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# Big Sky

June 19 - July 2, 2020  
Volume 11 // Issue #13

**Big Sky's emergency exit**

*Testing the (waste)waters*

*Collection commemorates equal rights  
movements of the 1960s*

**PBR team competitions reach  
halfway mark**

*Your next adventure is only a drive away*



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# OUTLAW PARTNERS

June 19 - July 2, 2020

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## ON THE COVER:

Lila Scot, Liv Grubaugh and Amelia Fogg take a turn on the Michner creek lollipop loop on June 11. PHOTO BY KIRBY GRUBAUGH

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### Big Sky's emergency exit

With one way in and one way out, locals question the reliability of Big Sky's evacuation plan in the case of a major emergency.

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### Testing the (waste)waters

Montana State University researchers in collaboration with the health department began testing Big Sky wastewater for COVID-19 on May 14. Samples throughout Gallatin County are so far showing a direct correlation with the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in respective areas.

23

### Collection commemorates equal rights movements of the 1960s

Hundreds of small pins dot the walls of Gregory "Beau" Hill's home. The pins, alongside the occasional flag, photo or newspaper clipping, were collected by Hill over a span of 14 years in an exhibit he calls the Spirit of the Sixths.

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### PBR team competitions reach halfway mark

The PBR Monster Energy Team Challenge began June 5, dividing riders into teams of four, with the team scoring higher in a best of six ride format coming away victorious. Team Cooper Tires concluded a flawless regular season finishing with a perfect 6-0 record after two weekends of competition.

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### Your next adventure is only a drive away

With airline travel limited this summer, the EBS team has just the thing for those looking for the staycation of a lifetime. Check out our top 10 summer escapes for some incredible activities within a stone's throw of Big Sky.

### Opening Shot



A masked wooden bear, practicing proper social distancing, stands guard at Fairy Creek Road in Bridger Canyon. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

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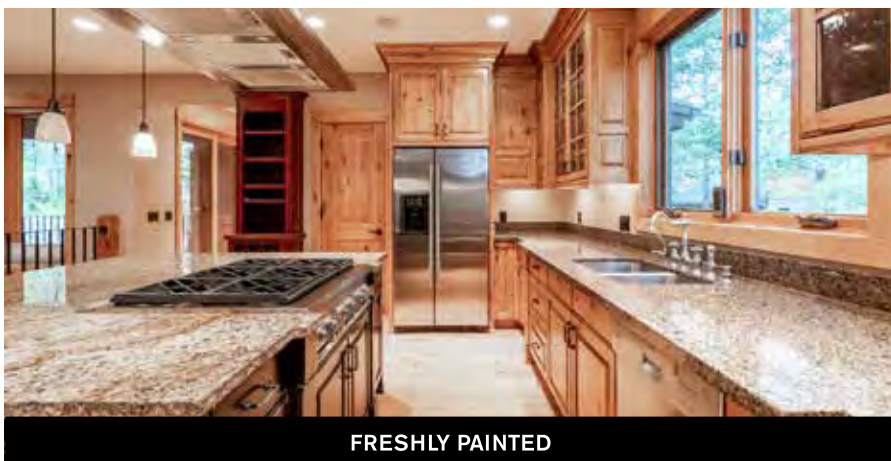
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# With many live events canceled, where will you look and what will you do for entertainment this summer?



**Jack Hilbrich**  
*Bozeman, Montana*

"I'm probably going to spend a lot of time camping, a lot of time outside. Also, I'm a big golfer so I'll do a fair amount of that, as well as bike riding. I'll probably shift to multi-day trips, a bit more of that for sure. But it is super unfortunate. It's bogus."



**Nikolai Kol**  
*Reno, Nevada*

"We really like going to concerts and seeing live events, so without that, yeah we're just going to be, like she said hiking, backpacking, spending time on the lake, stuff like that ... I've actually looked into some of those, like some of the artists will put up concerts and almost do like [virtual reality] concert type things. I don't have [virtual reality] but I did like watch a preview of one of those concerts and it wasn't really the same, so that's the tough part."



**Sofia Deer**  
*Bozeman, Montana*

"I will look for entertainment outside, hopefully go camping and hiking and biking a lot more than last summer. I've looked at a lot of online live shows too. One of my favorite bands had a live stream every Friday during the stay-at-home order and it was really nice."



**Shannon Kol**  
*Reno, Nevada*

"The great outdoors! We're big hikers, backpackers, campers, we ride horses, all the things ... At the lake, down where we're from, they have a really small little outdoor venue for local people and stuff like that, so I can see something like that being really beneficial this year, but I think we're pretty much SOL for the big stuff this year."



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## Camper bitten by possible bear in Beehive Basin

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**

BOZEMAN - A woman was bitten by what investigators believe to be a bear while camping last week in Beehive Basin just northwest of Big Sky. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks was notified of the incident on Friday, June 12. The victim and another person were camping on private land near the Beehive Basin trailhead when they were awakened early Thursday morning by a large animal pushing against their tent. After attempting to scare it away, it bit one of them on the leg from outside the tent, then left the campsite. The campers did not see the animal.

The victim's injuries were relatively minor and she sought prompt medical treatment. Based on her account of the animal's behavior and the nature of the bite wound, FWP believe the animal was a adult-age bear, however, no bear tracks have been found near the trailhead to confirm whether it was a grizzly or a black bear.

Details of the incident indicate the bear's behavior was likely investigative, not predatory and that the bite was defensive and the victim reported that their food was stored properly. FWP will be monitoring the area closely with other agencies for potentially hazardous bear behavior. FWP has worked with the U.S. Forest Service to add signs warning other recreationists in the area of the recent bear activity. This incident is still under investigation.

Recommended precautions for avoiding negative encounters with bears include:

- Be aware of your surroundings and look for bear signs.
- Carry and know how to use bear spray.
- Stay away from animal carcasses.
- Travel in groups and make noise whenever possible.
- Follow U.S. Forest Service food storage regulations.
- If you encounter a bear, never approach it. Back away slowly and leave the area.
- If a bear approaches your tent, make your presence known gradually. If it attempts to enter your tent, fight back.

## BSSEF golf tourney set to commence

**EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – The 1<sup>st</sup> annual Big Sky Ski Education Foundation Swing into Summer golf tournament will take place on June 27, starting at 10 a.m. Held at the Big Sky Resort Golf Course, teams of four participants will partake in a scramble style of play. In addition to tournament play, there will be a chipping contest, raffle and other various prizes.

The entry fee for the BSSEF golf tournament is \$400 per team, which includes carts, lunches and other complimentary items. 16 teams are currently registered for the tournament with registration ending on June 22. The tournament will be preceded by children's events on June 26, beginning at 3 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the BSSEF program.

## Resort tax enters new agreement with VRBO, Air BnB

**EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – Effective July 1, short-term rental booking sites, VRBO and Air BnB will implement a 100 percent compliance with Big Sky resort tax collections. The Big Sky Resort Area District entered into an agreement with the two companies this month, bringing a multiple-year effort to successful fruition.

The majority of BSRAD's existing resort taxpayers come from the short-term rental market, and BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale said they expect to see an uptick in collections following ensured compliance from the industry. Bierschwale added that resort tax funds are more critical now than ever for supporting important community projects and initiatives, and this agreement will aid in that effort.

## Rut Mountain Runs canceled

**RUT MOUNTAIN RUNS AND RE EVENTS**

BIG SKY – The Rut Mountain Runs and RE Events have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 in-person version of the Rut Mountain Runs. Getting to this point has been a very challenging process and it's disappointing to know we won't get to share time with you all in Big Sky this September. We modeled numerous scenarios that would encompass all the fun and excitement of an event that we would be proud of during these unique and challenging times however, it became increasingly obvious that this is not the year to safely bring runners from all around the country and globe to gather in the shadow of Lone Peak. With so much uncertainty still surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that canceling the in-person event this year is the only choice.

For those who have experienced the Rut, you know it's three days of festivities and celebrations with an incredible community feel. It's a place for old friends to come together and to make new friends on the trail. It's a place to finish your race and then cheer on 400 kids sprinting around the base area in the Runt Run. It's a place to get dressed up and go to our legendary after-party. It's a place to spectate runners coming into the Swiftcurrent aid station with hundreds of other cheering fans. It's a place to stuff into the Lone Peak Tram with 15 other sweaty VK runners after going cross-eyed up Lone Peak. We want nothing more than for you to enjoy all that is the Rut experience, but the reality is none of the above-mentioned experiences could be part of our event this year.

All 3,000 registered participants will have the following options: to join the Rut Virtual Runs, receive a 50 percent refund with priority registration to the 2020 or 2021 Rut, or defer 100 percent of your race entry to either the 2021 or 2022 Rut. Big Sky Resort will cancel and refund all lodging reservations for the Rut 2020 and participants should keep an eye out for an email with more details on how to move forward with their decision.

## TIGER grant finalizing design plan

**EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – A representative from Sanderson Stewart recently presented the timeline of upcoming events pertaining to the federally funded Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant, which involves construction beginning on highway 64 in the summer of 2021.

Sanderson Stewart's Bozeman Region Manager Danielle Scharf spoke on June 9 at a virtual TIGER grant meeting hosted by the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. Scharf said that they are currently completing the final design plan in June and acquiring right of ways necessary to begin construction. Sanderson Stewart anticipates acquiring all right of ways by the end of September, at the latest, beginning the bidding phase for the project in October, before finalizing the contract with the selected contractor in December. Construction will likely begin in May of 2021 and continue through the summer of 2022.

Major improvements from the TIGER grant project will include the construction of multiple left turn lanes along Highway 64 as well as the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Highway 64 and Little Coyote Road. Additional signage, pull-outs and expansion of existing recreational paths are other identified projects that will be covered by the TIGER grant.



# MDT bridge decks project progressing smoothly

BY BRANDON WALKER

**BIG SKY** – The Montana Department of Transportation is in the midst of construction on two bridge deck reconstruction projects in Big Sky, with a third slated to begin in July. The projects' anticipated completion dates vary, but all will be completed before winter snow blankets the ground.

MDT's contractor, Dick Anderson Construction, began the remodel project at the end of May. Currently, crews are working to revamp bridges that cross the West Fork of the Gallatin River, located near the entrance of the Conoco Travel Shoppe on highway 64, as well as one that traverses the Middle Fork of the Gallatin River, near the Highway 64 intersection with Little Coyote Road.

"The Middle Fork structure, which is the farthest one, they are currently removing Phase 1 of the bridge deck and then once they get that removed, they will start forming up and placing the rebar and all that stuff to pour Phase 1," said MDT project manager Craig Walker. "Then on the West Fork structure, which is down by the Conoco station, they've already hydro milled Phase 1, so they're prepping to pour back Phase 1 and the pour is scheduled to be on [June 19]."

Walker said that there have been no delays to the \$2 million construction project and they are progressing as planned. Each construction area currently allows for one lane of traffic to proceed through the work zone



Construction underway on the Middle Fork bridge, located on Highway 64 near the intersection with Little Coyote Road. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

at a time and is monitored remotely by Dick Anderson Construction utilizing cameras mounted on the traffic signals.

"So, they detect the last car and when the last car goes through the light and out the other light, the detection sees that, and the camera sees that and during the high traffic volume times they actually have someone monitoring them to change timing," Walker said. "If we need to let one direction go longer, they can manually let that direction go longer."

Walker detailed that the crews assist one another at each site and can only proceed as they receive materials from their suppliers, specifically concrete. "They can only get concrete from their supplier when he's available to get it to them," he said.

The West Fork bridge is anticipated to be completed by the end of July, at which point crews will begin construction on a third bridge, located on U.S. highway 191 that is slated to finish in September. "It'll be the same as the West Fork structure, [the] same process," Walker said in regard to the work being done on the highway 191 bridge. The Middle Fork bridge will take the longest of the three, needing the most extensive repairs and will finish in November at the latest.

Walker would like to remind travelers to not block the entrances to the Conoco or Chamber of Commerce and at the Middle Fork Bridge, to



Construction underway on the West Fork bridge, located on Highway 64 near the Conoco and Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

not detour in an attempt to avoid the project. "That can cause some issues later on if they continue to do it," he said.

"Go slow through the work zone. It's, you know, not just for our benefit but for everybody's benefit. We don't want anybody not to go home at the end of the day," Walker said.

## ADDITIONAL MDT AREA PROJECT TIMELINES AND OVERVIEWS

### Paving Highway 191 & Adding rumble strips

- **July:** A few miles at a time crews begin paving the stretch from Tepee Creek Trailhead to US Forest Service Road 986.
- **August:** Crews will finish paving and place rumble strips along the corridor. All major work will be completed by the end of the month.

### Rainbow Point Road turn lane

- **June:** Construction began at the intersection of Highway 191 and Rainbow Point Road to add a northbound left turn lane. Crews are milling and excavating in the immediate area.
- **Late June & early July:** Crews pave the area and stripe, or paint, the road. Construction on the turn lane anticipated to finish.

### Bridges over Gallatin River & Specimen Creek

- **June:** Crews finish bridge repairs over Specimen Creek. A concrete surface is laid down on the Gallatin River bridge and takes at least 14 days to cure on each side of the bridge.
- **July:** Work on the Gallatin River bridge anticipated to be completed.



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# Locals question Big Sky's imperfect evacuation routes

BY BELLA BUTLER

**BIG SKY** – Part of working in emergency planning is dealing with hypotheticals—considering the perfect storms of cataclysmic disasters that aren't likely to ever happen. But with American society crippled by an unanticipated pandemic, it's become evident that a worst-case scenario could be lurking just around the corner.

The destination town of Big Sky, a paradisaal escape for many, lacks an adequate plan for its residents' own emergency escape, according to community members. Montana Highway 64, which intersects with U.S. Highway 191, offers a two-lane passage that exits and enters Big Sky and dead ends to the public at Moonlight Basin, and a group of community members recently sent a letter of concern to Gov. Steve Bullock.

That doesn't mean there's no plan, it just isn't clear what Big Sky residents should do in the face of a wildfire, earthquake or any other disaster should it block egress on U.S. 191. The Gallatin County Emergency Plan does not present explicit options for egress but rather appoints the county sheriff, currently Brian Gootkin, to make the call on evacuation routes during an emergency.

"I think with the current [pandemic] situation, people are beginning to see the value in preparing for emergencies," said Gallatin County Commission Chair Don Siefert. The consensus answer to the question of are we prepared leans toward no, and a new question stands: what entity will take the initiative to change that?

The Big Sky Owners Association, the first and largest owner's association in Big Sky with 2,700 members, raised evacuation concerns in 2019 when they charged their advisory committee with researching the egress protocol for the Big Sky area. After pouring over 600-plus pages of county emergency management plans, John Leeper, chair of the advisory committee, came to the conclusion that Big Sky had not been adequately considered in Gallatin or Madison County's plans.

On April 26, Leeper and the advisory committee sent a letter to Gov. Bullock detailing the issue at hand and requesting a meeting to address their concerns.

A town bisected by county lines, Big Sky is unique in that it is an unincorporated census-designated place that covers ground in both Gallatin County and Madison County. According to the BSOA's letter to the governor, the absence of local governance and the county border have left the mountain town utopia at the whim of a generalized county protocol.

"There is no precedent or authorized legal structure for the two counties to jointly create and/or administer a single, coordinated evacuation plan for our community," the letter reads.

Currently, MT 64 is the one-way-in, one-way-out option for public travel in Big Sky. Turning their heads to the other option, Jack Creek Road, Leeper and BSOA have now asked what the protocol is should the main route, MT 64, be obstructed during an emergency.

Suppose an earthquake instigates a rockslide just downstream of the West Fork and it plugs the river up, Leeper suggested, painting the picture of what he calls the "worst-case scenario." The water quickly floods, covering up U.S. 191 until the highway and primary egress option is impassable. The earthquake is serious enough that it broke propane lines and high-tension electrical wiring, starting a fire.

Based on traffic counts and other community metrics, Leeper estimated that the occupancy of Big Sky can range from 10,000-20,000 people during peak seasons, including residents and visitors. Jammed between a flood/fire and a dead end, where would this horde of evacuees turn?

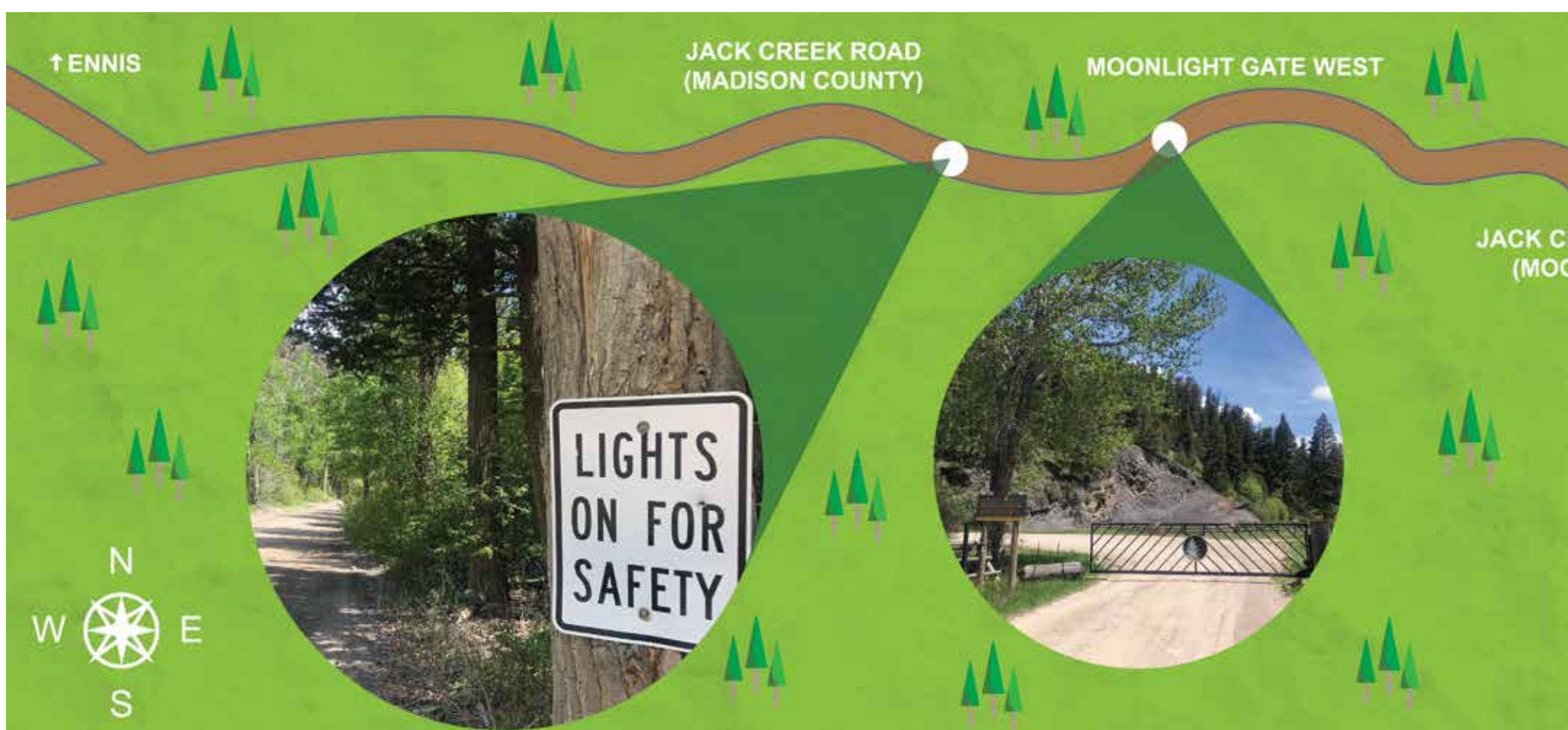
The answer may be at the end of MT 64, where the pavement turns to dirt and a gate marks the entrance to Jack Creek Road, a private Moonlight Basin asset. "It's the elephant in the room that the only other way out of Big Sky is going to be through Jack Creek," said Eric Ossorio, BSOA Chairman.

In the mid-70s, MT 64 was built as the first phase of a Federal-aid Primary Highway System route that sought to connect U.S. 191 with U.S. Highway 287 through the planned arterial link. The passage was never completed and due to a 1991 act of Congress, the Federal-aid Primary Highway System and associated funding were terminated. Moonlight Basin began managing the road and made it private in 1992.

Kevin Germain, Vice President of Moonlight Basin, says Moonlight would allow the private Jack Creek Road to be used for evacuation if needed, but there is no formal written agreement that ensures this permission. While this is a concern held by Leeper, Ossorio and other members of the BSOA, Germain said it's not a worry shared by Moonlight. The bigger issue, he said, is just beyond the western Jack Creek gate.



A less conventional view of Lone Mountain from the private section of Jack Creek Road. The road, initially intended to be a public arterial link between U.S. Highways 191 and 287 via Montana Highway 64, is currently owned and managed by Moonlight Basin. PHOTO BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR





From Ennis, the winding 3-4 miles stretch immediately approaching the gate is in stark juxtaposition to the smooth and wide private gravel road. Many corners on the portion of the road in question are either blind or low-visibility corners, and sections of the creek-side road are hardly wide enough for a single vehicle to cross. This section of the road is managed by Madison County.

Madison County Commissioner Jim Hart and Gallatin County Commissioner Don Siefert, along with Germain, Leeper, Ossorio and Gootkin were all in agreement that improvements could be made to that section of the road, and most said that the biggest issue it poses is in an emergency evacuation.

Namely, they pointed to the improbability of the section effectively evacuating thousands of people traveling west while also moving emergency response vehicles through in the opposite direction to provide support at the scene of the hazard. The road, in its current condition, can only reasonably function as a one-way road under that circumstance, they said. The problem, Hart contended, is funding. “Regardless of what people might say about how much taxes are paid ... from the Big Sky folks to Madison County, which we appreciate of course, we can’t just suddenly come up with \$20 million dollars to make improvements to that road,” Hart said.

In 2018 Madison County, which includes Big Sky Resort, Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, the Yellowstone Club and Moonlight Basin, collected the greatest amount of per-capita property taxes in the state at \$15,794, according to a report updated in May 2020 by the Montana Legislature’s Tax Study Committee. The same study revealed that for more than 37 percent of Montana’s 56 counties, comparable figures were under \$500 per capita.

“It’s no secret that the folks in the Madison County portion of Big Sky feel like they do not get a return on their property taxes,” Germain said, adding that the lack of work done on the county’s hazardous portion of the Jack Creek Road is a fair example.

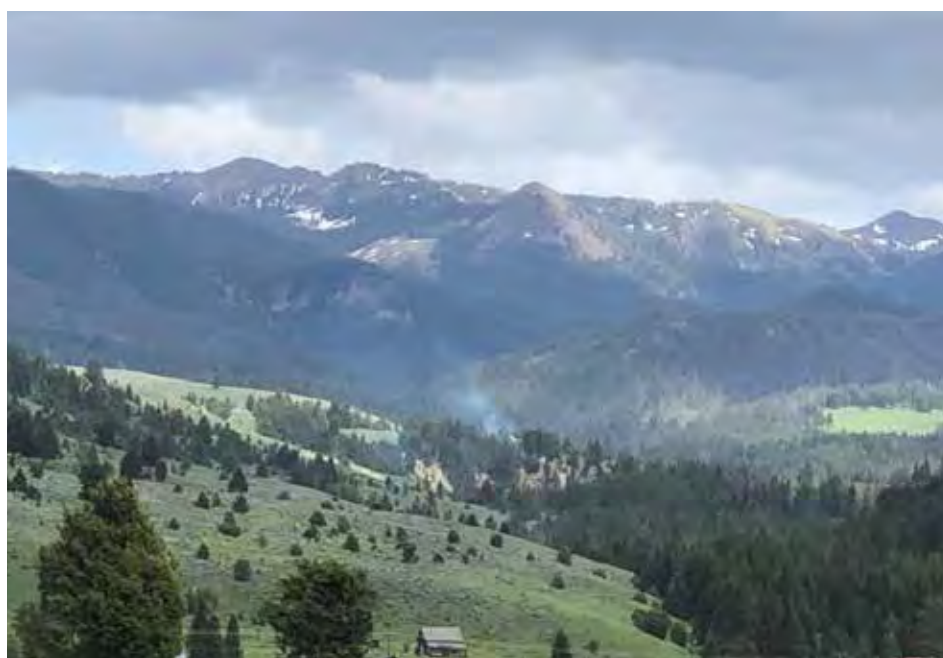
“It’s inaccurate that [tax contributions] are not reciprocated,” Hart said in response to the anecdotal claim. “I refuse to listen to somebody who argues that point ... that’s not a viable argument.”

Hart said that safety improvements are on the horizon, but such a project will take more time. He also noted that he needs to consider the potential negative impact construction debris could have on Jack Creek and the surrounding environment as well as the residents and property owners along the road. Germain isn’t convinced the county will follow through. “Until work starts getting done, I just won’t believe it,” he said.

Madison County has worked bridges in that stretch but two still require improvements, pending the approval of a Treasure State Endowment Grant for the project, according to Hart.

“We would sure like to see the county fix their portion of the road before there’s any sort of formal agreement,” said Germain, who has represented Moonlight in related conversations with the county for a decade.

Hart said that a formal agreement on the egress matter would rest more heavily on the shoulders of Moonlight Basin, being that their managed portion of the road is private and the county section is public. Siefert of Gallatin County agreed that more focused attention to the issue and the possible coordination of a more specific agreement would likely be beneficial. He said Gallatin County would support and encourage a more viable egress option for the split-county community, but also said the ball is in Madison County’s court.



A small forest fire burned near Big Sky on June 14. Forecasts project that Montana is likely looking at a very active fire season due to high temperatures and dry conditions. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

While the Jack Creek egress option bears its own challenges, Sheriff Gootkin of Gallatin County said that even when it’s accessible the standard egress route using MT 64 to connect with U.S. 191 isn’t perfect either. “You have one vehicle accident, and next thing you know everybody is trapped, nobody can move,” he said.

Gootkin, who according to the functioning Gallatin County Emergency Management Plan would be charged with choosing an evacuation option, said there are “... so many opportunities for [current egress options] to be bad” that it would be safest, if at all possible, to keep everyone in a general area like a community park.

According to Gootkin, Patrick Lonergan, the Gallatin County Chief of Emergency Management and Fire, is in agreement on this point. Lonergan did not respond to EBS’s multiple requests for comment.

Gootkin said decisions would have to be made on an ad hoc basis and would largely depend on the nature and immediacy of the emergency. Trend forecasts for southwest Montana this summer suggest abnormally dry and hot conditions, two key ingredients to blazing seasonal wildfires with which the country is becoming more and more familiar.

On June 14, a small wildfire burned through a chunk of forest approximately 3 miles south of the U.S. 191 and MT 64 junction, and on March 31, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake in Challis, Idaho rattled Big Sky. These recent events serve as a reminder that disaster and potential emergencies are possible, and with the global pandemic shining a spotlight on the importance of taking preventative rather than reactive measures to cope with community crisis, Big Sky’s egress dilemma is a rising priority.

*The Gallatin County emergency plan can be found at [readygallatin.com](http://readygallatin.com), and the Madison County plan can be found at [madisoncountymt.gov](http://madisoncountymt.gov)*





# COVID-19: Wastewater test results mirror confirmed cases

## Big Sky sees new case, wastewater tests positive

BY BRANDON WALKER

GALLATIN COUNTY – Researchers in Gallatin County are finding a direct correlation between recent wastewater testing and confirmed cases of COVID-19. And as they recorded data showing positive results of the coronavirus in wastewater samples, county health officials also confirmed a new case of COVID-19 in Big Sky.

In a June 17 press release, the Gallatin City-County Health Department said four new cases were recorded between Big Sky and Gallatin Valley, with one of the four cases spurring from the Big Sky community. Coincidentally, on the same day researchers at Montana State University witnessed the first positive test result of Big Sky's wastewater, showing the presence of COVID-19 in the sample.

MSU researchers in collaboration with the health department began testing county wastewater for COVID-19 in March with samples first collected in Bozeman on March 23. Testing began May 30 and June 6 in West Yellowstone and Three Forks respectively, and in Big Sky on May 14, after the Big Sky Resort Area District allotted nearly \$80,000 to fund the testing.

“What’s pretty interesting about the Bozeman results in particular is we saw ... a detection in the sewage that coincided with a group of cases that we detected at about the same time,” said Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley.

Seth Walk, an associate professor at Montana State University in microbiology and immunology, confirmed Kelley's outlook referring to results from Bozeman and West Yellowstone. “It correlates well with new cases getting confirmed and then the lack of cases being confirmed,” he said.

Test results showed a detectable trace of COVID-19 in Bozeman wastewater in March, coinciding with the rising number of confirmed cases at the time. Walk said recently there were similar results in West Yellowstone after cases were confirmed there. The tests also have come back with undetectable traces of COVID-19 during periods in which no new cases were confirmed. Now, the Big Sky wastewater results mirrored the same trend with the confirmation of a case within the community and the first positive wastewater test on the same day.



Dr. Paul van Erp (seated), a postdoctoral fellow in the Walk Lab and Lila Bull Chief (standing), a graduate student in the Walk Lab, analyze collected wastewater samples for traces of SARS-CoV-2. PHOTO COURTESY OF WALK LAB

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention designates that a result lower than 40 Cycle threshold (Ct) is the quantity at which a test is considered positive for traces of COVID-19. Conversely, tests resulting in quantities above 40 Ct are considered negative.

“It’s a cycle number, so every cycle that the sample is negative means that there’s less and less virus in the sample,” Walk said. “The higher that number, the less virus there is.”

It’s currently unknown what the 40 Ct quantity translates to in terms of how many infected people are in a given area. Walk said it depends on a number of factors including the magnitude of an individual’s case, how long a person has been infected and even the duration of time they’ve spent in the area.

“The important thing to remember there though is the test itself was developed to test human samples,” Walk said. “They weren’t necessarily developed to test environmental samples, so, it’s really kind of unknown whether that 40 [Ct] is a hard and fast rule for the samples that we’re trying to test in wastewater.”

Walk also said the collected samples don’t allow researchers to determine if the detected virus is still transmissible within its host to another person.

Kelley and the health department are consulting test results as they continue to work toward a safe reopening for Gallatin County. He said that even if cases haven’t been confirmed through traditional testing methods in certain areas, wastewater results will continue to provide valuable insight.

“But we start to see hits in the sewage load, that’s a clear [indicator that] maybe we need to start paying attention to that community a little bit more and pick up our testing there,” Kelley said.

Most Gallatin County communities, including Big Sky, are tested weekly with the exception of Bozeman which is being tested more frequently. In six weeks of testing, the most recent Big Sky test showed a detectable trace of the COVID-19 virus below the 40 Ct mark, resulting in a positive test, whereas in past weeks where the virus was undetectable.

“There’s something to watch there but it’s not [at] that level where we can say, conclusively, it’s showing anything,” Kelley said on June 16, prior to the most recent Big Sky wastewater test results.

Kelley recognizes the wastewater test results are valuable information to cross-reference as time progresses. “It’s a piece of the pie, it’s not the whole pie, so I think that’s kind of how we view it,” he said.

Additionally, irrigation water samples from Big Sky have been tested for traces of COVID-19, all coming back negative without traces of the virus present.

In Big Sky, wastewater testing will continue on a weekly basis through the end of 2020 and possibly even through the winter months, according to Walk. “Right now, this looks like a really good indicator of virus in the community so as long as that’s the case I think it’s a very good resource to provide,” he said.

“We’ve now set a baseline [of] where we are in Big Sky, where we are in Bozeman, where we are in West Yellowstone,” Kelley said of the data collected from the wastewater tests. “Maybe the most important comparison to make is what it will look like in the fall and the winter in those places in the sewage testing, compared to where we are right now.”



# Resort tax finalizes appropriations

BY BELLA BUTLER

**BIG SKY** – In the final appropriations meeting in a series of three, the Big Sky Area Resort Tax board finalized appropriation decisions for their spring cycle.

The board made a few adjustments to the preliminary award decisions made during their June 10 meeting, including increasing the proposed emergency reserve fund from \$500,000 to \$651,000, or 10 percent of the \$6.51 million available for allocation.

A robust board discussion examined the intent of awarding applicants providing like services or projects equitably. The awards granted to the Big Sky Discovery Academy, who requested funds for their preschool program, and Morningstar Learning Center amounts that equate to the same dollar figure per child per day enrolled at each institution.

It was suggested by BSRAD Board Chair Kevin Germain that historic funding of Morningstar that afforded the childcare center ownership over their own facility put it at an advantage over BSDA, which must pay rent at their facility. Despite this consideration, however, a motion to increase BSDA’s award failed.

“Our board and staff worked hard to review each application and ensure that those applicants providing the public a similar service were treated fair and the process was equitable between entities,” board member Ciara Wolfe

said in a statement shared with EBS. “This will help us hold them each to similar accountability standards and ensure everyone in our community is getting equal access to the entities we are funding with BSRAD collections.” Another example of this effort was the board’s choice to fund all conservation organization’s operational requests 75 percent, with the exception of the Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance, who trimmed their own request significantly.

In line with one of the board’s newly expressed priorities of matching funds and sourcing funds outside of resort tax, the Gallatin River Task Force was able to rescind a request for a \$100,000 project that will model Gallatin Canyon groundwater discharge and support the planning and formation of a canyon district. The project is now being woven into the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District’s infrastructure project, which district voters approved to fund through an additional 1 percent of resort tax.

Following a small area wildfire that occurred between the June 10 and June 17 meetings, the board voted to award \$80,000 to the Big Sky Fire Department on top of their award for operational costs for the replacement of two wildland apparatuses after initially opting to defer the request to the fall. Other large capital investments like the Big Sky Transportation District’s proposed bus barn were deferred to the fall cycle.

Of the \$6.5 million, the board’s final appropriations totaled \$2.5 million, leaving \$3.3 million for fall appropriations considering the subtraction of the reserve.

## BSRAD FY21 SPRING APPROPRIATIONS

ORGANIZATION	REQUEST	AWARD
Big Sky Fire Department	\$580,713	\$500,713
Big Sky Transportation District	\$195,000	\$195,000
Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office	\$155,664	\$155,664
Arts Council of Big Sky	\$30,000	\$30,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters	\$7,500	deferred
Big Sky Community Food Bank	\$25,452	\$25,452
Big Sky Discovery Academy	\$44,660	\$22,400
Big Sky Rotary Foundation	\$3,060	\$3,060
Big Sky Search and Rescue	\$4,150	\$4,150
Big Sky Skating and Hockey Association	\$0	deferred
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center	\$90,000	\$90,000
Friends of the Library	\$17,500	\$17,500
Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance	\$13,458	\$13,458
Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association	\$7,000	\$7,000
Habitat for Humanity Gallatin Valley	\$17,500	\$17,500
Morningstar Learning Center	\$83,745	\$72,800
Parkview West Homeowner’s Association	\$48,000	\$0
Montana Land Reliance	\$10,002	\$7,502
Big Sky Post Office	\$41,000	\$41,000
Wildlife Conservation Society	\$24,068	\$18,051
Women in Action	\$25,000	\$25,000
Big Sky Chamber of Commerce	\$181,600	\$181,600
Big Sky Community Housing Trust	\$774,000	\$264,000 (with some deferred)
Big Sky Community Organization	\$314,481	\$314,481
Gallatin River Task Force	\$232,562	\$182,564
Visit Big Sky	\$408,650	\$353,614





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# Youth Corps program offers summer opportunities

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – COVID-19 has impacted local job opportunities, internships, summer camps and travel plans, leaving Big Sky high school and college students scrambling to fill their summer months. In Big Sky, one Ivy League college student is giving back to her hometown.

The Big Sky Youth Corps is an initiative founded by longtime local and current Yale student Ava King along with a group of eight local high school students and is aimed at meeting this newfound need by providing paid internship opportunities that build professional skillsets and connectivity in the community.

Upon returning to Big Sky for the summer, King found that nearly everyone she talked to had employment that was canceled or disrupted by the pandemic. Forming the Big Sky Youth Corps, the team began reaching out to local organizations and businesses

to make their idea a reality. They conducted a poll that revealed 72.4 percent of the community’s youth had their plans interrupted, many of whom rely on these interim activities for income and skill building.

The Corps is arranging to pay students fixed stipends of \$2,000 for eight-week internships and \$1,000 for four-week internships as well as additional short-term volunteer work as need arises in the community.

Funding for the initiative is still in the works, but Big Sky Youth Corps hopes to raise \$25,000, which will allow the program to accommodate 12 students. So far potential donors, students and businesses the group has communicated with have been receptive, according to King.

“This is an awesome opportunity for businesses,” King said. “They have the ability to bring someone on, have them work on projects, some of which might not be financially feasible right now, engage with a local students in the community and provide them with skills that will help them in the future.”

Students who don’t rely on summer income will be encouraged to donate their stipends to a nonprofit, and businesses that can pay and wish to host an intern can then opt to sponsor a student, thus opening an additional position for a business that can’t afford it.

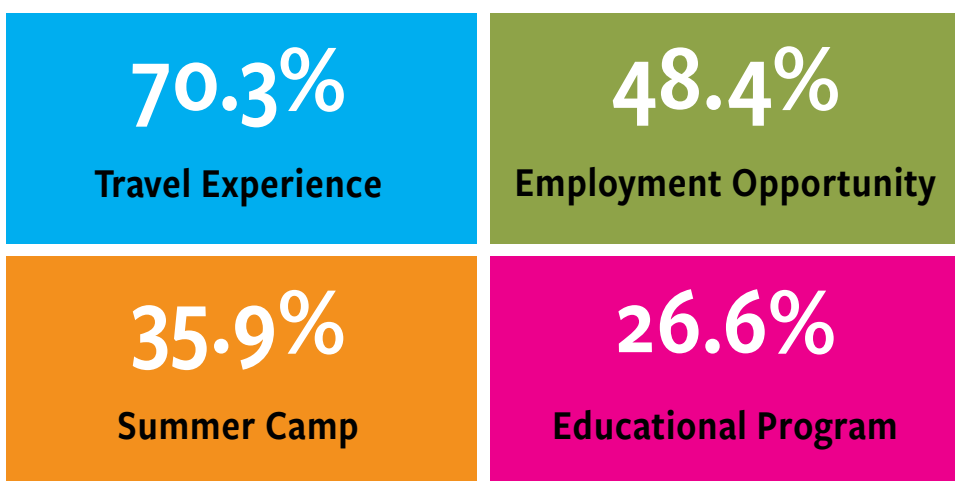
“Not having things to keep me occupied in the summer was always a little bit of an issue,” King said. “It’s important to have opportunities for students to keep busy, gain experience to apply for college scholarships in their field, and also make money.”

Organizations that have submitted job openings so far are Crail Ranch, WMPAC, Morningstar Learning Center, Big Sky Arts Council, Discovery Community Learning Center, Women in Action, Big Sky Vacation Rentals, Ari O Jewelry, NexGen River Conservation, Jake’s Horses, Montana Supply, and Consignment Cabin.

*The Youth Corps program is open to active high school and college students of all experience levels. They will submit a resume and fill out a brief application in order to be matched to a local business or nonprofit within their areas of interest. Potential applicants, or businesses interested in hiring a student, can contact Ava King at bigskyyouthcorps@gmail.com for more information.*

## Youth Corps surveyed 76 students.

The type of activities students had canceled were as follows:



# Big Sky social justice group to host virtual gathering

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – The Big Sky newly-formed social justice group hosted a virtual solidarity march and benefit show on June 19. Originally planned to be held in Town Center and the Wilson Hotel Plaza, the event was moved to a virtual platform for the safety of the community. It was peaceful, family friendly and all-inclusive beginning with a discussion on how Big Sky as a community can be more inclusive and have better representation of black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), and concluded with music by Swollen Souls, a hip-hop duo out of Bozeman. Donations made during the show went to the Montana Racial Equality Project and Bozeman United.

The gathering, sparked by the nation-wide movement against police brutality, was organized by Big Sky social justice group members Rhea Marie Foreman, Ruthi Solari and Kristen Hovs. The newly-formed group is a grassroots initiative and the rally on June 19 was their first organized event.

“As a predominantly white community, there are a lot of injustices and covert racism that happen and are mainly swept under the rug,” said Foreman. “We as a community need to say just because we are isolated, that doesn’t give us the right to be ignorant. We believe being silent is being complicit.”

Organizers say the event was meant to convey the message that Big Sky will not stay silent or remain neutral in situations of injustice as well as invite the individuals into a process of learning how to be allies to communities of color.

“Big Sky attracts diverse visitors from all over the world to come enjoy the beautiful nature and outdoor recreation and to work here,” said Foreman. “We need to ensure that, one, Big Sky is welcoming and safe for people from all cultural and racial backgrounds, and two, that the outdoor industry is more representative of our diverse population in the U.S.”

Although organized separately, the social justice group noted they are in solidarity with the organizations that hosted the rallies in Bozeman. Foreman said they communicated with local police who were supportive of the event and committed to maintaining positive relations with the community, before it was moved to a virtual format.



The Big sky Social Justice solidarity march took place June 19 in Big Sky Town Center. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP



# Lagging rural census response could cost Montana second U.S. House seat

ERIC DIETRICH, MONTANA FREE PRESS

HELENA — Members of the commission tasked with redrawing Montana's legislative boundaries following the 2020 census expressed frustration over the state's dragging response rate in Native communities and other rural areas June 10, citing complications from the COVID-19 pandemic that have disrupted get-out-the-count efforts.

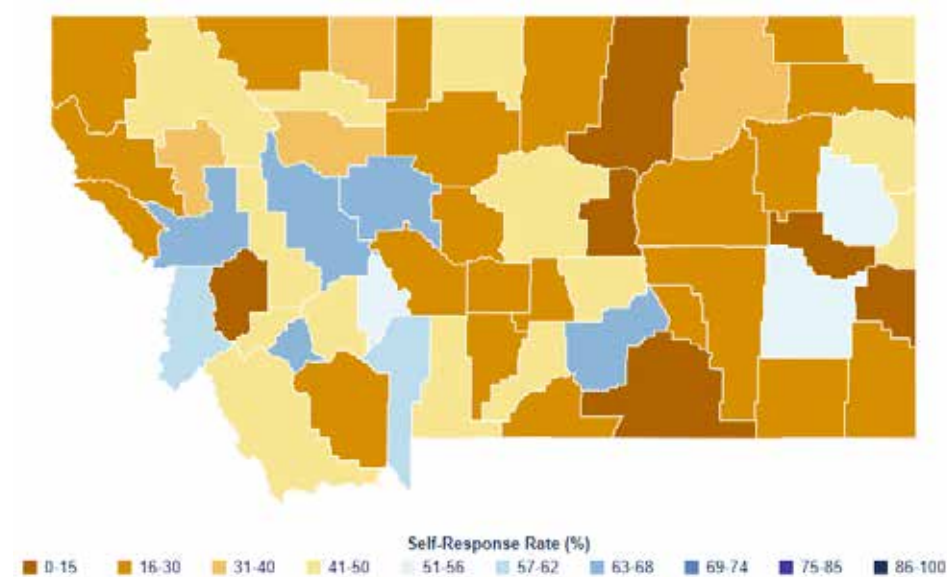
One, Republican Jeff Essmann of Billings, worried a low count could cost Montana its opportunity to gain back a second seat in the U.S. House.

"If we don't have these rural counties and our Native populations properly counted, we're not going to be getting that second congressman," he said.

"I'm fearful that we're setting ourselves up for a major undercount both in our rural counties as well as our reservation counties at this point," said fellow redistricting commissioner Joe Lamson, of Helena.

The five-member commission, meeting via video conference Wednesday, heard a presentation from Montana Department of Commerce Census Bureau Chief Mary Craigle, who said just over half of Montana households, 51.7%, had responded to the census as of June 5. That puts Montana's response rate 9 percentage points behind the nation as a whole.

Furthermore, while counties around Montana's urban centers have relatively solid response rates, Craigle's data indicates response rates are far lower in much of rural Montana.



Montana 2020 census response rates by county as of June 9. PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

In Meagher County, around White Sulphur Springs, 17.8% of households had returned census forms as of June 5, according to Craigle's figures. In Petroleum County, north of Billings, the response rate is just 11.6%.

Response rates are even lower in some rural American Indian communities. In census tracts on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in north-central Montana, 7.3% of households had responded to the count. On the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in southeast Montana, the response rate was only 3.6%.

In Helena's Lewis and Clark County, in comparison, 64.6% of households had filled out their census form as of the same date. In Missoula County, the figure is 64.3%.

The challenge, Craigle said, is that, unlike urban residents, many rural residents haven't had the Census Bureau mail forms directly to their dwellings. That's because the national population count is conducted by trying to reach people at their physical residences, meaning the Census Bureau doesn't mail forms to the post office boxes used by many rural residents.

Instead, census officials had planned to have workers drop off packets directly at about 120,000 rural Montana dwellings. Those efforts, however,

were derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which drove the Census Bureau to suspend field operations in April.

With the pandemic tide apparently receding, PPE-clad census workers resumed rural packet deliveries in Montana the week of May 4. Even so, more than two months after the heavily marketed April 1 "Census Day," only 84% of census packets have been delivered, Craigle said Wednesday.

Craigle also said she's been told by census officials that they still haven't hired enough workers to deliver census packets in some tribal communities and seven rural counties. Those tribal communities are the Fort Belknap, Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations, and the rural counties are Daniels, Carter, Judith Basin, Powder River, Prairie, Treasure and Valley, she said. "We definitely have a ways to go," Craigle said.

After census organizers encourage as many responses as they can via online and distributed forms, canvassers will be dispatched to knock on doors in an effort to count households that haven't yet responded. Those efforts had been scheduled to start in May, but are now slated to run from August to October.

The Census Bureau has asked Congress to give it a four month extension on a Dec. 31 deadline to deliver initial census results to the president.

Mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the national census is a once-a-decade effort to count every single American, producing the official population statistics that are used to allocate congressional seats among states. Census population data is also used by Montana's redistricting commission to redraw state legislative districts, and census data also directs how an estimated \$2 billion a year in federal funding flows into the state.

In Montana, the stakes for the 2020 census are particularly high because estimated population growth since 2010 has the state on the verge of regaining the U.S. House seat it lost following the 1990 census.

A 2019 analysis by consulting firm Election Data Services, for example, projected that Montana would add a second seat by a slim margin of just a few thousand counted residents.

"Ten years ago we missed getting that seat by a whisper," Essmann said in an interview. "That chance of that second seat could quite easily slip away, and then it's another 10 years."

Essmann also said a disproportionately urban count could hurt the political clout of rural communities that already have diminished representation in the Montana Legislature as population growth has shifted toward Montana's urban areas in recent decades.

"If they don't make the effort to get themselves and their neighbors counted, they'll lose more political power," he said.

At Wednesday's meeting, Essmann urged Craigle to seek help from coronavirus-relief funds being administered by Gov. Steve Bullock to support a new round of census response marketing.

Between COVID-19, national debate over police reform and the potential for a pandemic-induced state budget crunch, he and other redistricting commissioners said they were worried census advocates will have a tough time elevating the get-out-the-count message over public attention on other issues.

Craigle said she and other state officials have been working on a proposal for getting additional funding for census efforts.

"I believe there's still a chance we can work through this, but it's a lot harder," she said.

*This story is published by Montana Free Press as part of the Long Streets Project. This work is supported in part by a grant from the Greater Montana Foundation, which encourages communication on issues, trends, and values of importance to Montanans. Reach Lead Reporter Eric Dietrich at edietrich@montanafreepress.org.*



# OUTLAW TM | News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

## Outlaw Partners hosting fifth annual Big Sky Art Auction

### OUTLAW PARTNERS

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Big Sky Art Auction will bring a new and expanded format where bidders can experience the auction virtually or in person in Town Center. This year's event will be held on July 18 and 19 at the Wilson Hotel and will feature a collection of 60 pieces of fine art, furniture and jewelry.

In addition to submissions from well-known contemporary and traditional Western artists, the auction will also include pieces from local artists. An auction preview event will take place on Saturday, July 18 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and will allow guests to peruse auction items and interact with select artists.

The live auction will occur on Sunday, July 19 from 2 to 6 p.m. Furniture pieces will be on display in the Wilson Hotel conference room and the fine art pieces will be on display under a tent in the plaza in front of the hotel.

“We wanted to incorporate an online component to this year’s event to allow art collectors from all over the country to participate in our event,” said Ennion Williams, V.P. of Events at Outlaw Partners. “The addition of furniture pieces is also new this year and we’re grateful for the support from the participating artists and vendors.”

This year, auction attendees will be entertained by the rapid-fire delivery of Troy Black, one of the premier art auctioneers in the West. Black has conducted numerous well-established auctions in the West, including the C.M. Russell Live Auction in Great Falls, Montana, the Jackson Hole Art Auction, the Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale in Cody, Wyoming, and the Big Sky Arts Council’s annual Auction for the Arts.

*Visit [bigskyartauction.com](http://bigskyartauction.com) for additional details.*



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## SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



Looking hate in the eye pg. 20



Civil unrest in the 60's pg. 23



Capture mountain lifestyle pg. 27

## THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON  
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Nearly every spring for a long while, I've met with students from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. The purpose of their annual field adventures out West: becoming immersed in the complicated issues shaping the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Always leading the pilgrimage of bright young thinkers is Dr. Susan Clark, who teaches at the college during the academic year then heads home to Jackson Hole where, during summer, she serves as founder emeritus of the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative.

In my living room in Bozeman, Montana, I often introduce the young Yalies to two maps—one offering a general overview of Greater Yellowstone; the other overlaid by migration routes of almost a dozen different major elk herds.

The first bit of cartography, produced by the Wyoming Migration Initiative, reveals a framework for pondering a bold idea pioneered in the region—ecosystem management—that came to fruition around the same time Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative opened its doors back in the 1980s.

The second map illustrates, perhaps more clearly now than ever before, how Greater Yellowstone's biotic community transcends human-drawn lines, boundaries of land jurisdictions, topography, bureaucratic fiefdoms, time, space and traditional approaches to problem-solving.

Part of my visit with the Yalies involves talking about environmental journalism and it concludes with me giving them an assignment: write a letter to their present selves from 50 years into the future. I ask them to add up the facts as they know them and try to imagine how Greater Yellowstone might be different around the midway point of this century.

Which is to say: more people living in our region, inundating the front and backcountry and dealing with overall warmer and drier climatic conditions.

Yes, it's easy to despair, to be overcome by a sense of powerlessness while pondering the challenges. Yet within the simple construct of the elk map, I believe there is a powerful platform for hope.

Not only do the still-functioning migrations of elk, mule deer and pronghorn demonstrate why Greater Yellowstone is worthy of rare comparison to the African Serengeti; not only do they support the dispersal of biomass around the ecosystem, supporting the presence of hundreds of other creatures big and small; not only does their herbivory help keep soils and grasslands healthy as major sequesterers of carbon. But their ancient pathways, based upon intergenerational learning going back to the post-Pleistocene, inspire us with awe and wonder.

They offer a cohesive, easy-to-comprehend blueprint of sorts for what's at stake, and they should compel us to come together.

So often we hear how the wildland conservation movement, how academia, government land management agencies and the tourism industry are dominated by white people (especially white men). Critics rightfully point to a lack of diversity with people of color.

All of the above—whether it's reshaping the environmental movement or trying to save the character of America's most iconic wildland ecosystem—represents a serious existential crisis staring the conservation movement in the face. And that same movement, enabled by certain foundation funders, is obviously guilty of tokenism.

But here's the good news. Biophilia—the phenomenon popularized by entomologist and award-winning writer E.O. Wilson as "love of nature"—does

## Understanding the power of an elk migration map

not discriminate. It is innately present in every child and it lasts a lifetime, especially when kids are exposed young.

Becoming a citizen conservationist, conservation biologist or environmental journalist does not require permission. Foremost our responsibility is providing platforms for other voices to be heard, to heed criticisms (as painfully as they might be), to acknowledge if we are white living in the bubble of Greater Yellowstone we are benefactors of privilege.

Fortunately, caring about the natural world does not necessitate approval. A grizzly bear or elk do not care what one's background is.

Imprinting biophilia, for most people, does not begin with exposure to public lands. It can start with a parent reading to an infant child, having a photograph of an animal tacked to the wall, a plant on the doorstep attracting bees, a birdfeeder in the backyard or watching ants on the sidewalk.

As public landowners, the preponderance of acreage in Greater Yellowstone as to the entire West belongs to all Americans and it's our job to increase awareness of that stakeholdership. There is power in believing that places like Yellowstone and wildlife inside it belong to us.

When the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative adopted as its motto "conservation for the common good," Susan Clark and her associates recognized that just as conservation constructed during the late 19th century became radically more sophisticated in the 100 years that followed, so too will it make great leaps forward—with diversity, socioeconomic equity and inclusion—in this new millennium.

My message to any young person reading this? The preservation of Greater Yellowstone—a true national American treasure—depends on you and you can be an advocate no matter where you live.

The elk map of Greater Yellowstone doesn't only pertain to wapiti; it belongs to you, and you to it.

*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.*



This map indicates migration paths of the major elk herds in Greater Yellowstone. COURTESY OF WYOMING MIGRATION INITIATIVE



# Water Wisdom

BY DAVID TUCKER  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Since 2000, the Gallatin River Task Force has monitored water quality in the upper Gallatin watershed. Staffers and volunteers have routinely sampled several locations throughout the watershed to determine how land-use practices impact our streams, creeks and rivers. This data plays a key role in tracking the long-term health of the river system, planning and evaluating of restoration projects and management actions, while also helping to identify and monitor unforeseen events. In 2018, one such unforeseen event occurred—a late-summer algae bloom far beyond historic norms.

Naturally, as an organization grounded in science, we asked why. To find out, in partnership with Montana Department of Environmental Quality, we launched a 3-year study focused on algae growth and the conditions that lead to widespread, detrimental algae bloom. While algae occurs naturally in the upper Gallatin, too much algae is harmful to aquatic wildlife like trout and insects, and large blooms negatively affect recreation, like boating and fishing, making this condition undesirable environmentally and socially.

Factors that can exacerbate algae growth include phosphorus and nitrogen levels, water temperature, hardness, pH, water velocity, sunlight and water clarity. Task Force data collected in 2018 provided some insight into the conditions that might have caused the algal bloom. Nitrogen levels were some of the highest ever recorded in the West Fork of the Gallatin River. Potential sources of anthropogenic nitrogen include fertilizer, stormwater runoff, land application of treated wastewater effluent on the Big Sky golf course and Big Sky Community Park, pet and horse waste and septic system effluent.

In addition to elevated nitrogen concentrations, average weekly water temperature during the last week of July at the West Fork streamflow station was the highest ever recorded. Anecdotal evidence from local river users documented more sunny days over July and fewer afternoon thunderstorms that reduce water clarity than in years past. The elevated nitrogen levels combined with warm water temperature, clear water and abundant sunshine might have contributed to increased algae growth in 2018.

So, what does the 2019 data show and what conclusions can we draw, if any, from the two data sets?

For one, last summer was cooler and wetter, meaning water temperatures were generally lower and water quantity was generally higher. While algae growth was possible and

## Quality Control

was indeed observed at all of the study sites, conditions for a large-scale event weren't ideal, and no large-scale event was observed. We found algae production above state recommended levels at some testing sites, and nitrogen and phosphorus levels were also above state standards at certain sites at certain times.

These findings are only part of the story. Combined with the 2018 data, they're chapters in a book that will take years to write, with many revisions along the way. What we do know, and have known for some time, is that nitrogen levels in the upper Gallatin watershed are too high. There are steps that individuals can take to lower their nitrogen footprint, like regularly maintaining septic systems, conserving water and landscaping with native plants.

For the greatest improvement, we also need to implement large-scale restoration and conservation projects, and better regulate land-use practices to account for stormwater runoff and excess nitrogen loading. An upgraded wastewater treatment plant will go a long way toward reducing nitrogen in the West Fork, and streamside restoration projects can filter runoff before it reaches surface waters, improving in-stream water quality. The Task Force-led Headwaters Alliance is updating and expanding a plan to prioritize nutrient-reduction strategies, and will have a draft produced later this summer.

As we head into summer, forecasters are not optimistic about precipitation or temperatures, and on June 10, the snowpack is measuring 74 percent of normal. Low snow levels, less rain, and higher temperatures could mean significant algae growth this summer, as water levels will likely be low and water temperatures will likely be high.

Once runoff subsides, we'll be back in the river, gathering data, forming an outline and, hopefully, getting one step closer to understanding nuisance algae growth, an understanding that will inform future actions toward mitigation.



A large algae bloom in the upper Gallatin waterway in 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

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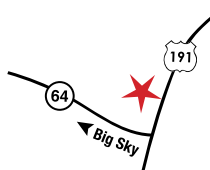


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# Looking hate in the eye in Whitefish

BY ASTA BOWEN

Here in western Montana it would seem we're a long way from the movement for justice and peace that has gained new thunder since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.



Asta Bowen, who resides in northwest Montana, addresses racism in rural communities. PHOTO COURTESY OF WRITERS ON THE RANGE

We're no strangers to injustice here, where societal woes too often land on Native American shoulders, and no strangers to inequality, where upmarket vacation homes overlook the many school kids in need of lunch assistance. And we have our share of political divides, tempered a little by the "live and let live" culture of the West—or maybe just diffused by her wide-open spaces.

Yet even in our community, confrontation is upon us. Protests beget counter-protests, emotions run high, things happen.

What happened here in Whitefish was nothing like the incident in Buffalo, New York, where a 75-year old man fell and was badly injured because police shoved him backwards. When an officer went to the victim's side, he was pulled back into formation; after those who had engaged with the man were suspended, their whole unit resigned in protest.

What happened here was also different from what we had seen earlier in Coral Gables, Florida; there, when marchers reached the police station, officers were waiting on the steps; a dialogue took place, followed by a prayer where the police joined protesters in taking a knee.

What happened here was much less dramatic. On a fine afternoon in the pretty ski town of Whitefish, a group was gathered to raise signs of support for Black Lives Matter. One large, angry man descended on the scene, cursing in people's faces and grabbing at signs, as the group chanted "Peaceful! Peaceful!" Within minutes a policeman had escorted the man from the scene.

But amid the commotion, one image burns bright: We see the intruder from behind, towering over a young black woman, as he gets in her face. Her sign, "Say Their Names," has dropped to her side, but her feet are planted firmly. She has just put up her sunglasses, meeting his assault with a steady, silent gaze. Though the encounter lasts only a moment, the impression is enduring.

Her name is Samantha Francine, and she embodies the change we need. As we adjust to life under pandemic, it is time to accept that yet another plague is upon us, and that is the disease of dehumanization. We condemn first and ask questions later—or never. We judge on sight, we dismiss and damn; we polarize and partisanize until the rift has grown so wide there is no reaching across.

We'll use almost any story to justify our rage, like the claim that blood running from the ear of the old man lying on the sidewalk in Buffalo was cleverly staged with tubes, or that the Coral Gables protest was illegitimate because A, it wasn't black-led, and B, the group had communicated with police in advance (organizer Oshea Johnson laughed and said he's been black since birth, but

yes; when the police called, they talked—and in a hopeful sign, are still talking).

Samantha just held her ground, looked the man in the eye, and listened.

She explained why: "I grew up with a single white father who taught us from a young age that things were going to be different for us just because of the color of our skin. He would constantly remind us that 'no matter the threat, always look them in the eye so they have to acknowledge you're human.' In this moment, those are the words that went through my head. When I lifted up my glasses, he saw me. I saw him."

From the news, it's easy to think that the revolution underway is only taking place in cities. But like coronavirus, this other plague is everywhere—most obviously online, in Twitter feeds and Instagram comments—but most dangerously, headed for our hearts. Mine too, I fear, which is why I am writing this, and why I am leaning on Samantha's stance for strength.

Swipe-and-judge is here, and it's going to take more than a mask to cure.

So let's stop, plant our feet, look each other in the eye and listen to one another. Wherever we do so, be it Buffalo, Coral Gables, Whitefish or our own back yard, that might be the revolution that really matters.

*Asta Bowen is a contributor to Writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She is the author of Wolf: The Journey Home and a former columnist for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. She lives in northwest Montana.*



Samantha Francine stands her ground at a Black Lives Matter rally in Whitefish, Montana. PHOTO BY GRACE JENSEN



# Old railroad takes new form

## Bike trail to be built on former Union Pacific Railroad bed

BY BELLA BUTLER

WEST YELLOWSTONE – In 1883, just over a decade after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, a group of mustache-sporting cyclists became the first to pedal through Yellowstone. The brigade traveled by train from Laramie, Wyoming along the Union Pacific Railroad, offloading 85 miles from the park before embarking on an intrepid and sometimes arduous adventure.

Today, with the Union Pacific Railroad long since retired and the commercialization of the national park, locals of West Yellowstone sought to create an experience that would parallel the exploits of the railway’s past travelers, like those of the dapper cyclists that made history atop their bike saddles.

The Yellowstone Short Line Trail, a project recently announced by its creators and fiscal sponsor the Yellowstone Historic Center, will be a 9-mile gravel trail stretching from the historic district of West Yellowstone to Reas Pass near the Montana-Idaho border, mostly on U.S. Forest Service land.

According to Ellen Butler, the historic center’s curator and fundraising assistant, the project’s organizers are excited to offer an opportunity for locals and visitors alike to base outdoor recreation in the region’s historical context. The 10-foot wide trail will feature a number of amenities, including benches, pavilions, bike maintenance stations and interpretive signs exploring the area’s cultural and natural history.

Butler said the historical center has been referring to the trail as an “outdoor museum.” They believe that the recreation and outdoor component will draw a larger audience of people that traditionally wouldn’t opt for an educational visit to a museum to explore the engaging past of the area.

“Based on the response we’ve gotten so far, the community is really excited about it and we’ve been thrilled to see how many people outside of the community are excited, too. It sounds like a lot of people will travel here just to bike that trail,” Butler said.

West Yellowstone, once a town reliant on traffic from the Yellowstone Special and Yellowstone Express passenger train offered by Union Pacific’s Oregon Short Line Railroad, is now largely dependent on tourism from the neighboring national park to support the local economy. Butler said the hope is for the new trail to change that.

“Especially with recent events and the park being closed as late as it was this season, West Yellowstone has kind of seen just how reliant we are on the park, and for us it’s going to be great to be able to offer additional attractions outside of the park so that even in the times

when the park is closed we can still offer tourists something when they come here,” she said. After it struggled to gain momentum for years, Jason Brey from the Hebgen Lake Ranger District supported the project through to its 2019 Forest Service approval. Currently, the project is in its fundraising phase, striving for a goal of \$1.25 million, the estimated need for the trail.

The project has already acquired a number of grants, including a grant from the Dumke Foundation, which will match donations 2-1, up to \$375,000, tripling other donations. The project has already raised a quarter of a million dollars, excluding the matching grant.

Assuming the fundraising goal is met by this fall, trail construction will begin the spring of 2021, making the trail accessible by the end of summer 2021 and completed in 2022, according to the Forest Service.

The trail will also connect to the Greater Yellowstone Trail, another project in development that will reach from West Yellowstone through the Teton Valley, eventually arriving in Grand Teton National Park.



In 1883, a group of cyclists became the first to bike through Yellowstone National Park, riding penny-farthing bicycles. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING



The old Yellowstone Special train cruises around Reas Pass. The Special ran daily throughout the summer season for the duration of passenger service to West Yellowstone. The Yellowstone Express was later added as a second passenger train to West Yellowstone to meet rising demands. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE YELLOWSTONE HISTORIC CENTER

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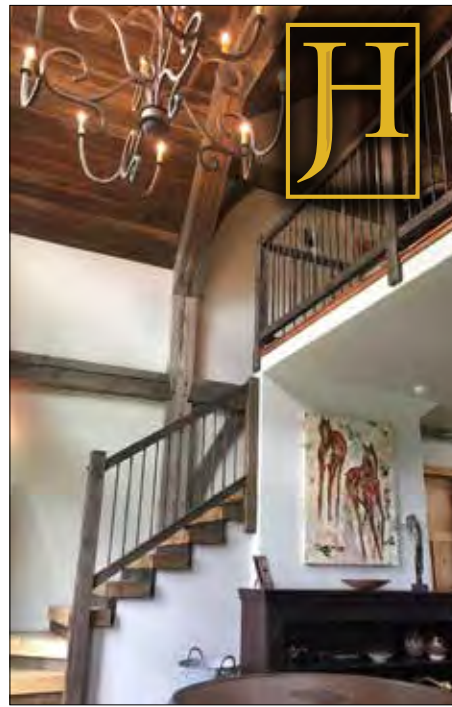
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# Local collector documents civil unrest in the 60s

BY MIRA BRODY

**BIG SKY** – Hundreds of small pins dot the walls of Gregory “Beau” Hill’s home; they’re organized into frames, the largest of which is 4 or 5 feet wide. Each pin represents someone—the pin’s former wearer—who hoped for change during a wave of equal rights movements in the 1960s.

The pins, alongside the occasional flag, photo or newspaper clipping, were collected by Hill over a span of 14 years from auctions and estate sales and are meticulously organized and preserved into an exhibit he calls *The Spirit of the Sixths*.

There are two red and white flags made by the United Farm Workers union in 1962 when Hispanic fieldworkers fought for fair pay, benefits and better treatment for farmworkers. They are original silkscreens, and imperfect—Hill points out the fold down the middle severing the faded red fabric.

“It wasn’t how good it looked, it was what it meant,” said Hill. “They had a lot of pride in it.”

Another red, white and blue frame contains presidential race buttons, including those of Richard Nixon and John F. Kenney, as well as some lesser-known names, such as Shirley Chisholm, who was the first black woman elected to the United States Congress and the first black woman to run for president. Hill hopes to build his collection of black civil rights memorabilia—just last month he was outbid on a letter written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which sold for \$27,000.

The largest collection, however, is of Vietnam War-era memorabilia spanning almost every major city in the country, including framed photos of the victims of the Kent State shooting, a headline reading “The Chicago 8,” an image of a man burning his draft card, another bloodied from a police bat during a protest, and pins reading “When I die I know I’ll go to heaven because I’ve already spent my time in hell,” and “Hell no, we won’t go.”

A smaller pin, on the far right, is jet-black, with a single number handwritten on its face: 45,000—the number of U.S. soldiers who had lost their lives in the Vietnam War by New Years of 1971.

“I look for something that means something. This one right here, somebody wore that all over the place. Somebody wore that for years,” Hill said, pointing to different pins that had various degrees of water, mold and sun damage. He says many of them sell for thousands at online auctions.

He pulls out a *Mad Magazine* pin he says he wears out and about sometimes. It’s an original, purchased in 1958 for about 50 cents. Although not as significant as the others he keeps behind glass, he guesses it’s



Gregory “Beau” Hill collects equal right movement memorabilia from the Vietnam War-era displayed in an exhibit he called “Spirit of the Sixths.” He estimates he has the largest collection in Montana and possibly the largest west of the Mississippi. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



This is the staging area for Hill’s growing civil rights movement collection. Once he has a centerpiece, he will have them framed for display. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

appreciated to about \$150—a standing example of how unaware we are of our role in history until its too late. Hill says this is possibly the largest collection of its kind in the state, maybe even west of the Mississippi.

“I try to not have any duplicates,” he said. “It’s hard because I have so many of them. I literally have to have a picture on my phone and check.”

Hill was finally able to finish the *Spirit of the Sixths* after a stroke last June left him with some extra time while he was recovering. He was also able to make some progress on his house, another project born from his habit of collecting. A skilled carpenter by trade, Hill moved to Big Sky from Northern California in 1975 right out of high school, hoping the high-altitude mountain air would help his allergies, and has stayed ever since. Much like the frames on the wall, the house he designed frames nearby peaks in its carefully placed windows.

Hill hopes someday it’ll serve as an educational piece, possibly in a gallery or school, somewhere people can read them all and fully realize the spirit of the 60s. “I spent so much time just trying to put it together I never really gave a whole lot of thought about where I’d like to have it,” he said. Of those who have seen his collection, their reactions are sometimes assertive.

“I’ve had people look at this and flip out and want to punch me,” Hill said. “The thing is, I’m not trying to point out any particular point of view.”

“People close their minds. And a closed mind is a terrible thing because it’s wasted,” he said, paraphrasing the famous and widely adapted United Negro College Fund slogan. “Is that how that saying goes?”

The emotional verbiage on these artifacts and stories behind them are a reminder that unrest is something our country’s history is familiar with. Just this month, Bozeman hosted two Black Lives Matter rallies with a peaceful gathering taking place in Big Sky on June 17. These expressions of first amendment rights prove that assembling is something we’ve been doing to gain traction on equal rights for generations, and continue to do today.



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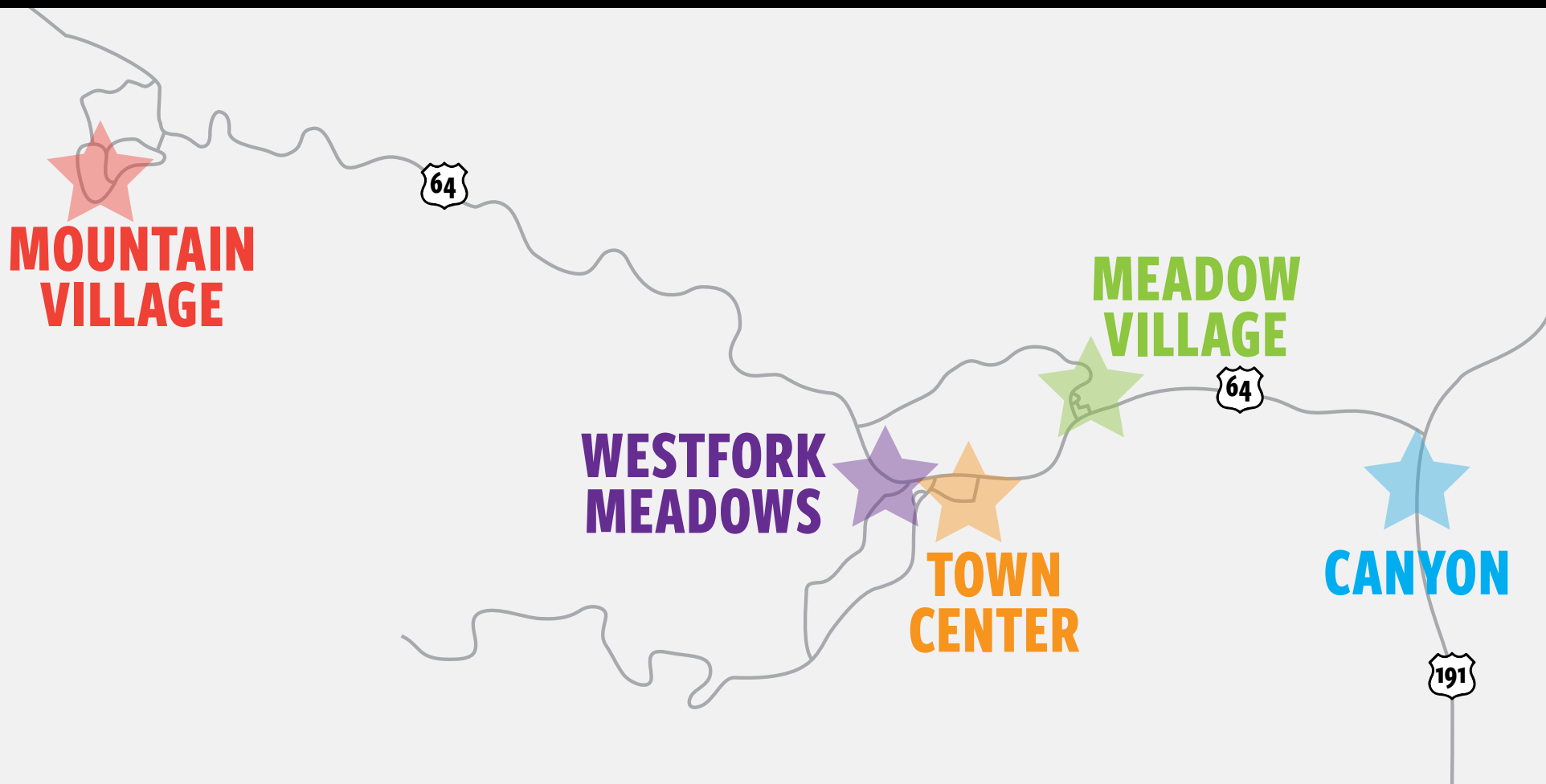
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# Local photographer captures mountain lifestyle with an experienced lens

BY MIRA BRODY

**BIG SKY** – Like many, Big Sky photographer Ryan Turner moved to the mountains to get his master's degree at Bridger Bowl and fulfill his dream of becoming a full-time ski bum. After relocating to Big Sky in 1998, the Wisconsin native and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Bachelor of Fine Arts graduate is an accomplished photographer, capturing the vibrant lifestyle of mountain living.

"I was just a kid who had a dream to do something with his life instead of working in a blue collar town," said Turner, who ultimately made the leap out West after a close friend died—a solid reminder that life is short. "As I've grown as an artist I've realized how much I appreciate the things that I love and that I've incorporated that in my art."

He names renowned Jackson, Wyoming nature and wildlife photographer Thomas Mangelsen as an inspiration. Turner captures mountain scenes, landscapes and wildlife after beginning his professional career shooting action photography at Crystal Images where he was fortunate to collect hours of practice, shooting close to 10 rolls of film a day. His work has been featured in 60 different publications through the years, including Powder Magazine and Big Sky Journal.

"Taking action shots [with Crystal] was really helpful because I learned how to be efficient with film," he said. "Everything I shot back then, I developed on slot film and learned how to post-process, post-production...there are lots of different techniques with that film."

In 1999, Turner started freelancing, turning more to work that interested him, and in that he found a draw toward light, the way it ignites a situation, brings focus to something and creates a mood. He says he appreciates how light can take something really simple and make it extraordinary. Through the years he has traveled around the world, including Alaska and France to name a few locations, growing and developing his craft. He says he moved toward adventure photography because capturing those magical moments in nature always felt more natural to him.

Turner enjoys giving back to the community that has supported his work over the last 20 years of his career. He has donated to a number of local organizations, including the Arts Council of Big Sky, Big Sky School District, Women In Action, Friends of the Avalanche Center and the Gallatin River Task Force among others.



Big Sky photographer Ryan Turner, captures mountain scenes, landscapes and wildlife and the vibrant lifestyle of mountain living. PHOTO COURTESY OF RYAN TURNER

He and his family attend annual beautification events as well, including the Community Park Weed Pull and Mountain and River clean-up days.

"We have an opportunity as artists to be able to grab people's attention quickly, and it draws us to it over and over again," Turner said of the role of art in the community and its ability to communicate to viewers. "It can make you feel happy and sad and calm."

These days, like any self-respecting Big Sky resident, Turner enjoys fishing, rafting, hiking, snowboarding, as well as reading history and painting. He just finished a major installation in 100 rooms at the new Wilson Hotel, has done installations at the Yellowstone Conference Center as well as homes and offices throughout the region. He is also working on a yet-to-be-titled book—his first—which he hopes will be finished by the coming fall.



Turner has photographed all over the world, but has recently turned to honing his skill most in the region. This piece is titled "Yellowstone's National Treasures." PHOTO BY RYAN TURNER



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# BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, June 19 – Thursday, July 2

If your event falls between July 3 and July 16, please submit it by June 24 by emailing [media@outlaw.partners](mailto:media@outlaw.partners)

## Friday, June 19

Best of 406 Market  
Marketplace, 4 p.m.

## Saturday, June 20

Bozeman Farmers Market  
Gallatin County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.

108 Sun Salutations with the Santosha Wellness Center  
Town Center Plaza, 9:30 a.m.

Junk-Fest 2020  
Antique Barn, Gallatin Gateway, 9 a.m.

Live Music: The Fred Eaglesmith Show  
The Filling Station, 7 p.m.

## Sunday, June 21

Father's Day Brunch  
The Corral Bar, 8 a.m.

High "Altitude" Tea Service  
Townshend's Teahouse, 11:30 a.m.

New Moon Women's Circle  
Santosha Wellness Center, 8 p.m.

## Monday, June 22

Virtual Preschool Science Series  
Montana Science Center Facebook, 10:30 a.m.

Virtual Book Club  
Country Bookshelf Facebook, 6 p.m.

Library Book Pick-up  
Big Sky Library, 3-6 p.m.

## Tuesday, June 23

Big Sky Chamber Virtual Annual Members Meeting  
Big Sky Chamber Facebook, 8:30 a.m.

Community Pint Night for Bozeman Ultimate  
Bunkhouse Brewing, 4 p.m.

Big Sky Virtual Kitchen  
Virtual Kitchen Facebook, 5 p.m.

## Wednesday, June 24

Community Yoga with the Santosha Wellness Center  
Big Sky Plaza, 10:30 a.m.

Wildfire Awareness Summer Barbeque  
Hyalite Fire Department Cottonwood Station, 4 p.m.

Library Book Pick-up  
Big Sky Library, 3-6 p.m.

## Thursday, June 25

Art on the Rocks  
Emerson Facebook, 7 p.m.

## Friday, June 26

Live Music: Friday Afternoon Club  
EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Live Music: Jazz Night  
Red Tractor Pizza, 7 p.m.

## Saturday, June 27

Bangtail Divide Trail Work  
Bangtail Divide Trailhead, 9 a.m.

Jakes Youth Field Day  
East Gallatin Recreation Area, 9 a.m.

BSSEF Charity Golf Tournament  
Big Sky Resort Golf Course, 10 a.m.

## Sunday, June 28

Family Hike  
Ousel Falls Trailhead, 2 p.m.

Live Music: The Dirt Farmers  
Red Tractor Pizza, 6 p.m.

## Music on Main Live from the Rialto Thursday, July 2 at 7 p.m.

Music on Main kicks off its 20<sup>th</sup> season in Downtown Bozeman with Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs. A limited number of tickets will be released for the show inside the Rialto theater and the show will be streamed on Facebook live for all to enjoy from the local restaurant, bar or your own home. This format will continue every Thursday for all July shows—tune in and keep the tradition alive!



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**SECTION 3:**  
BUSINESS, HEALTH,  
SPORTS & FUN




# Making it in Big Sky: Lotus Pad

BY BRANDON WALKER

**BIG SKY** – Like almost every industry and business sector in the United States, restaurants were dealt a heavy blow with the onset of COVID-19 shutdowns. In order to continue responsibly serving the public, many adapted their services to takeout and curbside pick-up options to continue operating in some capacity.

The Lotus Pad was among them, never wavering following the mid-March dine-in closure mandate. Owner Alex Omania and her staff immediately rolled up their sleeves and shifted to a business model that focused on online ordering and takeout, all while maintaining a five days per week schedule.

Now, in adherence to Gov. Steve Bullock’s Phase 2 reopening guidelines, the dining room has reopened and Omania and her staff are welcoming patrons inside the building once again while also continuing to cater to online orders and curbside pick-up.

In Phase 2, restaurants and bars in Gallatin County can operate at 75 percent capacity, meaning Lotus Pad can host 75 percent of their 98-person limit at one time. “It’s been going strong,” Omania said. “I’m feeling pretty grateful.”

Having owned and operated the Lotus Pad in Big Sky since 2007, Omania recently spoke with EBS about the restaurant’s current business climate.

*Explore Big Sky: How has your daily work routine been impacted by COVID-19?*

**Alex Omania:** Obviously there’s like the fear thing. Everybody’s afraid. People are scared, but you just have to adjust to that and make sure everyone understands that we are all healthy, everyone working there.

*EBS: Shoulder season fluctuations aside, how do you believe the virus will continue to affect your business?*

**A.O.:** We’re focused on operating and serving really good food and we are focused on giving a good experience to people. So, I think that, as long as we can be open that is how it’s going to impact us ... It’s going to keep us with our chins up and you know, I’m just trying not to put a lot of energy into thinking about this virus necessarily, you know, and more of how can we adapt to how people are eating.

*EBS: What is the overall demeanor of patrons coming to dine in? Is the atmosphere returning to some semblance of normal?*

**A.O.:** The overall demeanor, I mean I’d say like 90 percent of people are really grateful that they’re here in Montana and I think people feel very relieved when they come in and you know everyone in the restaurant isn’t reminding them of what’s going on and we’re just there to serve food and I think in general, I mean, it’s amazing. People are amazing. People are sick of it you know they’re sick of hearing about it. They just want to eat dinner and see how you’re doing and your day.

*EBS: As an owner, what will you remember most from the day when you were able to welcome dine-in patrons and reopen the dining room?*

**A.O.:** I will remember how great it feels to socialize, because I’m an extrovert and that’s why I own a restaurant and that’s why I built this restaurant because I love cooking for people. It is like my superhero power, you know, and just doing takeout was great and relaxing for everybody but being able to like be there and see people is great. That’s what I’m going to remember the most is just the warmth that you get when you socialize. I think it’s pretty important.

*EBS: What trends are you noticing in dine-in versus takeout orders now that the dining room has been open for a couple of weeks?*

**A.O.:** People love the online stuff. They love not having to call and deal with a person. I think it’s easier and quick and sometimes you know you’re just getting what you want a lot faster. As far as people dining in ... I think that the difference between now than before [is] people are definitely a little bit more hesitant to ... socialize and hug.

*EBS: Did you adopt any new business offerings or practices due to the pandemic and do you believe they will become permanent?*

**A.O.:** Yeah definitely! Online ordering and delivery and you know even the curbside delivery, I think that’s actually kind of cool. It’s sort of like drive-thru. ... Really emphasizing washing your hands all the time and awareness around that, just to stay healthy. That is one thing that everyone’s kind of made more emphasis on that.

*EBS: What’s been the crowd favorite on the menu since you reopened?*

**A.O.:** People just love drunken noodles. I think what happened with all this is that when people were afraid to go out, they didn’t realize they missed certain really simple things that maybe they would get sick of.

*EBS: Are there any new menu offerings in the works for the summer season?*

**A.O.:** I think we’re going to remain closed two days a week because it’s healthy for everybody and one thing I’m realizing about all this is that we’re all, before COVID, operating at a very unsustainable work pace and I think I noticed everybody a lot happier during this. So, we’re going to stay closed two days a week and we’re going to open back up for breakfast like we did last summer.

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

**A.O.:** I can give you a million examples of this, it doesn’t have to be totally literal, it can kind of be figurative. Ciara Wolfe told me this actually. Ask for money and you get advice. Ask for advice and you get money. So, I will tell you that that applies to everything, people asking for raises, you asking your distributors to lower their prices, I mean it applies to so much.



Alex Omania, owner of the Lotus Pad since 2007, pictured in her town center restaurant. PHOTO BY SHANNON CORSI PHOTOGRAPHY

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# Life 101

## What's the good news?



BY LINDA ARNOLD  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

I've had the pleasure to work with a wonderful corporate trainer and motivational speaker, Gary Lalonde, over the years. And I've always loved his traditional greeting, "What's the good news?"

During these challenging times, this seems like a helpful tool to consider. First of all, it sets a positive tone. And it puts the responder in the position of doing a quick brain search to come up with something that is going right in their lives.

I'll admit it can be a bit disarming. Especially for those "Debbie and David Downers" out there. Cue the sound effect from Saturday Night Live (waaaah, waaaah).

### Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!

Our brains have a natural tendency to go toward the fearful "fight or flight" response. Blame it on that throwback to the saber-toothed tiger days—and the human race's need for safety.

Psychologist Rick Hanson has done extensive research in the neuroscience arena. He sums up the negativity bias of our brains in an interesting illustration below.

Our ancestors had to avoid two kinds of mistakes:

1. Thinking there's a tiger in the bushes, but actually all is well.
2. Thinking all is well, while actually there is a tiger about to pounce.

The cost of the first mistake is just needless worry, although the cost of the second mistake is irreversible. As a result, we have a brain that tends to make the first mistake again and again to avoid ever making the second mistake.

As a result, the brain is like Velcro for negative experiences, but Teflon for positive ones!

### Asking the Right Questions

During this pandemic period, there are lots of unknowns. And, since our brains have that negative bias, there's a tendency to look at things that are going wrong. What about looking at what's going right in your life?

Our brains love questions, and they will even go in search of answers. Try this exercise that's very simple and, yet, can yield profound results. Just keep asking your mind these questions:

1. What's going right in my life?
2. What else is going right?
3. And what else is going right?

Our brains think in pictures, so the more you can attach a positive picture to your answer, the better. As well as a "fist pump" when recalling a specific success!

### Putting Things Into Perspective

My niece, Caitly, has a wonderful way of shedding light on life lessons with her sons. She came up with the term "PIP it," as a shorthand way of saying, "put it into perspective," and we've adopted the phrase in our extended family.

Consider these real-life scenarios, shared by life coaches Marc and Angel Chernoff, from their workshops. Talk about PIP-ing it!

"On my nursing shift at the hospital this evening, I was forced into a moment of clarity when I got off the phone, utterly flustered after having an argument with my husband. An 8-year-old patient—who is dying of leukemia—asked me if I was okay."

"Today is the 10-year anniversary of the day I had planned on ending my life. It's also the 10-year anniversary of the day I found out I was pregnant with my now 9-year-old son. He's the reason I changed my mind. And he is so worth it! But, perhaps most important, I now realize I am worth it, too."

So, what's the good news in your life?

*Linda Arnold is a syndicated columnist, psychological counselor and Founder of a multistate marketing company. Reader comments are welcome at [linda@lindaarnold.org](mailto:linda@lindaarnold.org) or visit [www.lindaarnold.org](http://www.lindaarnold.org) for more information on her books.*



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# Golf Tips from a Pro: Be Prepared to Play

BY MARK WEHRMAN  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

There is one statement that has guided me through my career as a PGA Professional. "Confidence comes with preparation." Proper preparation, through practice, will put you in a better position to succeed in tournaments.

A proper warm-up session before a casual round will help you be less nervous on that "scary" first hole tee shot. Proper stretching and loosening up before your round will reduce the chance of injury while playing. Spending time on the putting green before your round will help you get comfortable with the current green speeds. Practicing around the greens will provide you more confidence when chipping and pitching the ball out of tough lies.

Most importantly, I am confident that showing up to the golf course well before your tee time will lower your heart rate which, in the game of golf, is extremely important for hitting better shots, and will ultimately lead to shooting lower scores.

Tom Watson was once asked if he was in-between clubs with a shot, what was his preference? Was it taking one more club and swinging easy, or one less club and swinging harder? His answer was, "I will choose whatever club makes my heart rate slow down." Mr. Watson is obviously a world class golfer and one of the best to ever play the game, but this is great advice to follow when making a club choice.

Lastly, with the current road construction taking place on Montana Highway 64, I'm sure you have noticed some delays when traveling the "Spur Road." Since the start of construction, we have been getting calls every day from golfers with tee times that are running behind due to wait times caused by the construction. Not only is this a challenge for the golf shop to keep a tee sheet schedule, but it is a challenge for all of the golfers to arrive early and be prepared for their round.

Remember, if a 10-minute delay in traffic is going to make you late for your tee time, then you probably weren't going to be on time in the first place, and certainly you would not be prepared to play your best golf.

When arriving for a tee time at the course, if you want to play your best golf, you need to leave plenty of time to check in the pro shop, stop by the Bunker Grill to purchase your F&B needs, stretch and warm up your body, and do some practicing on the range so you are best prepared to tee off hole No. 1 with confidence. Again, confidence comes with preparation! Here's to showing up a minimum of 30 minutes before your round!

*Mark Wehrman is the Head Golf Professional at the Big Sky Resort Golf Course and has been awarded the PGA Horton Smith Award recognizing PGA Professionals who are model educators of PGA Golf Professionals.*



Mark Wehrman, PGA (left) and student Abby Scholten (right) practice at the Big Sky Resort Golf Course driving range. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK WEHRMAN



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## PBR team competitions reach halfway mark

### Team Cooper Tires finishes flawless regular season, Division B set to kick-off

BY BRANDON WALKER

LAS VEGAS – The Professional Bull Riders tour concocted a new style of competition to keep riders and fans alike safely entertained during the pandemic, culminating in the anticipated return of spectators to PBR events on July 10-12 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The PBR Monster Energy Team Challenge began on June 5 with riders divided into teams of four, competing in head to head matchups against other teams, where the team scoring higher in a best of six ride format comes away victorious. Split into two divisions, Division A and Division B, teams compete in six regular season matchups.

Division A concluded its regular season matchups on June 14, competing June 5-7 and the 12-14. Division B will begin their competitions on June 19. At the end of Division B's matchups, the top three finishing teams from each division will compete in the championship weekend in Sioux Falls in mid-July.

Team Cooper Tires reigned supreme in Division A, finishing with a perfect 6-0 record after the two weekends of competition. Led by the No. 1 ranked bull rider in the world, Jose Vitor Leme, Team Cooper Tires bested their six opponents by a combined 1105 event aggregate points, winning their final matchup in decisive fashion, 259-0.

“This team environment has been great and it starts with the head of the snake,” said Team Cooper Tires’ rider Sage Kimzey on June 13. “Jose has been nothing besides extraordinary. He leads by example and I think all of us have really bought into the team environment.”

Other teams from Division A, joining Team Cooper Tires at championship weekend, will be Team Las Vegas, 4-2, and Team Can-Am, 3-3.

The final playoff spot hung in the balance as Team Can-Am squared off with Team Union Home Mortgage on June 14. Coming down to the final ride of the matchup, Team Can-Am’s Mauricio Moieira found his team trailing 172.75-88, as he mounted Skitso. In a win or go home scenario, Moieira was able to hold on and complete his ride, scoring 85.5 event aggregate points, propelling Team Can-Am to the .75-point victory and playoff berth.

“I couldn’t be happier for my team,” Team Can-Am’s Ezekiel Mitchell said. “Mauricio really did his thing today. We might have lagged in some areas, but everyone tried their guts out. I couldn’t be happier to be part of this team.”

At the halfway point of the PBR Team Challenge competition, Vitor Leme is running away atop the Built Ford Tough most valuable player standings leader board, having ridden nine of the 12 bulls he’s faced. He outpaces his closest competitors, Roscoe Jarboe, from the eliminated Team Wrangler, and Moreira by four completed rides. Jarboe and Moreira have each completed five of their twelve rides and Vitor Leme leads both riders by more than 340 event aggregate points.

“Jose has been the standalone leader and he has carried this team on his back,” Team Cooper Tires’ Stetson Lawrence said following competition on June 13. “There is no doubt about that. We’re happy to be winning.”

The final six teams comprising Division B: Team Ariat, Team Boot Barn, Team Pendleton Whisky, Team Lucas Oil, Team CAT and Team South Point will complete their six competitions the weekends of June 19-21 and 26-28 to decide the final three contenders to make it to the PBR Team Challenge championship weekend.



Team Can-Am’s Mauricio Moieira takes on “Skitso” on June 14. Moieira completed the ride and thrust his team to the PBR Team Challenge playoffs.  
PHOTO COURTESY ANDY WATSON, BULL STOCK MEDIA



# Big Sky Brews: Pandemic Coffee Porter

BY MIRA BRODY

After the hottest week of the year so far in Gallatin Valley, there are few things that bring relief from the high afternoon sun on a Friday. One of those, however, is a growler of beer from Beehive Brewing. This one in particular was brimming with their Pandemic coffee porter.

Porters originated in London in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The use of brown malt created a hoppy, dark pour and the name is derived from its popularity amongst street and river porters. If you're scratching your head at the job title "porter," you're not the only one—the term for a group of invaluable working class has remained, but the history of city porters has largely been forgotten. These men were tasked with unloading ship's cargo and delivering them to shops and because such manual labor required a high caloric intake, pubs became their fueling station between shifts.

Although porters were phased out of the working economy, the beer gained popularity and was the first beer style brewed across the world with major distribution breweries popping up in Ireland, North America, Sweden and Russia by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Beehive's porters are notoriously drinkable—never too overwhelming for those who don't normally have a taste for them. It's mild, with flavors of nut and chocolate in the forefront, and that satisfying rich coffee taste to carry you to your next sip. The coffee is smooth and in no way acidic, as sometimes coffee porters can be.

Right now, Beehive is experimenting with a few different coffee blends, one keg at a time. The Pandemic is their second version in this experiment and uses a cold brew from Cold Smoke Coffeehouse

in Bozeman. Inspired by their coffee porter staple, the 50 Caliber, you can expect the Pandemic to get better throughout the summer.

The remainder of my growler was a big hit at the cookout, so next time you're entertaining or attending your next potluck and want something with a bit more "wow" than your usual canned six-pack, get a growler filled with the Pandemic coffee porter at Beehive on your way.



The Pandemic coffee porter is an experiment in the making at Beehive Basin Brewing. This week's batch uses cold brew from Cold Smoke Coffeehouse in Bozeman. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



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**SPANISH PEAKS MOUNTAIN CLUB**

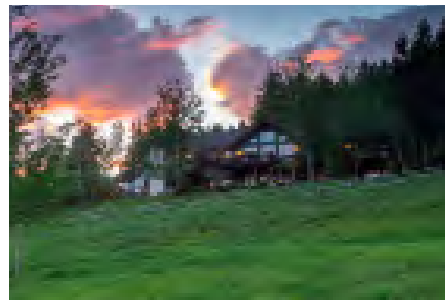


Royal Coachman Ranch  
160 ACRES / \$5.9M



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail  
1.27 ACRES / \$800K

**BIG SKY**



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



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



8 L  
4,321

**BIG SKY - LAND**



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



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



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



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

**COMMERCIAL**



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



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

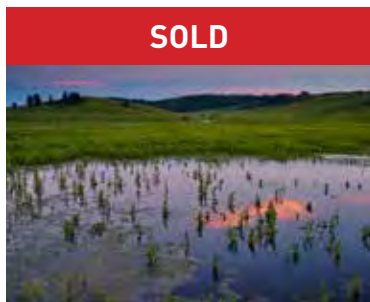


380 Mountain Man Trail  
Montana Ranch  
20.8 ACRES / \$325K

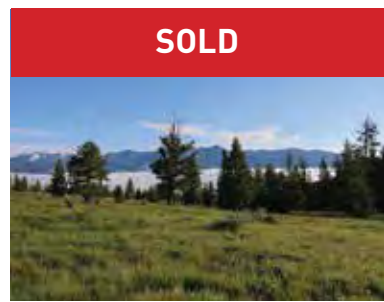


223 Town Center Avenue  
Big Sky, MT  
2882 SQ FT / 1601 SF Patio  
\$1.525M

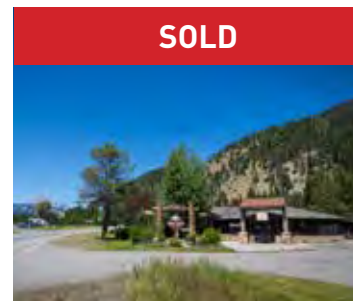
**RECENTLY SOLD**



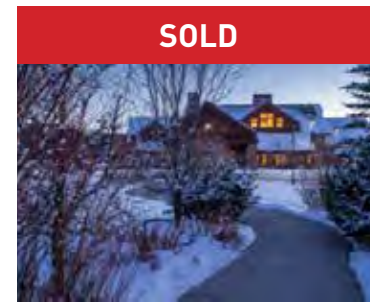
Yellowstone Ranch Preserve  
List Price: \$19M



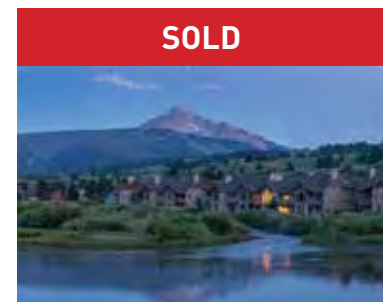
Mountain Meadows  
120 Acres / \$3.495M



Big Sky Corner Property  
List Price: \$3.24M

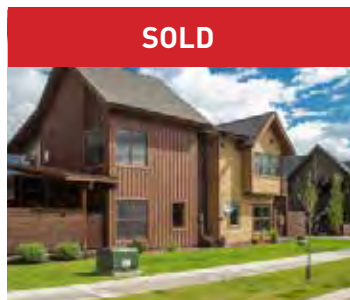


78 Meadow Village  
Dr. Big Sky, MT  
4,769 SQ FT / \$2.1M

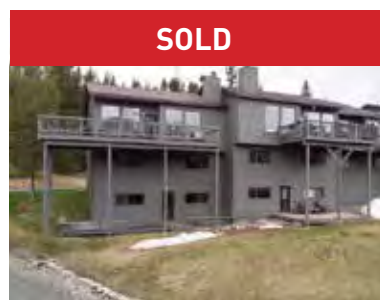


Crail Ranch Unit 40  
List Price: \$1.35M

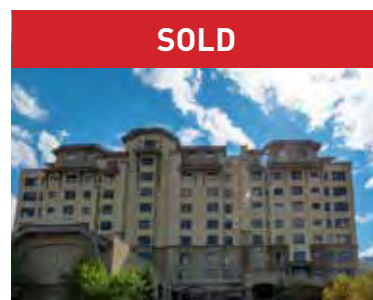
**RECENTLY SOLD**



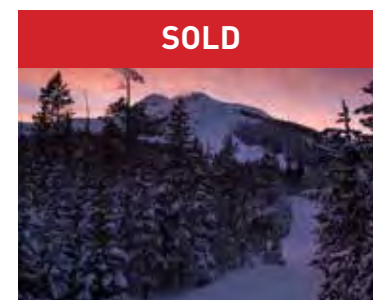
211 B Pheasant Tail  
\$692K



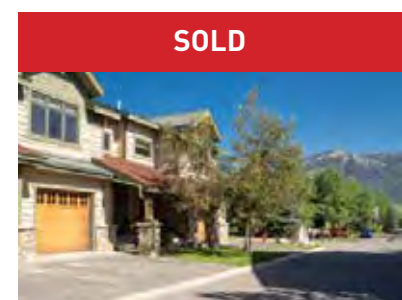
Hidden Village  
15 Blue Flax Place  
2,788 SQ FT / \$599K



Summit 911/912  
List Price: \$595K



Lot 39 Diamond Hitch  
1 ACRE / \$595K



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

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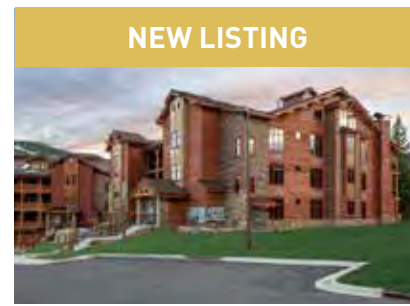
Little Thunder  
1,204 SQ FT / \$2.975M



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



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Hill Condo 1313  
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20 ACRES / \$480K



Lot 71 Morning Glory  
3.65 Acres / \$375K



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



UNDER CONTRACT

13285 Dry Creek Road  
Bozeman, MT  
7448 SQ FT Total / \$5.95M



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



UNDER CONTRACT

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



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

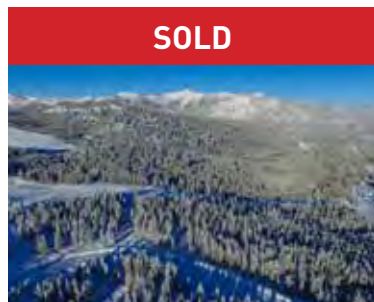


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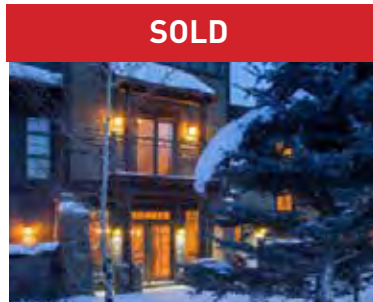
SOLD

2078 Little Coyote List  
List Price: \$1.079M



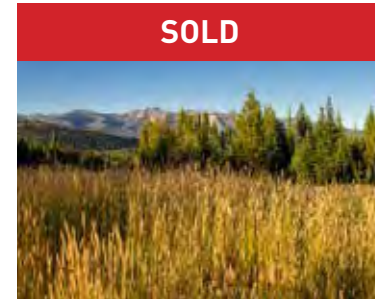
SOLD

Ski Tip Lot 10  
List Price: \$975K



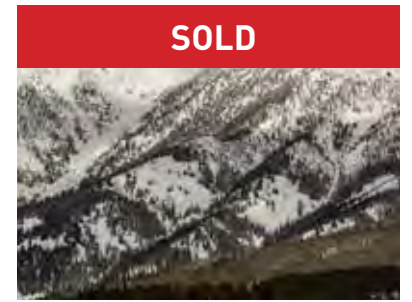
SOLD

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



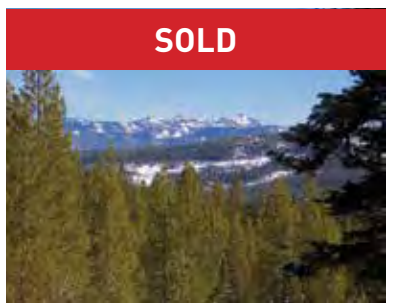
SOLD

Lot 64 Goshawk  
1.04 ACRES / \$775K



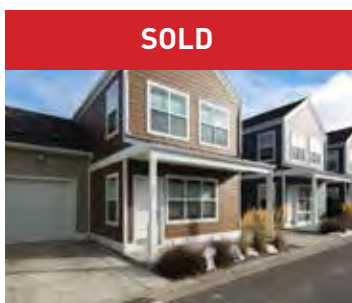
SOLD

Lot 44 Diamond Hitch  
1.25 ACRE / \$699K



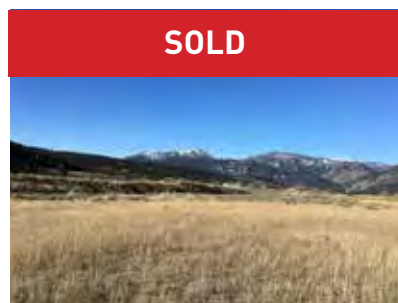
SOLD

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



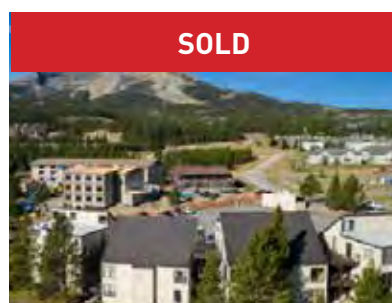
SOLD

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



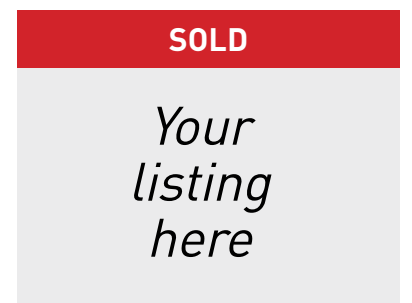
SOLD

COS 2071 Tract 1 Gallatin Road  
3.14 Acres / \$299K



SOLD

Hill Condo 1321  
440 SQ FT / \$185K



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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.*

### Amuse Bouche: Don’t forget the malt!



BY SCOTT MECHURA  
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

Despite our recent economic shutdown, we are in the midst of America’s second beer renaissance. Only this one began by moving in a different direction than the first and, personally, I think we are missing out.

Brewers were among the diverse working class of immigrants who settled throughout the United States. A large portion of which set up shop in the upper Midwest.

Many of these brewers brewed styles reminiscent of their homeland, creating what is commonly referred to today as American Lager. These would include beers such as Schmidt, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Old Milwaukee, Budweiser, Hamm’s, Leinenkugel’s, Miller High Life, and hundreds upon hundreds more. Many Europeans brewed even more diverse styles, but they either didn’t survive prohibition, or were gulped up by many of the aforementioned.

As time went on, these breweries ruled, and we arrived at what many of us beer historians and enthusiasts refer to as “the dark ages” or the, 1960’s and 1970’s.

It was the lowest time in American beer history.

Save for a few surviving pioneers such as Anchor Steam in San Francisco, and Yuengling in Pottsville, PA, it was almost impossible to get a beer that was different than the big Midwestern lagers.

#### Enter the 1980’s.

Brooklyn Brewing, Summit, Sierra Nevada, Bell’s, and a few others open their doors and begin brewing styles not seen in America for almost 100 years.

The British were great innovators and developers of brewing evolution. Belgians were great artesian brewers with both unorthodox methods and beers. Germans and the Czech were amazing technicians focused on details.

And the up and coming American brewers of the 1980’s and 1990’s were great imitators.

Suddenly we were seeing styles such as pale ale, India pale ale, Oktoberfest, bock, Marzen, Munich Helles, Dortmund Export, weizen, porter and stout. And while often times the quality of beer and depth of knowledge of these early craft brewers left much to be desired, they were exciting times none the less. These were the beers that inspired me to brew and become a judge.

Fast forward to today, when it seems a brewery opens more frequently than a Chick-fil-A or Starbucks. The quality of malt and yeast are greater than ever. The knowledge and skill of craft brewers today, dwarfs those of 20 and 30 years ago.

Why then have we forgotten about the malt? Because to me, a large portion of current American beers lack a fundamental definable malt profile.

Think about it. Breweries everywhere, and how often do you see some of the styles I mentioned? They’re there, but one style seems to have taken the modern American palate hostage.

#### IPA.

Not to be confused with India Pale Ale, IPA is nothing more than an ambiguous acronym, a style categorized by heavy herbal, citrusy hop presence, often intensely bitter, as well as what should also be a balancing malt flavor to its profile, but one that increasingly is absent.

Now a distinct style in and of itself, you can’t flip a bottle cap without hitting an American IPA. And some breweries make this single style as much as 70 percent of the total range of styles. Such as Post Falls Brewing in Post Falls, Idaho who, last I visited, brewed 13 beers, nine of which were some version of IPA.

To be clear, there are thousands of tremendous IPA’s all across the US, but I pine for the historic beers craft brewers were emulating just a couple decades ago.

Are we simply replacing the average lagers of yesteryear with an oversaturation of IPA’s that, while it might seem exciting now, just bring us back to the beginning?

*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.*



## Shining a light on the future.

Making smarter decisions about renewable energy requires knowledge. NorthWestern Energy’s solar projects throughout the state of Montana provide clean energy to the power grid – and they’re shaping the future of renewable energy, too. We’re working with local universities to better understand where solar energy belongs alongside a balanced energy mix. And that research is helping us build a brighter future for the next generation of Montanans.

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View more of the story at  
[NorthWesternEnergy.com/BrightFuture](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/BrightFuture)



# American Life in Poetry: Column 794

BY TED KOOSER

U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Here's a delightful poem you can almost smell. Don't we all know that old-shoe-plus-shoe-polish odor? I don't remember oxblood smelling different from plain old black or brown, but Andy Roberts, writing so vividly of his father, makes us feel that it does. He's from Columbus, Ohio, and his most recent book of poetry is *Leaning Toward Greenland*, (Night Ballet Press, 2020). We found this poem in *Atlanta Review*, edited by Karen Head, one of our former colleagues here in Nebraska.

### Oxblood

I squeeze into nine pounds of my dead father's  
Brooks Brothers wingtips,  
heels worn down from running between women.  
Slip on his herringbone suit coat, flash on him  
snapping his fingers, popping his Dentyne,  
swinging along to "The Great Pretender."  
The suit's too big, it can go to Goodwill.  
But they don't make shoes like these anymore.  
The old tin of oxblood I prize open,  
shift to my nose and remember  
all he ever needed was Nat King Cole,  
a slice of phosphorescent moon  
and a blonde in the passenger seat  
down Wainwright Road to the quarry.

*We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2017 by Andy Roberts, "Oxblood," from Atlanta Review, (Vol. XXIV, no. 1, 2017). Poem reprinted by permission of Andy Roberts and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2020 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006.*

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Automatic data processing (abbr.)
  - 4 Preserve
  - 8 Per. mystic
  - 12 Monkey
  - 13 Adjective-forming (suf.)
  - 14 Adept
  - 15 Television channel
  - 16 Athos
  - 18 Love (Lat.)
  - 20 For (Sp.)
  - 21 Urban office holder
  - 23 Peacock blue
  - 25 Water (Sp.)
  - 26 Forbidden
  - 27 Wilt
  - 30 Son of, in Hebrew names
  - 31 Book (Lat.)
  - 32 Tennessee Valley Authority (abbr.)
  - 33 Cyprinoid fish
  - 34 Tough
  - 35 Group
  - 36 Fr. author
  - 37 Speck
  - 38 Arabic (abbr.)
  - 40 Well (Fr.)
  - 41 Husky (2 words)
  - 44 Chatter
  - 47 Hill formed by a glacier
  - 48 Indian nursemaid
  - 49 Jap. fish
  - 50 Tyrol
  - 51 Balto-Slav
  - 52 Hoodwinked
- DOWN**
- 1 Army service number (abbr.)
  - 2 Flat fish
  - 3 Inconsiderable
  - 4 Renaissance garment
  - 5 Rom. pin
  - 6 Anatomical duct
  - 7 BPOE member
  - 8 Archfiend
  - 9 Above (Ger.)
  - 10 Insect
  - 11 Noun-forming (suf.)
  - 17 Husband (Fr.)
  - 19 Extinct bird
  - 21 Nakedwood tree
  - 22 Old
  - 23 Priest (Sp.)
  - 24 Sleeping
  - 26 Batrachian
  - 27 Might
  - 28 With (Fr.)
  - 29 Simpleton
  - 31 City on Tokyo Bay
  - 35 Suggestion
  - 36 Commander at Ticonderoga
  - 37 Affray
  - 38 Russ. inland sea
  - 39 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (abbr.)
  - 40 Neckline shape
  - 41 N.Z. woody vine
  - 42 Wolframite
  - 43 Stain
  - 45 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
  - 46 Invite

### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

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	38	39				40				
41				42	43			44	45	46
47				48				49		
50				51				52		

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## Corner Quote

**“We don’t have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”**

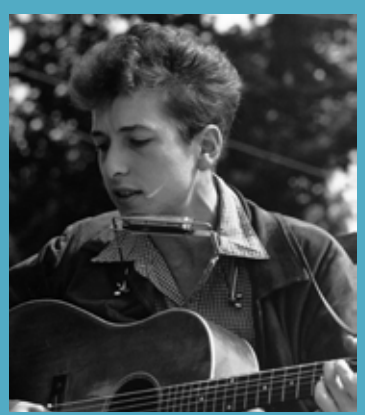
– Howard Zinn

# BIG SKY BEATS

 **“The Times They Are a-Changin’”**  
— Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan wrote “The Times They Are a-Changin’” in fall of 1963 and it was released as the title track of Dylan’s 1964 album of the same name. It was inspired by Irish and Scottish ballads and the theme was a deliberate attempt to create an anthem of change to reflect the civil rights movement. Dylan was once heard telling blues musician Tony Glover, “It seems to be what the people want to hear.”

Less than a month after Dylan recorded the song, President Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated and the following evening Dylan opened a concert with it. According to biographer Anthony Scaduto, Dylan was apprehensive, fearing the poignant messaging of the song would strike the wrong chords and upset the crowd. “Something had just gone haywire in the country and they were applauding the song,” Dylan said of the event. “I couldn’t understand why they were clapping, or why I wrote the song. I couldn’t understand anything. For me, it was just insane.”





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# BACK40

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”

## Fire and the Human Tetherball

BY WILLIE BLAZER

My static line is hooked and I'm standing in the open door, taking in the roar of the plane, the smell of jet fuel. The fire is 1,500 feet below, on a knife ridge in the rugged mountains of northern Montana. I ready myself to jump. As a rookie smokejumper out of the Missoula base, it's my job to parachute into remote terrain where a wildfire is reported. When I hit the ground, I'm a wildland firefighter. I just have to get there.

Exiting the Twin Otter plane, I slice through 30-mph wind in a tight body position – chin down, elbows tucked in, knees and feet together. This is cannonball position.

Falling fast now and counting: 1,000 ... 2,000 ... 3,000 ... 4,000 ... I feel the shock of my canopy fully inflated – no need to open my reserve chute. Check canopy. Damn, the suspension lines are twisted. I reach up to spread the risers apart and kick my feet in a bicycling motion. My lines untwist. It's quiet under a canopy at 1,000 feet, but no time to enjoy it. I have one minute until I hit the ground. I see my jump buddy, veteran Missoula smokejumper Ran Crone, 200 feet below me and quickly realize the raging winds are pushing us in the wrong direction, toward a dreaded snag patch – think old telephone poles with spiked tops.

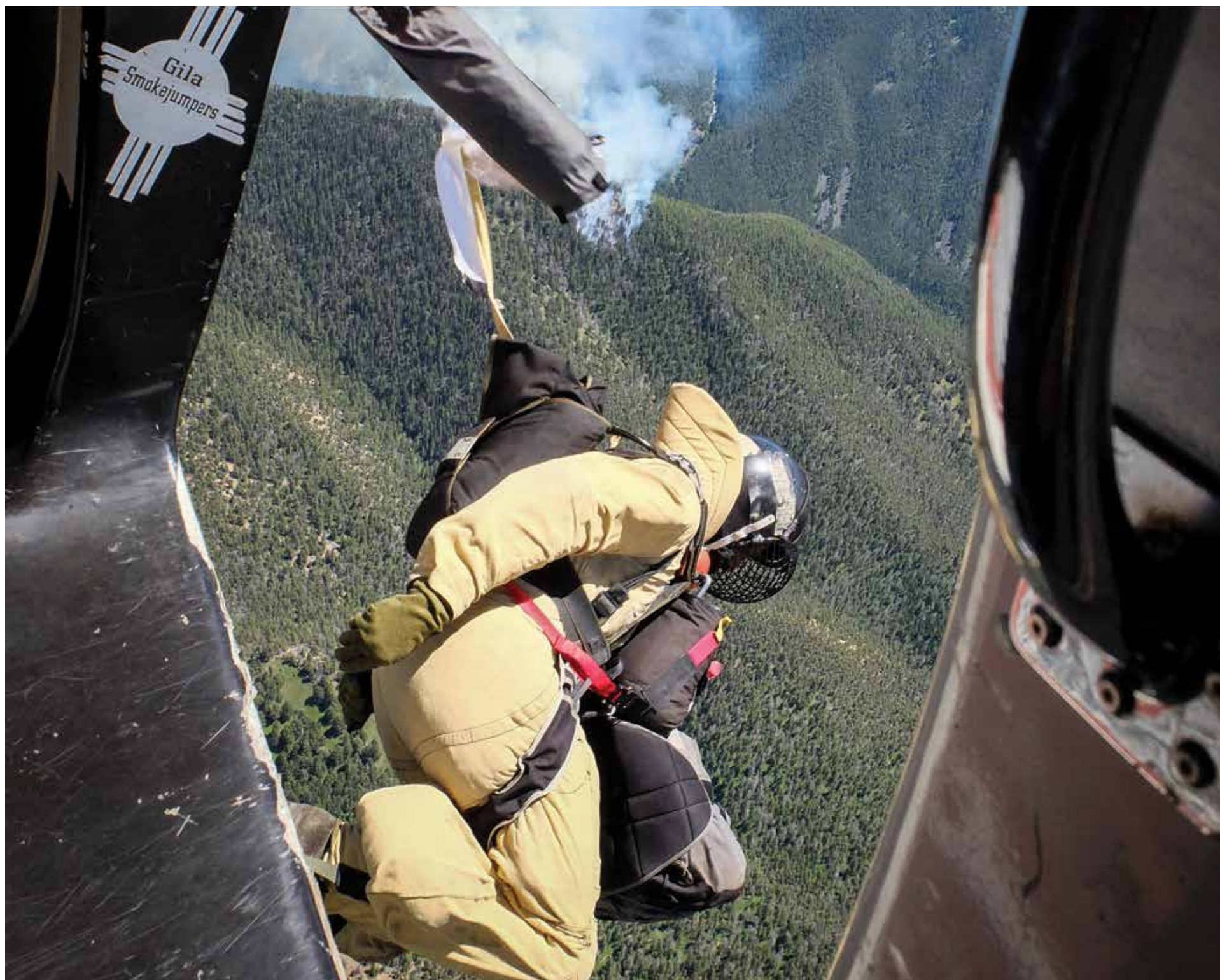
We're at the mercy of the wind, and Ran's heading for a gnarly, 80-foot-tall snag. I see his parachute catch the top of the dead tree. His body starts whipping around the snag like a tetherball, and increasingly faster. I hope the tree won't break on him, as I rapidly descend, preparing for a similar punishment. Jumping from the aircraft isn't the scary part – in smokejumping, it's the landing.

BAM! Feet, head and a couple flips crumple me against a small tree. My chute is hooked in a 20-foot snag but I'm safely on the ground. I dump my gear and radio the plane, then run a quarter-mile through the snag patch to find my buddy high up in the dead tree, completely wrapped in his suspension lines.

Ran says he's OK, and we break up laughing. I radio the aircraft to drop the parachute with climbing spurs in case I need to shimmy up and cut him loose. But after 15 minutes, Ran manages to cut himself from his cocoon and rappel to the ground.

We go to work, gathering our packs, chainsaw and Pulaskis, and head a half-mile along the rocky ridge to the fire. We contain it in short order and prepare for the best part of smokejumping: “para-camping” with cowboy coffee and a can of Spam. We'll think about our five-mile slog out with 100-pound packs in the morning.

*A version of this story first appeared in the summer 2015 edition of Mountain Outlaw Magazine*



A Missoula Smokejumper exits a Douglas DC3 aircraft to respond to rapidly growing wildland fire just west of Paradise Valley with the Absaroka-Beartooth wilderness in the background. PHOTO BY JON MARSHALL





*Shelly Bermont*  
Rare Silver Keshi Pearls, 18kt Gold Beads & Clasp



*J. Bradley Greenwood's*  
Sagamore Entry Table



*Jim Dick, Drama on the Prairie*  
Original Oil, 36 x 36



*Jake Mosher, Milky Way Over Beehive Basin During Summer*  
43x62x2, Matted and Framed

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# THE OPEN ROAD

YOUR NEXT GREATER YELLOWSTONE  
ADVENTURE IS ONLY A DRIVE AWAY



Ah, the open road. As American as apple pie. The notion of taking to it is baked deep into our history, our music, our folklore. To attempt a separation of the open road from the people of this country is practically nonsensical, as overland voyage is as much in our blood as oversea voyage was in that of the pilgrims and immigrants that formed the backbones of what we know today to be the U.S.

In the Greater Yellowstone, a landscape traced by thousands upon thousands of roadways and pavement arteries, the concept is abundantly obvious. For residents of this wonderful region,

what's a five-hour drive, where in certain corners of the country the concept is a headache laying in wait?

Now, the EBS team doesn't have plans to send anyone on a pilgrimage all their own, as there are some incredible summer activities within a relative stone's throw of Big Sky. So, as the battered airline industry regains its footing, we recommend you give this list your consideration.

With that, hit the road.



## Get mobile with Blacksford RV

*Sponsored by Blacksford RV*

No matter where your summer adventures take you, the EBS team recommends putting Blacksford RV at the top of your essentials roster. Based in Bozeman, Blacksford RV offers a pinnacle product in overland travel—brand new Mercedes Sprinters and Winnebago RVs. Every vehicle on Blacksford RV's lineup is the perfect merger of function and fashion, where a beautiful and bespoke experience awaits anyone looking to explore the Greater Yellowstone (and beyond) through one of their rentals. Prices range from \$199-\$399 per day, meaning there's an option for everyone to get in on the action.

New to the area? No problem. Blacksford RV is a leader in the overland adventure industry and can assist in curating your experience with GuidePost by Blacksford, a service that helps connect you with vetted campsites, guides and other hand-picked experiences that will leave you with memories and stories to last a lifetime.

You see, the Blacksford team knows exactly what you need to hit the road in style because the company was built from a place of personal unsavory consumer experience; founder Jonathan Distad struggled to find an RV to rent between Minneapolis and Seattle for a family foray into western Canada, ultimately discovering a culture of nickeling and diming within the industry. Distad, a clear entrepreneur, sought to fix the issue, offering a premium service that begins with a fool-proof digital onboarding and has an RV waiting at the airport upon arrival. With 24-hour roadside assistance, you're never far from help if needed, and as an added bonus, every rental gets a free annual pass to the area's national parks.

Need we say more? Let's ride.

Visit [blacksford.com](http://blacksford.com) for more information.



## Get your cowboy on in Cody, Wyoming

*Sponsored by the Park County Travel Council*

Here in the Greater Yellowstone, the West isn't just a direction. It's our heritage and our soul, and it's something you can feel as soon as you get to Cody, Wyoming, a town that was founded by the world-renowned showman, soldier and frontiersman Buffalo Bill Cody.

Cody has been a home base for epic adventures for over a century; where explorers, trailblazers and outlaws once walked our streets after long days of adventure, you'll now see mountain bikers, kayakers, photographers, historians and hikers strolling through town. That's because not only is there an abundance of beautiful mountains and rivers, but Cody is also nestled next to one of the most scenic places on Earth: Yellowstone National Park.

If you're looking for something a little more relaxing, Cody is a great place to rest your cowboy hat, as it's home to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, which is the most comprehensive Western museum in the region. With five museums, including the Draper Natural History Museum, Buffalo Bill Museum, Plains Indian Museum, Whitney Western Art Museum and Cody Firearms Museum, you'll have plenty to explore. And if you're a history buff, you can also take a tour of Old Trail Town where buildings were brought in from the immediate area, including one building that was the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang's hideout.

Looking for a show that will get your palms sweaty? Saddle up for Cody's nightly rodeo. Officially starting in 1938, the Cody Nite Rodeo is the longest running nightly rodeo in the country and has earned Cody the title of "Rodeo Capital of the World." In fact, the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association has named the Cody Nite Rodeo the "Best Outdoor Rodeo of the Year" multiple times.

With the perfect blend of adventure and Western history, there's no doubt that Cody is home to the Great American Adventure. Find yours this summer.

Visit [codyyellowstone.org](http://codyyellowstone.org) for more information.



# Immerse yourself in the Teton Valley (Tetonia, Driggs & Victor), Idaho

*Sponsored by the Teton Regional Economic Coalition and the Teton Geotourism Center*

To the south of Big Sky, an epic and primordial landscape beckons in southeastern Idaho, chock-full of wildlife, natural splendor and intriguing centers of culture and information. We're talking about the Teton Valley here, people, and there's no place quite like it.

Begin your journey into the Teton Valley at the world's first Geo Center located in Driggs, Idaho, a veritable portal for your journey down the Teton Scenic Byway. The Teton Geotourism Center serves as a worthy and educational introduction to all that awaits you along the byway through interactive exhibits and displays showcasing the area's spectacular resources. The Geotourism Center is also equipped to serve as your resource for trip planning as you navigate your way along the region's beautiful paths and roads. A virtual tour of the center is available at [discovertetonvalley.com/geotourism-center](http://discovertetonvalley.com/geotourism-center)

As for the road itself, the Teton Scenic Byway is a truly epic, gorgeous roadway tucked within the western portion of the magnificent Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This byway will send you on a journey you'll never forget, one that incorporates expansive rolling hills of farmland with the Teton Mountain Range as a backdrop, piquing interest in the natural beauty of the region as you begin your foray into Yellowstone National Park or Jackson, Wyoming, and Grand Teton National Park.

Within spitting distance of some of the area's most popular attractions, taking a stop at the Geo Center and in the charming towns of Tetonia, Driggs and Victor, Idaho, is a no-brainer for any traveler worth their salt. Be sure to build this adventure into any trip to Big Sky this summer.

*Visit [discovertetonvalley.com](http://discovertetonvalley.com) for more information.*



## Reach for the sky with Geyser Whitewater's Yellowstone Aerial Adventures

*Sponsored by Geyser Whitewater's Yellowstone Aerial Adventures*

Wheeeeeee!

That's the sound of the kids (and adults) having the time of their lives on Geyser Whitewater's Yellowstone Aerial Adventures, an immense zipline and high ropes course with four ziplines totaling over 1,200 feet of zipline and 49 challenge elements—that includes spiderwebs, rope bridges, log bridges and much more—located in West Yellowstone, a scenic 45 minute drive south of Big Sky.

The first of its kind in the U.S., challenge-by-choice and completely self-navigated course boasts dozens of interactive features sure to test the courage of the whole family, leaving everyone with exhilarating tales for the car ride back to Big Sky and for friends and family back home.

Imagine this: after a day in Yellowstone National Park, packed with incredible wildlife and landscape spotting, you put the cherry on top with a thrilling adventure high in the sky, complete with stunning and unique views of the surrounding wilderness to round out the adventure. Does it get any better than that?

With options for the kiddos starting at 4 years old and up (along with a Junior Ranger course for people of all ages), there's something for everyone, and believe us when we say that mom and dad might be the members of the family screaming the loudest as they battle the heights and the fast speeds of the ziplines. With that in mind, don't get too bent out of shape if you see the kids get a good laugh out of the sight!

Heights aren't your thing? The facility also boasts the Yellowstone Mining Company—a good time for treasure seekers—along with picnic tables and Adirondack chairs for lounging in style.

Don't miss out on this national one-of-a-kind experience, sure to complete any trip to America's first national park. Make your reservation today for the best deal on whitewater rafting and zipline packages.

*Visit [yellowstoneparkzipline.com](http://yellowstoneparkzipline.com) for more information.*





## Master the art of 3mph on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River

*Sponsored by Boundary Expeditions*

Focused on providing safe, exceptional quality river trips, Boundary Expeditions is an industry leader for river guiding on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho, one of the most wild, pristine and coveted waterways in the Lower 48. This 104-mile stretch of waterway is free of dams, motors and cell service and lies in the heart of Idaho's Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

From May to October, Boundary Expeditions provides 5-night-6-day Middle Fork rafting trips ranging from 75-100 miles per trip. While there are slower moments, where the company's three pillars—adventure, conservation and education—are explored through amazing connections and discussion with staff and guests alike, adults and youth will enjoy the thrilling Class III-plus whitewater rafting that will have you recounting stories from your trip for years.

In addition to the whitewater rafting, guests will also be treated to gorgeous hiking, world-class fishing, a uniquely tailored camping experience, delicious cuisine and the highest level of service from Boundary's professional guides and staff. The outfit's multi-day trips come complete with camping equipment, a flight into Indian Creek (if required) and plenty of opportunity to enjoy spectacular scenery, wildlife and time to immerse yourself in "river time" at 3mph. No worries, it's all been handled for you.

From the moment you arrive on a Boundary Expeditions journey, you become a part of their tight-knit, well-trained staff family, and the company's chief goal is to show each guest incredible service and an unforgettable river experience that will keep you coming back for years to come.

Limited spaces for August are available, act fast!

[boundaryexpeditions.com](http://boundaryexpeditions.com)

## Enjoy a soak and midweek retreat at Chico Hot Springs

*Sponsored by Chico Hot Springs*

Nestled in the beautiful Paradise Valley in southcentral Montana, only a hop, skip, and a jump from the Yellowstone River and Yellowstone National Park, oh and not to mention the greater than 10,000-foot Emigrant Peak that overlooks it, Chico Hot Springs has welcomed weary travelers, starry-eyed lovers and individuals looking to explore the mountainous landscape of the West for over 120 years. Need we say more?

What began in 1900 as a humble hotel with the additional draw of soaking in the soothing, natural mineral hot springs; Chico has morphed and even changed hands a time or two, into an 800-acre world-class resort and day spa.

A wealth of offerings can be found in the immediate area as well as on site at Chico Hot Springs, including fly-fishing, exquisite meals and the opportunity to dance the night away. Chico offers a wide array of lodging opportunities from cabin stays to top of the line rooms.

What better time than following an extended, mandatory period stuck inside your own home to book the staycation or vacation of your dreams. Chico Hot Springs is currently accepting reservations for midweek stays after fully booking weekends for the summer season. As an added bonus this season, only guests that book a room are able to soak in the pristine hot springs, meaning more space for you to relax and unwind.

You don't want to miss out on this opportunity. *Visit [chicohotsprings.com](http://chicohotsprings.com) and book your Chico stay today, you can thank us later.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHICO HOT SPRINGS



# Recreate in scenic West Yellowstone, Montana

Sponsored by Destination Yellowstone

Yellowstone National Park is the eldest of all the national parks in the United States. Of the five entrances to the historic park, West Yellowstone, Montana is the closest of them all to the majestic Old Faithful geyser as well as the mesmerizing Grand Prismatic thermal pool.

Looking for something to do in town? Good news: You can witness the majestic animals of the park minutes from where you're staying. The Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center, located on the southern end of West Yellowstone's main strip, recently welcomed two grizzly cubs and four wolf pups.

If it's fishing or boating you seek, West Yellowstone is the place for you. With the Madison and Gallatin rivers within spitting distance, it's a trout anglers' paradise. While there, why not rent a boat or kayak from the local marinas and troll on Hebgen and Quake lakes?

After a day on the water you can visit Yellowstone Aerials to get your adrenaline rush. Work your way through ropes courses or take a ride on their ziplines.

Seek solitude in the comfort of the surrounding wilderness on hundreds of miles of ATV, mountain biking and hiking trails.

Immerse yourself in the rich history of the area at The Museum of the Yellowstone. Continue your educational experience by taking a self-guided tour to learn about the catastrophic earthquake of 1959.

Come one, come all; there's lodging to fit the needs of every family. From RV parks to hotels and cabins, and even camping, you can hand select a stay all your own.

Visit [destinationyellowstone.com](http://destinationyellowstone.com) for more information.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DESTINATION YELLOWSTONE



PHOTO COURTESY OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



PHOTO BY JON CRACROFT

## Visit a Dude Ranch

Sponsored by the Dude Ranchers' Association



PHOTO COURTESY OF JJJ WILDERNESS RANCH

Is there really any better way to experience the West than on horseback? We'll wait... but in our opinion, the answer is simple: no there isn't! Get your boots on and saddle up cowboys and cowgirls, because no matter where you are in Montana or the western United States, there's a dude ranch nearby, ready to provide you with an authentic Western vacation experience, complete with a cowboy hat.

Since 1926 the Dude Ranchers' Association has been assisting adventure seekers looking for the ride of their lives. Their website is a database of all registered member dude ranches in the U.S., helping pair you with a ranch that fits your ideal experience. While on their website or speaking with them on the phone, they can even provide you with safety procedures and updates from the ranch of your choosing.

The DRA's goal is to preserve the Western "cowboy" lifestyle that many of us have emulated at some point in our childhood. Why wait? Now is your chance to slow down and indulge, while taking a ride through the Rocky Mountain West and experiencing the cowboy way firsthand!

Giddy up and get yourself on down to check out a dude ranch near you! And don't forget if you have any questions, the DRA is there for you.

Visit [duderranch.org](http://duderranch.org) for more information and to schedule your trip today!



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAINBOW TROUT RANCH



PHOTO COURTESY OF BAR W GUEST RANCH



## Explore Ashton and Island Park, Idaho

*Paid for in part by a grant from Idaho Tourism*

Looking for somewhere to stay in close proximity to Yellowstone National Park? Look no further than Eastern Idaho's Yellowstone Teton Territory. A stay in Ashton or Island Park, Idaho will not only put you at the doorstep to America's oldest national park, but Grand Teton National Park is right down the road, too.

In the time that you don't spend immersing yourself in the wonders of both national parks, there's plenty more to do in the Yellowstone Teton Territory. Rent a side-by-side ATV to create your own adventure in Island Park, or simply take a drive to admire the breathtaking Mesa Falls.

Don't forget the fishing! With renowned trout waters in any direction, both Ashton and Island Park are the ideal place for an angler to wade on in. Teton, Fall, Henry's Fork, and Warm rivers await you and your party. Book your stay with Three River's Ranch and their experienced guides will put you on the fish, ensuring you'll be set no matter which fly is hatching during your visit, all you have to do is set the hook.

Lakeside Lodge, located in Island Park, features live music every Friday and is situated on the banks of the Island Park Reservoir so you can end your day listening to the calming waves lapping on the shoreline.

Want some entertainment after a long day? Island Park's Yellowstone Playhouse features fun for the entire family.

Searching for some grub? The Frostop has been serving up warm meals in Ashton for more than 55 years. Although if you're looking for a challenge, why not take on the colossal burgers from Big Jud's?

*Visit [yellowstoneteton.org](http://yellowstoneteton.org) for lodging, and more information and to see what you've been missing.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF YELLOWSTONE TETON TERRITORY

## Stay and play in Livingston, Montana

*Sponsored by the Livingston Chamber of Commerce and TBID*

No matter the season, Livingston, Montana has something for everyone. Stay in one of the eight hotels located throughout the town, offering unique experiences to fit everyone's style of home away from home accommodations. Don't worry, for those looking to immerse themselves in Mother Nature, there are ample camping opportunities in the immediate area as well.

From fly-fishing or river rafting on the Yellowstone River, golfing at the scenic Livingston Golf Course, and hiking any one of the numerous trails to be found in the area in the spring and summer to hunting in the fall and finally, cross-country and downhill skiing or snowboarding in the winter months, there really is something to suit the whole family's fancy. Oh, and lest we forget that Yellowstone National Park is located nearby, calling your name for a visit.

If it's an informative experience you're after, this small town has you covered; Livingston is home to three museums and theaters for you to explore. Looking for something a little more upbeat? Livingston has the tune for you, why not stop by one of the many live music opportunities that the town has to offer for your viewing pleasure. End your day with an exquisite meal at one of the many local restaurants, but be warned, they'll leave you pleading for more.

Whether it's work or travel, anytime of the year, Livingston has something for everyone.

*Visit [VisitLivingstonmt.com](http://VisitLivingstonmt.com) for more information and to prepare your trip today.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIVINGSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TBID







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