is one of my favorite films of all time. The feminist coming-of-age stories inspire without the sappiness.

#### "F9" – Justin Lin – May 22

Charlize Theron is back and John Cena has joined the "Fast & Furious" family. 'Nuff said.

#### "Candyman" – Nia DaCosta – June 12

Greta Gerwig showed us the brilliance of a good remake with last year's "Little Women"let's see if another strong female director can do the same. At the very least, it's unlikely Philip Glass's original score can be beat.

#### "Soul" – Pixar – June 19

"Soul" is about a man who loses his love for music and is transported out of his body in this story of redemption.

"In the Heights" – Jon M. Chu – June 26 Let's see what else Lin-Manuel Miranda has up his sleeve. Jimmy Smits co-stars.

#### "Tenet" - Christopher Nolan – July 17

After Robert Pattinson's preceding decade, I'll see him in anything, especially if it's in the next Christopher Nolan film. The plot for "Tenet" is vague but hints at themes of time travel and evolution.

"The French Dispatch" – Wes Anderson – July 26

Writer and director Wes Anderson returns after his uninspiring "Isle of Dogs" to reestablish



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Gina Marshall

Jim Wentzel

Director Wes Anderson is known for his elaborate posters and film marketing. "The French Dispatch" poster is an articulate look into the director's new film coming out this July. PHOTO COURTESY OF SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

himself as the best director for great actors. "The French Dispatch" is about American journalists in a French town delivering news to Francophiles abroad. Starring Tilda Swinton, Elizabeth Moss, Timothée Chalamet, Owen Wilson, Saoirse Ronan, Willem Dafoe, Edward Norton, Adrien Brody, Christoph Waltz and of course, Bill Murray.

"No Time to Die" – Cary Joji Fukunaga – November 25If you're like me, you've probably seen every James Bond film and dislike half of them, but that doesn't stop you from hitching our wagons to Bond after Bond. I'm looking forward to what's rumored to be Daniel Craig's final Bond film. Hate the title, not the game.

#### "The Eternals" - Chloe Zhao - November 6

Yes, the Marvel Universe is still being put to screen and, yes, a lot of us are sick of it. That said, director Chloe Zhao's approach is unique-she gave us a fresh perspective of life on the Pine Ridge Reservation in "The Rider." I'm excited for her future work even if it is in the form of another Marvel movie.

#### "Annette" – Leos Carax – TBD

Adam Driver and Marion Cotillard star in director Leos Carax's latest film about a comedian and his opera-singer wife and their especially gifted child. Carax directed my favorite film of 2012, "Holy Motors," and has not released a feature film since. I can't wait.

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

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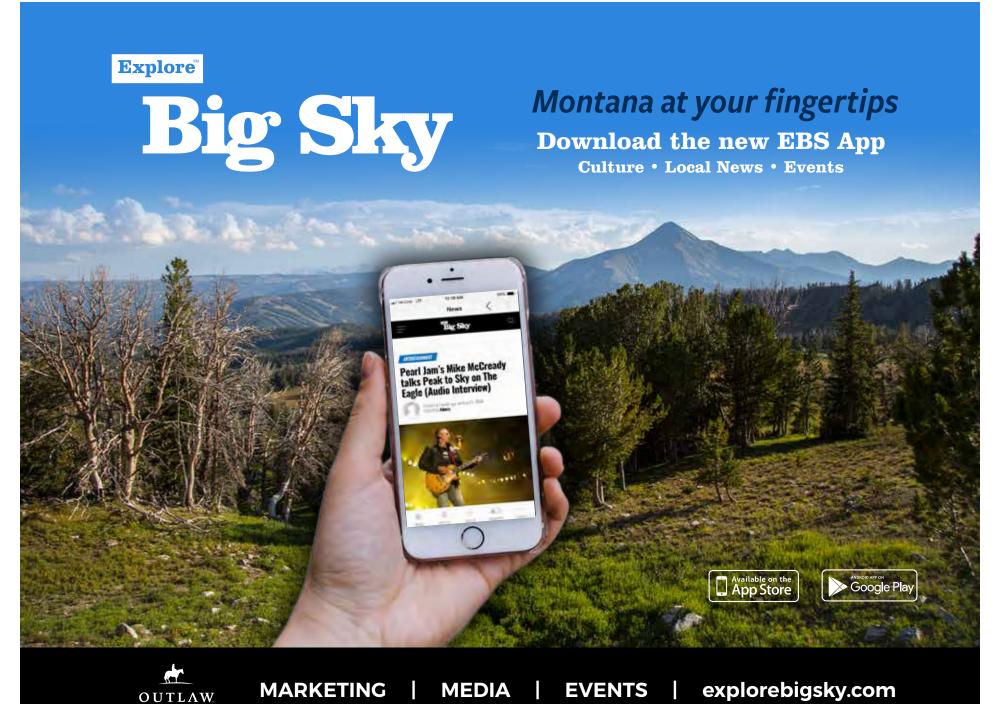
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### **AMUSE-BOUCHE**

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.

## Kitchens: the rooms that changed everything



#### BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

It's perpetually interesting to me how inventions, behaviors, beliefs and social practices can come from the most unlikely circumstances.

For example, how the interstate system was the impetus of the modern restaurants as we know them, or how denim jeans, one of the most universal pieces of fashionable clothing, began as durable pants for gold miners.

But there is one piece of modern life so taken for granted, so prosaic, that no one even gives it a bit of thought: the modern kitchen as we know it. More precisely, the Frankfurt Kitchen.

For centuries, kitchens only existed in castles or homes of the wealthy upper class where staff and servants performed their daily work. For everyone else, cooking and dishwashing was done around a stove, usually cast iron, which was centrally located in the main room of the house—in some cases, the only room in the house.

As early as the late 1930s, virtually all apartments and tenement housing in homes around the globe were designed this way.

This rather unattractive, not to mention obtrusive, piece of equipment was where all meals were made (no Weber grills outside on the patio), hot water for dishes was heated, as well as hot water for additional cleaning, such as laundry. And, as if this uncomely necessity wasn't working hard enough, it was usually the only source of heat in the winter months as well.

Ironically, people spend thousands of dollars on cast iron stoves as a fashion item in their kitchens today. The Scandinavian AGA Cooker is a sleek (as sleek as a massive cast iron oven can be), beautifully glazed work of practical art commonly found in a spacious rural kitchen.

Then something happened. A movement.

Due to the devastating effects of enemy bombings, large portions of post-World War I Europe were in the midst of a huge housing shortage. That, along with something called the English Garden City Movement, which involved designing neighborhoods so that they were surrounded by open recreation space, had city planners and architects rethinking the way we designed living spaces.

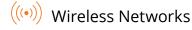
I doubt many Americans, or even Europeans for that matter, have heard of Margarete Schutte-Lihotzky, the first female Austrian architect, but we have her to thank for the kitchen as we know it today.

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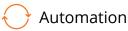
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Enter Ernst May and the Romerstadt movement. May was a German architect who was tasked with redesigning living spaces in urban areas, one he quickly assigned to Schutte-Lihotzky.

So why was the first female architect tasked with such a project by a senior engineer and city planner? Because, in the parlance of the times, cooking and being in a kitchen was traditionally a woman's work.

The challenge Schutte-Lihotzky faced was creating a functional, sensible, useful space without encroaching too much on the overall floorplan of the home. It was a major milestone in home design.

These first kitchens closely resembled a ship's galley and had a cookie-cutter look to them (pun intended). This would turn out to be a prelude to the houses that would soon follow all across America after World War II.

So, the next time you're watering the plant in the windowsill over your kitchen sink, or hosting your next party and you find yourself gathered in the kitchen, think of Margarete who passed away in 2000 just days before her 103rd birthday.

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.

### Big Sky Brew: Burnt Tree Brewing enrichens area suds selections

#### BY MIRA BRODY

ENNIS—This Big Sky Brew writeup brings us to the west side of the Madison Range, to Ennis, where cowboy hats outnumber the trucker hats and most patrons will naturally find it necessary to thoroughly wipe the ranch muck from their boots before stepping past a door mat.

The joint in question? Burnt Tree Brewing, where a suds enthusiast is welcomed by flyers on the wall touting events such as "Fly Tying Sundays at 4" and a healthy ratio of locals and out-of-town weekend visitors. Don't worry—you can still see Lone Peak from the window.

Brunt Tree Brewing opened just last August but has been in the works for over a year and is backed by a reservoir of experience—the manager, Amy Kelley, is married to Scott Kelley who owns the popular Ennis watering hole, Gravel Bar. The Brewery's owner, Jeff Millsap, is Amy's brother and their experienced head brewer, Dave McAdoo, is a longtime family friend hailing from the Ruby Valley.

After considering locations around Ennis and Virginia City, the trio decided the most ideal location would be in their old restaurant space attached to Gravel Bar on Ennis' main stretch. The team is dedicated to quality over quantity, an ethos one can taste it in their beer. As such, rather than spending too much energy on large market distribution, Burnt Tree focuses on providing the very best possible craft beer in the area.

I tried two different beers at Burnt Tree, starting with their golden honey ale dubbed the Flying Ant. At 5.8 percent ABV, it yields a mellow, semi-sweet sip that will be great for warmer weather activities, say on a tube or drift boat along the river just outside—and I was pleased to find that it didn't feel watered down like honey ales sometimes do.



Burnt Tree Brewing's Flying Ant Honey Ale pairs well with a brisket sandwich from the Gravel Bar in downtown Ennis. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

I followed with their Black Dog Porter. I don't usually like porters, but I was convinced by the owner to give it a try. For die-hard porter fans, you may find it a bit low-key, but for those who aren't usually drawn to them, this one is worth a try and I enjoyed the earthy flavor that does not overwhelm a slightly more conservative palette.

The next time you find yourself in the Madison Valley fishing, floating, hiking or whatever other activity you enjoy on the other side of the range, stop by Burnt Tree Brewing, grab a beer (Kelley recommends The Other One Hazy IPA, the Flying Ant or their Raspberry Sour) and head up to their rooftop beer garden to soak in the views.





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For Explore Big Sky, the Back 40 is a resource: a place where we can delve into subjects and ask experts to share their knowledge. Here, we highlight stories from our flagship sister publication Mountain Outlaw magazine.

Noun: wild or rough terrain adjacent to a developed area Origin: shortened form of "back 40 acres"

### **A Name Without a Place** The forgotten boomtown of Taft, Montana

BY MICHAEL J. OBER

Taft, Montana, may be one of the state's more forgettable towns, but when it boomed it was raucous and wretched. It owed its sole existence as a railroad construction camp to the creation of the massive Taft Tunnel through the Bitterroot Mountains, connecting Montana and Idaho. The Milwaukee Railroad surveyed and engineered the 1.7-mile-long tunnel to breach the Continental Divide and began blasting through in 1907.

Taft sprang up immediately, its population swelling to nearly 3,000 souls by the 1910 census. Like most railroad construction whistle-stops, she was no beauty queen and was among the numerous shantytowns that emerged, quickly, adjacent to the Milwaukee's main rail line pushing west. Bankrupt one year and flush with new investors the next, the Milwaukee spawned Taft-like towns in a frenzy and shed them just as quickly. The tunnel was its lifeblood.

As towns go, Taft was strictly utilitarian serving as the operations base for the gigantic tunnel, which required a skilled workforce of teamsters, loggers, miners, cooks, drillers and laborers working round the clock.

At its peak in 1908, when the tunnel finally opened amid great fanfare, there were 1,800 employees working out of Taft. Italian stone masons, Swedish lumbermen, mule skinners, freighters and hundreds of other skilled and unskilled laborers followed the tracks west to the formidable slopes of the Continental Divide, there to construct a tunnel that detractors claimed to be "unimaginably expensive and a colossal boondoggle." It became the nation's most expensive railroading feat in history.

As far as can be determined, there was never a church in the town ... or a library, school, or Masonic Temple, or an opera house or fire department. Taft featured one grocery store, two cafes and a drug



The Wilnston Brothers Material Yard in 1908. The railroad served as the only way in and out of Taft most months of the year. PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC WALLACE PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

store. In contrast, there were 500 prostitutes and 30 saloons by one Missoulian journalist's count, and "everything on a high level of impropriety."

Taft displayed no clear existence of law enforcement, either. Missoula was the closest town offering any kind of police presence, but the Missoula County sheriff's deputies steered clear using the excuse that it was too far away to effectively patrol. In truth, Taft was 90 miles from Missoula and accessible only by train in most months of the year. Time and again, deputies would be dispatched there only to find no witnesses, no evidence and no suspects in some high-level crimes including assault, homicide, robbery and rape.



Railroad men in Taft circa 1907, the year crews started blasting through the Bitterroot Mountains to breach the Continental Divide. Rarely patrolled by the Missoula County sheriff's deputies, the remote boomtown developed a reputation for lawlessness and debauchery.

Missoula had its progressive and high-minded culture, emerging business class, its streetcars, cemetery, power and water company and sturdy stone architecture. It looked to the west with scorn upon the necklace string of upstart rail stops en route to the tunnel through the Bitterroots: De Borgia, Saltese, Taft, Haugen, St. Regis.

Lawlessness, then, was the order of the day in Taft. One spring, as the snow receded, eight frozen bodies were found in and around the town sporting stab wounds and bullet holes. The year 1907 saw 18 documented—but unsolved—homicides. Nobody talked. Labor clashes were not uncommon. In 1908, Albanian stonemasons killed six Montenegrins in a dispute over subcontract wordings and wages.

Missoula County attorneys and deputies could only shrug. Finding a solid witness in Taft was like finding a proper woman. Forest Service rangers had no better luck curbing prostitution as cribs crept into the Lolo National Forest surrounding the town, one in a crude tree house. Taft claimed to have one prostitute for every three men and a murder rate higher than New York City. U.S. Forest Service ranger Elers Koch wrote, "The bars were lined with hard-faced dance hall girls and every kind of gambling game going wide open."

Taft was smack-dab on public lands of the Lolo National Forest and therefore subject to federal regulations, which nobody obeyed. Tim Egan, author of The Big Burn wrote, "the rangers' attitude toward the town was one of disgust. The caches of whiskey and rum, the slot machines, the hundreds of hookers, the killers and felons who mocked the rangers ... that's what Taft represented to a forest ranger."

One young ranger assigned to the Taft District telegraphed his supervisor: "Two undesirable prostitutes established on government land," he wired. "What should I do?" "Get two desirable ones," was the reply.

A Chicago Tribune writer, during a Milwaukee train stop there, described it as "the wickedest city in America." But to call Taft a city was a great stretch of imagination. It was a grim collection of

unpainted slab-wood framed shanties interspersed with tent houses and slope-roofed sheds. Vintage photographs of Taft are hard to come by, owing largely to the truth that it was starkly unattractive to start with and got no better with time. Even William Howard Taft, after whom the town would be named, traveled to the work camp in 1907 when he was Secretary of War and declared it a "sewer of sin" and "a sore on an otherwise beautiful national forest."

As round-the-clock shift workers disgorged from the tunnel bound for the bars, another shift replaced them, often swapping beds in boarding houses for brief rest before a locomotive whistle announced a new shift, another dollar to be earned and then spent in the prostitute cribs and gambling dens. Taft was awash with vice, awaiting a cataclysmic end.

It was the Great Fire of 1910 that finally did Taft in. The infamous inferno of that summer spared nothing as it seared more than 3 million acres. When the fire raged and raced down off Lookout Pass during the Big Blowup, it seemed bent on incinerating Taft with a fury that only God could dispatch.

In just one night, August 20, 1910, Taft fell to the flames. It was an easy target, its wooden structures mowed down by a relentless firestorm funneled through the narrow canyon. In places, even the steel rails of the Milwaukee Line bent and curled. Forest rangers tried to organize workers into a firefighting force but the citizens chose



The St. Paul Pass Tunnel, formerly known as the Taft Tunnel, closed to railroad traffic in 1980, but has been open to hiking and mountain biking traffic since June 2001. It's part of the 15-mile-long Route of the Hiawatha trail system.

instead to break open barrels of whiskey and consume as much as they could while the flames approached.

Just in time, a rescue train arrived from Missoula and residents tumbled into boxcars as the locomotive retreated through smoke and fire back down the valley. By morning Taft was no more. After it burned, the Missoulian headlines proclaimed almost dismissively at its riddance: "Taft lost, Deborgia and Saltese spared from flames!"

Parts of the little town survived, like a two-story hotel that was eventually repaired by its owners. When the railroad rebuilt its tracks to the town, they parked boxcars on a siding track to be used as makeshift businesses and housing, a feeble attempt to resurrect the place.

There was plenty of timber to harvest as millions of fire-killed snags stood stark and silent on the slopes up and down the valley. For a brief time, a small contingent of timberjacks tried to remake Taft as a harvesting base and railcar-loading site. Then there was the tunnel and tracks and telegraph line to maintain, offering labor for some. But with the monstrous tunnel now complete, there was no longer need for a large workforce and eventually folks walked away from what was left of Taft. By the late 1930s the Federal Writer's Project accounted for only four remaining buildings, all abandoned.

In the decades that followed, the Federal Highway Administration built a two-lane highway that punched its way up the valley, past the town site and over Lookout Pass. A small gas station, then a grocery store, was all that Taft could muster up for the thousands of motorists whizzing by, bound for someplace else. In 1962, the Interstate Highway System eventually caught up to the former boomtown. Bulldozers and graders widened the two-lane highway and the broad right-of-way gobbled up the remains.



The East Portal railroad station leading into the Taft Tunnel, a 1.7-mile-long tunnel that crosses the Montana-Idaho border. The railroad was inundated with Taft residents fleeing the Great Fire of 1910.

West of Missoula, underneath the fill and subgrade of Interstate 90, lie the remains of Taft, Montana, a fitting resting place for such a tawdry town. Today, Taft is a green highway sign that marks, well ... nothing. It still has a name—just not a place.

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Editor's note: The St. Paul Pass Tunnel, formerly known as the Taft Tunnel, opened for trail traffic in June 2001 and is part of the renowned 15-mile-long Route of the Hiawatha hike and mountain bike trail system that runs between Idaho and Montana.

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