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Big Sky

June 5 - 18, 2020
Volume 11 // Issue #12

**Gateway towns prep for
Yellowstone reopening**

*Bozemanites protest
racial inequality*

**Wind and the Willows
release new album**

Farmers markets back in action

South Dakota PBR hosting spectators



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June 5 - 18, 2020

Volume 11, Issue No. 12

Owned and published in Big Sky, Montana

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ON THE COVER:

Cameron Pecunies takes some early season cuts with his driver on the Big Sky Resort golf course. The course opened for the season on May 22. PHOTO BY DAVE PECUNIES, COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPINION.....	4	ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT.....	23
LOCAL NEWS BRIEFS.....	6	BUSINESS.....	33
LOCAL.....	8	HEALTH.....	36
OBITUARY.....	14	SPORTS.....	38
OP NEWS.....	15	DINING.....	42
ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS.....	17	FUN.....	45

8

Gateway towns prep for Yellowstone reopening

As Gov. Steve Bullock opens Montana entrances, Yellowstone gateway communities and health officials are preparing for an influx of out-of-state visitors and the unknowns that COVID-19 brings to the tourism industry.

10

Bozemanites protest racial inequality

Large crowds took to the streets of Bozeman on May 31 in an expression of solidarity for racial equality following the alleged murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police on May 25.

23

Wind and the Willows release new album

Bozeman based band Wind and the Willows pushed the envelope on their second album, working with new sounds and stories to compile "Ode to Shady Grove."

33

Farmers markets back in action

The farmers market is a memory seared into many of our minds. With a few minor alterations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these summer staples will resume in southwest Montana this summer.

38

South Dakota PBR hosting spectators

With three closed-to-spectator events under their belt and another month of the same ahead, PBR is preparing to welcome the return of fans July 10-12 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Opening Shot



Essentially we are all essential: The Historic Madison Hotel in West Yellowstone communicates a heartfelt community message on the park's opening day on June 1. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

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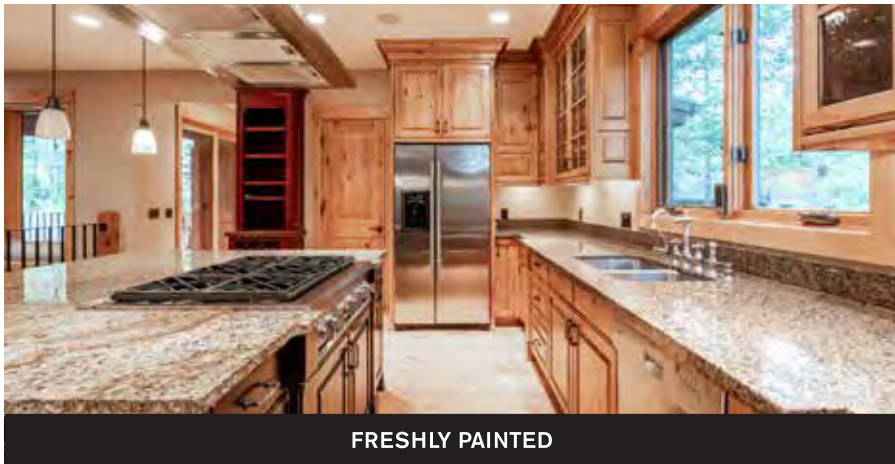
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LETTERS

Mud season: Our epic misnomer

BY BOB HALL

Hmmm, “mud season”: the term doesn’t exactly invoke budding wild flowers, green fields and dry hiking trails. Nope, I learned during my first late April and May in Big Sky that it’s actually a unique time to be here. What to do in a day isn’t always obvious and, yes, the weather moves quickly but in many ways it is Big Sky at its finest. In fact, mud season might be one of the great marketing misnomers in Big Sky history.

First of all, it really doesn’t seem that muddy to me (my thinking is the snow actually evaporates). One day there’s a rock in your yard, perhaps a tree well and suddenly the snow is gone, hardly leaving a trace of mud! As the sound of your snow tires’ studs hitting the road suddenly feels out of place, the snow quietly becomes a fading memory. Hide the shovels and the checkbook: you’re probably done paying plow bills. Whoops, here comes a Memorial Day storm, laying down three inches fresh, but it will be gone within hours.

I took a startling drive early last week; our yard was still full of snow and there were plenty of plow drifts on the side of the driveway. As I entered the meadow, it seemed a lot greener than yesterday, there were kids in shorts on bikes and the sun actually felt warm. Magically, it had gone from winter to spring. Working my way north through the canyon accompanied by the roaring Gallatin, I saw a few intrepid kayakers navigating House Rock. When I received a cell signal again, the fields were green and there were blossoms, yes leaves on the trees. “Wow, it’s friggin’ summer down here,” I thought. “Three seasons in 45 minutes!”

Having said all of that, there certainly is snow in the high country. Who knew that walking up a hill on skins could actually be fun. Well the truth is, it’s not fun but it makes you feel like you are capturing what brought us out here in the first place and, hey, you’ve earned an extra slice while bingeing on Schitt’s Creek. I’ve found that equipment makes a difference (buy touring boots!) and it is damned satisfying to look down to where you booted up.

The ride down, well, it depends. You might get that hour window of corn snow, perhaps a bit of glue, or if you’re really lucky, your best run of the year! How about the people’s land, the Big Sky Golf Course? How awesome is it that until Memorial Day it’s everyone’s to use and as they see fit? Yes, there are the dedicated golfers lugging a pull cart or slinging a bag over their shoulder. You can even watch kids building sand castles in the traps. It’s a great place to push a stroller and see how far can you send that frisbee for the 10 Labs on the course to fetch. This is a wonderful gift the resort gives its residents to get the feel of spring firsthand.

Yes, there are the early season hikes on Storm Castle or Porcupine Creek, and they may or may not be muddy. Nymphing the upper Madison can be very productive, but damn, why won’t they hit the million caddis that are on the surface?

Well, with all of these proper social distancing activities, perhaps what we really have is an embarrassment of riches. It is to the point where you can’t put all of your activities on your Instagram account (you’ll lose all of your quarantined friends back East). Yep, we have all this great stuff during a season known for nothing but mud!

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The BSOA recently submitted a letter requesting an egress (evacuation) plan for Big Sky. Is emergency evacuation something of concern to you with Big Sky's limited egress route capacity? Why or why not?



Scott Nuthak
Butte, Montana

"I mean there's a large volume of people that live up the canyon obviously and depending on what time of year it is, that's going to be a hell of a lot of people scrambling to get out. But I don't know, I guess if...everybody was not lollygagging and everybody was just streaming...I don't know if it could all be that free and that smooth or not. [It's] hard to say I guess really."



Brent Ralston
Boise, Idaho

"It surprised us that there's a large development here that only has one ingress, egress point. I think more access in here is probably a good idea. You can imagine if there's a fire in here somewhere, the thought is that it would start up on the mountain and come down and people would get out, but what if it started in the canyon, then everybody up here is stuck."



Julie Blakeley
Big Sky, Montana

"It would be great otherwise it'll be a cluster when they try and leave all at once down one road. Especially if there's a fire in the canyon, I always worry about that."



Matt Allain
Bozeman, Montana

"Yes, the fire danger seems to be the biggest thing on a hot, dry August. Something happens, how do you get out, Jack Creek? If there's emergencies and the canyon is shut down you have to go completely around, right?"



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Variable messaging signs proposed at Canyon entrances

EBS STAFF

GALLATIN COUNTY – Two variable messaging signs were proposed to be located at each entrance of the Gallatin Canyon along U.S. Highway 191 by the Montana Department of Transportation on May 22. The signs would display text, conveying messages to alert travelers of any traffic hazards within the Canyon. Public comment has been welcomed since the day that the proposal was announced.

“The primary driver and force on this particular project is because of the long stretch of roadway and if an incident does occur, in the Canyon, our intent is to notify the public that there is something in the Canyon that could disrupt the traffic flow,” said MDT project design engineer Michael Grover.

Grover estimates the total project cost to be around \$500,000, dependent on construction costs at the time of the bidding process, with construction slated to begin in 2021. Two right of ways will need to be constructed as well as rerouting available utilities to power the signs. Grover believes the project would be completed in one season as long as weather doesn't delay construction.

Big Sky Resort to expand summer operations July 1

BIG SKY RESORT

BIG SKY – On July 1, Big Sky Resort will expand summer operations in Mountain Village, continuing on its phased reopening plan.

“As the State of Montana moves into Phase 2 of its reopening plan, Big Sky Resort is planning for our second phase of summer operations,” said Troy Nedved, general manager of Big Sky Resort. “We are looking forward to sharing the natural beauty and recreational assets of our mountain town with guests, while simultaneously keeping social distancing and sanitation top of mind.”

Summit Hotel, Village Center and Shoshone Condominiums in Mountain Village will welcome guests starting July 1. In addition to Vista Hall, dining options will be expanded to include Westward Social and Peaks Chophouse. Each restaurant will offer take-out options and limited outdoor seating.

Basecamp activities will also begin July 1, allowing guests to book private zipline tours, guided hikes or head to the summit of Lone Peak for stunning views on the Lone Peak Expedition. All activities are bookable online and offered to private groups only to encourage social distancing.

Many operational protocols will be in place for the health and safety of our guests, team members, and community. All guests are encouraged to read Big Sky Resort's safety practices and summer reopening plan before their trip.

Fall River Annual Meeting Goes Virtual

FALL RIVER RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ASHTON, IDAHO — Fall River Electric Cooperative's annual meeting for owner-members will be held June 13 at 1 p.m. This first-ever virtual meeting, a precautionary measure as a result of COVID-19, will include the election results for the Co-op's board, changes in the bylaws and an advisory vote on a future proposal concerning board candidate voting.

Additionally, Bryan Case, Fall River Electric's CEO/General Manager along with the board's President Doug Schmier and Mike Burton of the accounting firm of DeCoria & Company will provide members with vital information. Over thirty scholarships to children of members of Fall River that intend to continue their education beyond high school will also be presented as part of this year's virtual meeting. To view this year's meeting, owner-members should watch via the internet at www.fallriverelectric.com.

A field of seven candidates for the Fall River Electric Board of Directors fill a ballot which was mailed to all owner-members late in May. This field of candidates includes three current board members seeking re-election and four new candidates vying for the three board positions. The top vote-getter representing each district will win a three-year seat on the board.

Co-op members can vote online or by mail-in ballot until 12 p.m. on June 10 or can vote in-person from 8 to 10 a.m. on June 13. Voting in-person will be done at each of Fall River's office locations in Ashton, Driggs and West Yellowstone. To ensure the safety of electric members and Fall River's staff, the in-person voting will be done as members remain in their vehicles.

New initiative unlocks long-term housing for local workforce

LANDING LANDS

In partnership with Landing Locals, Landing Lands is excited to announce the Big Sky Rent Local initiative, an innovative way to unlock more long-term housing for the community's local workforce. In 2019, Colin and Kai Frolich started Landing to tackle the housing issues facing vacation towns head-on, a program that has taken off in the Lake Tahoe area, unlocking over 30 new rentals for 75 locals in under a year. Landing is happy to announce their expansion into Big Sky in partnership with the Big Sky Community Housing Trust.

The Big Sky Community Housing Trust works to secure long-term housing for the local workforce and in 2017, in partnership with over 20 other stakeholder organizations, they developed the Big Sky Housing Action Plan and identified the need to create at least 500 housing units for local workers by 2023. Currently, more than half the Big Sky workforce commutes nearly an hour each way from Bozeman, with the majority preferring to live locally. As the Big Sky short-term vacation rental properties have seen explosive growth, long-term rental opportunities for local workers have diminished and rental prices have soared. Landing creates a platform from which potential tenants can search and find long term rental options from unit owners who advertise vacancies.

“We saw an immediate mission alignment between Landing and BSCHT,” said Laura Seyfang, executive director of BSCHT. “We are excited to bring this technology solution to Big Sky to unlock new affordable housing to create a more stable local workforce.”

For questions, contact the Big Sky Housing Trust at info@bigskyhousingtrust.com

2020 Primary Election Results

GALLATIN COUNTY – While voters weren't able to vote at traditional polling places this year, ballots for the 2020 primary election were due at one of the 13 drop off locations around the county until 8 p.m. Results are accurate as of 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 3 when EBS went to print. Final results can be found at ebs.com.

Presidential Candidates

Democrat
Joseph R. Biden 70%

Republican
Donald J Trump 92%
Incumbent

U.S. Senator

Democrat
Steve Bullock 96%

Republican
Steve Daines 88%

Green
Dennis Daneke 26%
Wendie Fredrickson 74%

U.S. Representative

Democrat
Kathleen Williams 89%
Tom Winter 11%

Republican
Matt Rosendale 43%
Corey Stapleton 38%

Green
John Gibney 100%

Governor
Democrat
Mike Cooney 47%
Whitney Williams 53%

Republican

Greg Gianforte 61%
Tom Fox 26%

Green

Robert Barb 100%

Secretary of State

Democrat
Bryce Bennett 100%

Republican
Scott Sales 53%
Christi Jacobsen 22%

Attorney General

Democrat
Raph Graybill 55%
Kimberly P. Dudik 45%

Republican
Austin Knudsen 63%
Jon Bennion 37%

Green
Roy Davis 100%

State Auditor
Democrat
Shane A Morigeau 61%
Mike Windsor 39%

Republican

Troy Downing 45%
Scott “Tux” Tuxbury 33%
Nelly Nicol 22%

Gallatin County 911 Mill Levy

For 54%
Against 46%

Search and rescue mill levy

For 63%
Against 37%

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How COVID-19 is grounding Montana's toughest communities

BY MIRA BRODY

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK – Through some of the harshest conditions in the lower 48, the Yellowstone bison herd has thrived since prehistory, outdating Lewis and Clark, Christopher Columbus, even the Ice Age. A similar resilience applies to the Montana communities—Cooke City, Gardiner and West Yellowstone—that serve as gateways to the nation's first national park, which attracts over 4 million visitors a year.

The challenge this year, however, is not due to extreme weather or time. To blame is the same enigmatic virus that has crippled well-resourced cities, precipitated the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression, and claimed the lives of over 100,000 Americans to date.

Recreationists across the country, motivated by the same urge to escape as the rest of us, are seeking solitude in open spaces. In late April, Gov. Steve Bullock cited that Montana has seen the lowest number of COVID-19 cases per capita in the country, a statistic he credits to swift action in issuing stay-at-home orders in March, before even much higher-populated states chose to do so.

Until recently, the state has witnessed a lapse in new cases, minimal community spread and been told by health officials that Montanans have “done our part” to flatten the curve. As of June 3, however, Gallatin County has five new cases, two confirmed in the West Yellowstone community and all discovered in the past week.

Wyoming's South and Southeast entrances of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks opened May 18 to a flood of visitors bearing a wide variety of license plates. Even with only the two Wyoming entrances accessible, visitation through the East and South entrances on Memorial Day weekend were 97 percent of normal with a total of 4,686 vehicles entering the park, according to a May 26 National Park Service statement.

Bullock announced at a May 28 press conference that he was working with park Superintendent Cam Sholly to reopen the North, Northeast and West entrances to the park on June 1, the same day the state's 14-day travel quarantine expired. Now, health officials are scrambling to prepare as people from across the country pack their camping gear, fill their gas tanks and head to the mountains.

“What if people look at a map and see that Montana has the lowest number of cases per capita in the country? What if they come and start to get people really sick?” said Buck Taylor, director at Community Health Partners, West Yellowstone's only medical facility. “We may be asked to care for a lot of people and there's just not that capacity. There's no hospital, it's just a small primary care clinic.”

In a typical season, CHP and the Hebgen Basin Fire District, the only EMS provider in the south end of Gallatin County, triages a variety of ailments, ranging from altitude sickness, trauma, car accidents, dehydration and an occasional heart attack. Call volume at the fire department increases by 200 percent in the summer from shoulder season.

Taylor said that, hypothetically, if three patients walked into their office needing immediate assistance within the same hour that CHP staff would be “very, very busy.” When necessary, CHP will send patients to the medical center in Big Sky or to neighboring hospitals in Rexburg or Idaho Falls.

Preparing for the unknown

COVID-19 adds another complicating factor to patient intake during busy summer months.

“This year what is challenging is now we don't know if those folks have altitude sickness, COVID, or both, and trying to determine that is difficult without point-of-care testing,” Taylor said. “We have to treat everyone with these symptoms as positive whether or not they are until we know otherwise.”

To prepare, CHP, Hebgen Basin Fire District, the Gallatin City-County Health Department and Medcor, which operates three urgent care clinics within the park boundary, have divvied up a long list of to-dos.

CHP is adapting its single clinic in order to maintain separation between COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 intakes, and is establishing a triage center much like the one Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital implemented back in March. Gallatin County's health department is ensuring it receives a shipment of PPE and is seeking out ways to ramp up testing capacity as well as contact tracing.

Hebgen Basin District Fire Chief Shane Grube, who has taken up COVID-mitigation leadership in West Yellowstone, said CHP has committed to increase its ability to test and triage patients.

“One of the things that we foresee is an outbreak in the tight quarters of employee housing,” Grube said. “We want to be ready to test those folks and support them in quarantine if needed.”

At the Park County Health Department, bordering Yellowstone's North Entrance, Director Julie Anderson said her team is also on track to increase testing abilities, ensuring residents and business owners are prioritized, and have secured quarantine facilities generously provided by the Super 8 and Country Motor Inn.

Additionally, the new Livingston HealthCare campus, a Billings Clinic affiliate, offers a wide range of nearby services including emergency and urgent care departments.

“It's safe to say we'll see cases [in West Yellowstone] and they'll be travel related,” said GCCHD Health Officer Matt Kelley. “That's definitely a concern, and more of a concern if we start seeing community spread as a result of that, within the workforce, within the community ... That's when you really see higher numbers and that's what we're trying prevent.”

Funding outbreak preparations

As the federal government opens the parks, it has not yet committed aid necessary for these gateways to support the fallout that a COVID-19 outbreak would bring to a community with limited emergency services. This has left health officials with another critical task on top of keeping their community safe: finding the funding to do so.

When asked where a seasonal town of 1,300 people such as West Yellowstone seeks funding to prepare for a global pandemic, Kelley responded with a dry laugh. “You tell me,” he said.

In mid-May, Kelley said he sent a proposal to the governor's office and remains optimistic, noting that he had also been in communications with FEMA and that reimbursements from them were another possible avenue of funding. Although no one could confirm an exact amount, after hotels, tests and the staffing necessary to triage and treat patients, the estimated cost could reach “several, several hundred thousand dollars,” Hebgen's Grube said.

Park amenities contracted by Xanterra and Delaware North, as well as NPS campsites won't open until later in the summer, meaning visitors will rely solely on gateway towns to shop, eat and lodge. If a single, infected person visits the park then travels to Gardiner, West Yellowstone or Cooke City to grab a burger or stay the night, they put the residents of that town at risk.

“People's behaviors are not changing,” said Director of the Livingston Chamber of Commerce Leslie Figel. She experienced groups of visitors frustrated that the North Entrance was not yet open. “I'm astonished about the amount of people we've seen in the last five days. How are we going to handle the people who are going to get angry when they don't get what they want and still be a place people want to visit? It's going to be a different day and age of travel.”



After an early morning rush, the West entrance, historically one of Yellowstone's busiest gateways, remained quiet on opening day. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



Lea Anne Reinsch was selling masks on June 1 in front of the Book Peddler. All proceeds go to the Madison Valley Hospital Foundation and masks can be purchased on Reinsch's Facebook page. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

Figel says Livingston, a town of 7,044 that has survived on tourism since the Northern Pacific Railway laid track in the late 1800s, is a tight-knit community and that despite uncertainties, business owners are prepared, as they always are, to host the annual rush of visitors.

Although the health of their community is of concern, it's not the only thing on business owners' minds.

A town born from tourism

It's opening day at the West Entrance of Yellowstone National Park, the first day of Gov. Steve Bullock's Phase 2 economic reopening plan and the end of the statewide 14-day quarantine mandate, but you wouldn't think it from West Yellowstone's activity.

The streets of the park's busiest gateway are quiet for June, when they'd usually be bustling with the tourism that keeps them afloat. Many stores, usually open in mid-April or early May, still bare their "closed for winter" signage and those that are open have COVID-19-related verbiage, instructing people to sanitize upon entry and remain 6 feet apart while shopping. There's no need—there are but two or three small groups of visitors, some with masks draped loose around their necks, filtering in and out of the otherwise empty streets.

"It wasn't as robust as past years but the fact that we had an opening day on June 1 is really encouraging," said Katrina Wiese, president of the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce, of opening day traffic. "I think we all kind of expected a slower season."

She says a variety of factors, including that tour buses were not included in the park's first phase of reopening, contributed but that they have already seen reservations increase since the governor's announcement.

"Our town is 100 percent tourism based; the community is extremely dependent on it," Wiese said. "I know a lot of businesses have put a lot of money into reopening safely for both visitors and residents."

Wiese said the threat of a coronavirus flare-up remains part of the conversation. "I think it's probably on everyone's minds, but our town and emergency medical services have been outstanding to work with to prepare our visitors and residents."

According to a survey of 440 respondents conducted in early May by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana, 44 percent of business owners said they have six months or less to survive if the current conditions continued.

Statewide, this will cost 1,575 full-time jobs, 779 part-time jobs and 1,904 seasonal jobs that are typically filled in the summer. Massive

cutbacks, limiting inventory and bracing for the long haul are how these gateways, many of which provide tourist tax revenue directly to the state, have been instructed to survive.

Businesses can also apply for funds through the Montana Business Adaptation Grant Program to receive up to \$5,000 in reimbursements for any costs associated with keeping themselves and their employees safe and their business in line with state sanitation guidelines.

"A grant is always good, a loan is always bad. That puts us behind and we're already starting out behind," said Randa Hulett, who purchased Seldom Seen Knives and Gifts in 2000 with her husband, Stephen. They have been residents of West Yellowstone since 1972. "I haven't seen anything like this since the fire of '88 ... and maybe the day after 9/11."

The Eagle's Store has graced the corner of North Canyon Street and Yellowstone Avenue since 1908 and was open for business, but its signature soda fountain remained in shadow, the colorful tile bar roped off to imploring visitors.

"Basically without tourism we don't eat. If the park didn't open this year everyone in this town would be on welfare. Families would be hit the hardest," said a store employee who goes by Tony. Tony has been in West Yellowstone for 27 years, working in various local businesses, and has seen it all, except this.

"I've never seen anything like this," he said. "I've seen fire and stuff but those go away. Nothing like this virus."

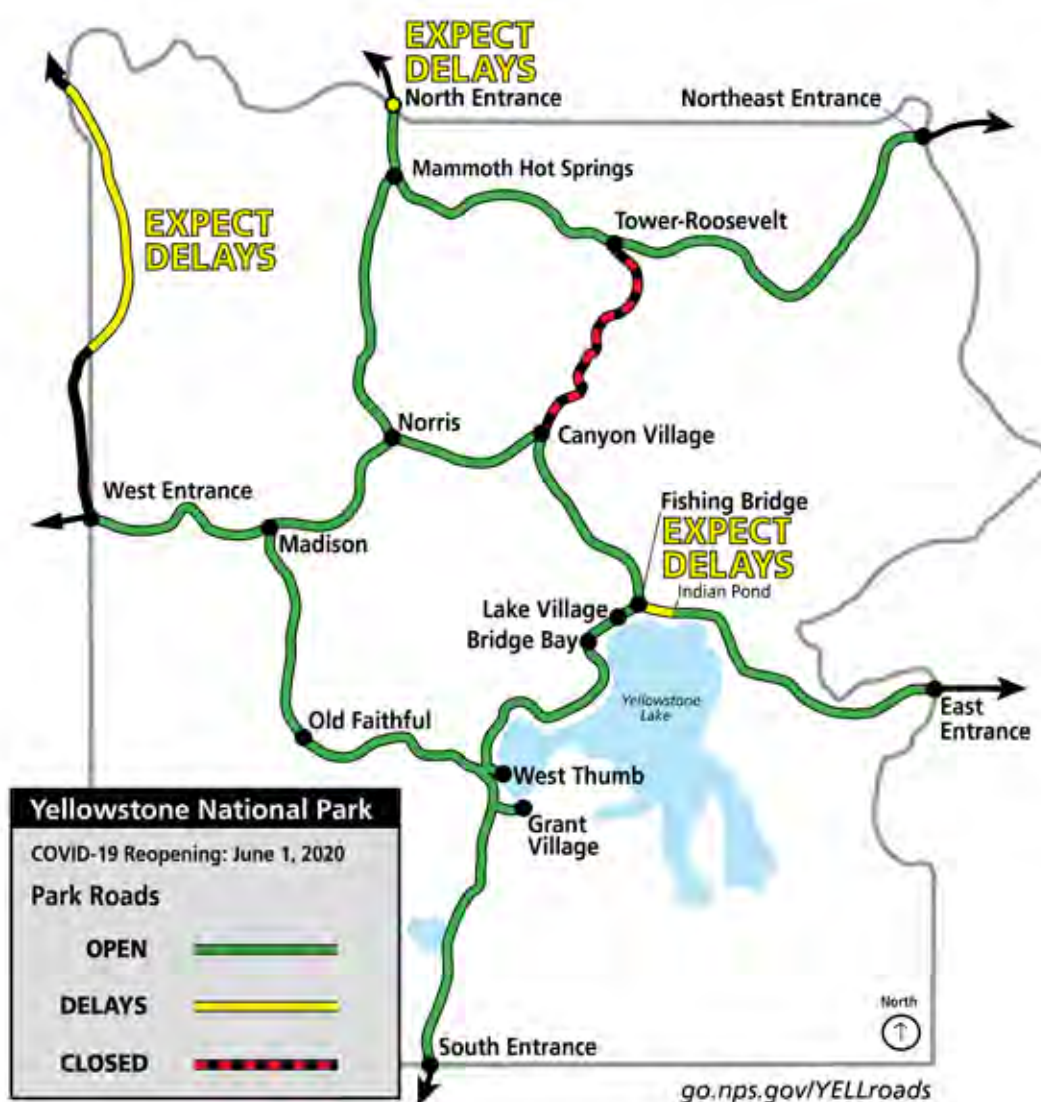
In front of the Book Peddler, Lea Anne Reinsch sits at a small table beside a stuffed otter—both wear colorful, homemade masks. Reinsch is a resident of Ennis, but her family has owned the plaza building behind her for 35 years.

Two months ago Reinsch had no idea how to sew but decided to purchase a sewing machine and teach herself how to make masks with adjustable ties and filter pockets. She donates proceeds to the Madison Valley Hospital Foundation in Ennis. Even after the pandemic, she says there are plenty of uses for masks, including wind and dust storm protection or while dirt biking of four-wheeling.

"It's going to be a very strange year," Hulett said, walking behind the counter of Seldom Seen.

In the 10 minutes we've been chatting, only one other person has walked by the store window outside. Hulett says, like many, she won't know how deep the cut will be until October when the businesses of West Yellowstone balance their books for the season.

"We just have to hang in there and see, that's all you can do," she said. "Usually people are complaining about the tourists ... I don't think you'll hear them complaining this year."



Bozemanites rally, protest racial inequality

BY BELLA BUTLER

BOZEMAN – Large crowds took to the streets of Bozeman on May 31 joining Missoula, Billings, Great Falls, Helena and other cities nationwide in an expression of solidarity for racial equality following the alleged murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota by white Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. Chauvin faces charges of third-degree murder and manslaughter.

The rally, which was organized by Montana State University's Black Student Union and Montana Racial Equity Project, began in Bogert Park where a masked audience filled the lawn. According to the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, roughly 2,000 people were in attendance. A handful of speakers opened the rally by discussing white privilege, allyship—the process of seeking to understand marginalized groups—and what it means to be a person of color living in Montana. One woman shared her personal story of growing up as a Native American in the state and how she felt forced to “kill the Indian” and assimilate into white culture.

“I cannot say that I know what better is, but I know this isn't it,” she said to roaring applause. “This isn't the American Dream because so many of us have only lived in its nightmare. It's time to wake up.”

From Bogert, rally organizers led protesters in a march down Main Street to the Gallatin County Courthouse, chanting phrases like “No justice, no peace,” “Black lives matter” and “Say their names,” a reference to Floyd and other individuals alleged to have been murdered by police.

Organizers asked that protesters avoid speaking to or arguing with police and focus rather on “solidarity and taking a stand.” As the march flooded the downtown sidewalks, cars passing by responded to chants with honking, symbolic fists and peace signs thrust out of windows and the occasional black exhaust emitted from revving diesel engines.

At the courthouse, more speakers shared personal anecdotes and calls to action. Judith Heilman, the executive director and founder of Montana Racial Equity Project, imparted her perspective as a former black California policewoman. “There are so many people that think that racism, bigotry and prejudice does not exist in Bozeman, does not exist in Montana, and if black people and Native people would just stop talking about it, it would just go away,” she said, later calling that belief false.

“Living as a black man in Bozeman ... people need to know that black lives matter,” said Edwin Allan, a graduate student at MSU and a rally attendee. Originally from West Africa, Allan said he has experienced instances on campus where people were visibly afraid of him, something he never witnessed in West Africa.

“When I saw the video of George Floyd being strangled, I'm like ‘Doesn't the policeman realize he can't breathe?’” Allan said. “People need to realize we are humans and we bleed. We need oxygen, we need everything all other humans need, so this is to create that awareness that we are humans, too, and it's really, really important for Bozeman.”

Some protesters called the event “necessary” for the Bozeman community. “I think a lot of people think that Montana is tone deaf or is not susceptible to this kind of thing,” said protester Michelle Kolodin. “When that happens, we just exacerbate the problem further. So I think it was really awesome to just see how much of a turnout we had and I look forward to continuing to educate myself and others around me to be allies in this movement.”

Protesters were visibly armed with nothing but signs and chants, and the event was largely peaceful and “relatively ... without incident,” according to Bozeman Police Chief Steve Crawford. “We had some extra resources available should there have been a problem, but we did not elect to have a high-profile visible presence,” he said.

Crawford said one of his greatest concerns was the large gathering of people in a setting where social distancing is not always possible. Rally organizers asked attendees to wear masks and socially distance whenever possible, but the populous assembly challenged the 6-foot guideline throughout the afternoon.

Acknowledging the complexity of the issues nationwide that have left cities burnt and looted, Crawford stated that the Bozeman Police Department's top priority is the safety of the community, which he emphasized includes those who participate in protests.

Speakers said the rally is merely the beginning of the movement in Bozeman, and that more work on behalf of racial equity must follow. The Movement for Black Lives, a national movement, announced that it would recognize June 5 as a national day of action for American justice. Montana Racial Equity Project and MSU BSU will host another rally at Bogert Park on June 5 at 5 p.m. in recognition of the action day. The organizers are encouraging people to attend an action training session at the Bozeman Pond on June 4 at 5:30 p.m.



Protesters stand among a large crowd at Bogert Park in Bozeman during a demonstration of solidarity following the death of George Floyd. Protesters marched from the park to the Gallatin County Courthouse on May 31. PHOTOS BY BELLA BUTLER



Rally organizers lead the way from the park to the courthouse, where the Bozeman Daily Chronicle counted 2,000 attendees.



Zeynep Martello, a local business owner, dons a facemask while proudly holding up her protest sign.



Protesters colored the steps of the courthouse with the names of people of color that were allegedly murdered by police officers.

“This isn't the American Dream because so many of us have only lived in its nightmare. It's time to wake up.”



**BIG SKY
BUILD**

— EST. 1997 —

BIGSKYBUILD.COM

Big Sky mountain biker stable after grizzly bear attack

GoFundMe campaign nears \$75,000 goal

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR AND MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – A grizzly bear attack on Memorial Day left a local mountain biker in critical but stable condition. Peter Scherfig was on a solo bike ride to celebrate his 61st birthday when he was attacked on Fish Camp Trail in the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club community. It was the first grizzly bear mauling in Big Sky in 23 years.

Gallatin County officials received the initial report at approximately 1:10 p.m. on Memorial Day, May 25, that a biker had been involved in a bear attack on the Fish Camp Trail in Spanish Peaks.

“It looks like a surprise encounter,” said Morgan Jacobsen, spokesperson for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, in a May 26 interview. “This kind of behavior is normal for grizzly bears.”

Following the attack, the victim crawled up to South Fork Road where Joe Jacobs found him on his way to the Yellowstone Club.

“I saw [the biker] was sitting down in a cross-legged position ... and thought they were just somebody actually taking a break having some water,” said Jacobs, a finish carpenter who lives in Bozeman. “As I got closer they put their arms up and I could see ... that his arms were bloody and there was something not quite right.”

When Jacobs pulled over he saw the victim was badly injured and called 911. Unable to speak, the biker tried to communicate what happened by writing in the gravel along the road so Jacobs grabbed a pad of paper and a pen.

“He wrote, ‘Bear,’” Jacobs said. “Then he wrote, ‘Can’t breathe.’”

Big Sky Fire Department first responders transported the injured biker to the Big Sky Medical Center where they rendezvoused with a life-flight helicopter that flew the victim to St. Vincent’s Healthcare trauma center in Billings where he was treated for lacerations and puncture wounds to the face and back, according to Jacobsen.

Scherfig was then transferred to the Oregon Health and Science University Hospital in Portland where he is undergoing multiple facial reconstructive surgeries. He suffered a punctured lung and two broken ribs but no major internal or additional head injuries due to his bike helmet.

Officers from the Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office and state FWP officials found the bike on the Fish Camp Trail, which connects to both Yellow Mule and the popular Ousel Falls trails. The trails were temporarily closed to the public but have been reopened.

The bear has not been located. FWP is currently investigating the incident and is deeming the grizzly “non-predatory” at this time and not actively searching the area, Jacobsen said. Louise Astbury, general manager for Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, released a statement saying that authorities and first responders acted quickly and delivered the patient to definitive care.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the individual and his family for a full recovery,” Astbury said in the release.

Brian Lloyd, FWP’s Region 3 game warden, is urging area residents and visitors to exercise caution in the field.

“This is a reminder to be extra cautious when you’re out there [and] carry bear spray,” Lloyd said at the scene following the attack, adding that hikers and bikers should not venture out alone and should pay attention to signs including the smell of dead carcasses or birds in an area.

Joe Jacobs agreed. “You’re not at the top of the food chain out here,” he said.

Through an effort spearheaded by Peter’s wife Katie along with close friends Marjorie Knaub, Debbie Applebaum, Lisa Knorr and Patty Dickerson, the Big Sky community has rallied behind the Scherfigs and started two funds to help support them through the complex and expensive medical journey ahead.

“I know Peter and Katie have a [high] deductible, and I don’t know the costs of the life flight to get to Billings but it’ll be expensive,” said Knaub, adding that the cost of having to fly elsewhere for surgery will also increase medical expenses.

Working as a CPA, Knaub quickly gathered the tax information necessary to start the Peter Scherfig Benefit Fund at Big Sky’s First Security Bank branch.

“People hoping to donate can go to any First Security Bank in Big Sky or Bozeman and say they want to donate to the fund,” Knaub said, noting the fund was officially formed on May 26.

In addition to the fund at First Security Bank, Applebaum set up a GoFundMe campaign with the same goal in mind. Between the two initiatives, friends and family hope to raise \$75,000 to cover the Scherfigs’ expenses.

As of press time on June 3, the GoFundMe campaign had met \$72,385 of its goal.

Visit gofundme.com/ff/bear-mauling-in-big-sky to make a donation via GoFundMe.



FWP Region 3 Game Warden Brian Lloyd (R) begins his investigation of a grizzly bear attack on Memorial Day in Big Sky, Montana. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Gallatin County adopts rule for Phase 2

BY BELLA BUTLER

GALLATIN COUNTY – The Gallatin City-County Board of Health voted to adopt an emergency rule specific to Gallatin County guided by Gov. Steve Bullock’s Phase 2 reopening plan at a May 28 meeting.

The county’s emergency rule, which took effect on June 1, notably permits businesses including restaurants, bars and gyms, among others, that were previously restricted to operate at 50 percent capacity to operate at 75 percent capacity. Group fitness classes, gyms, pools and hot tubs may do the same with proper sanitization and social distancing. Other places of assembly can operate with limitations.

In the governor’s Phase 2 reopening plan, he announced that the group gathering guideline of 10 people or fewer would expand to 50 people or fewer and further requested that local community leadership refine the guideline to accommodate the community’s specific circumstances. In the emergency rule approved by the board, the 50 people or fewer guideline was affirmed.

The rule also dictates what types of gatherings could reasonably be compliant with social distancing. “Due to the inherently unstructured and socially-focused nature of certain gatherings—such as wedding receptions, live music concerts, festivals, and fairs—such events cannot be conducted with appropriate physical distancing and pose a condition of public health importance. As a result, such events should be limited to 50 people or fewer,” the rule reads. The rule then adds that events of greater than 50 people may be permitted if social interactions are “predictable and manageable” through a number of controlled layout factors.

“It’s the biology, it’s the physics and it’s the chemistry of the bug that is really hard to deal with, and I want people to understand that,” Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley said in response to multiple public comments arguing for greater leniency for weddings, a large economic driver in the Gallatin Valley.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCA BRAVO

The rule also includes what Kelley described as “discretionary language” that offers suggestions about face coverings. Face coverings are recommended to be worn in “businesses that provide essential services where social distancing is difficult and that provide services necessary to daily living ...” This component of the rule is merely a suggestion, Kelley clarified, but was included as a response to local business owners’ expressed concerns for the safety of their staff.

Kelley said that the county rule is intended to mirror Gov. Bullock’s Phase 2 guidelines, as the board cannot be any less stringent than the state. The entrance into Phase 2 also marked the termination of Montana’s 14-day travel quarantine for out-of-state travelers.

Consistent with Phase 1, the state and the county still recommend that vulnerable individuals remain at home when possible and other individual hygienic precautionary measures continue.

Kelley reminded the board that while case numbers have declined significantly, we are still living in a pandemic. “There’s a lot of individual responsibility involved in this,” he said.

McCollum assists community campaign

Part-time resident bolsters Big Sky’s combative effort of COVID-19

BY BRANDON WALKER



Will McCollum (left) and Erik Morrison (right) prepare “Montana Masks” for distribution to frontline workers, businesses and members of the Big Sky community. PHOTO BY OF JUSTINE JANE PHOTOGRAPHY

BIG SKY – While the Town Center Owners Association officially announced the STAY Big Sky campaign on May 29, the wheels were already in motion when the campaign received a \$10,000 donation from part-time Big Sky resident, Will McCollum, along with other collaborative efforts.

McCollum, who splits his time between Denver, Colorado and Big Sky, weathered the COVID-19 shutdown in his Moonlight home with his girlfriend, Kara Pearson. “We decided mid-March when things really went down that this is the safest place for us to be, as well [as] the best place for us to keep our wits about us and keep our morale’s high,” he said.

TCOA marketing and events manager, Erik Morrison grew close with McCollum while the pair recreated together during the shutdown. After Morrison shared his initial thoughts on the STAY Big Sky campaign with his new friend, McCollum donated funds to purchase “Montana Masks” for the community. Morrison estimated the money purchased roughly 3,000 masks that himself and McCollum began to distribute to

frontline workers, local businesses and community members on June 2.

McCollum voiced his appreciation and thankfulness for Big Sky, where the effect of the pandemic has been smaller in scale to areas with larger outbreaks, remarking on the ease of access to recreational opportunities that have kept him and Pearson active throughout the pandemic.

“40 million people unemployed, there’s social unrest and America’s on edge and I just felt like this is a way that we could make a positive contribution to a community that

hopefully can be a real refuge or respite to a lot of Americans who road trip to Big Sky,” he said describing the thoughts that went into his contribution. “So, if we can keep Big Sky open, I’m really hoping that our community can have a bigger ripple effect on all those visitors who really need a break.”

McCollum described that the masks are intended to help alleviate transmission in the event of a major outbreak of COVID-19 in the community. “What we’re really hoping is that we won’t have to use them,” he said. “But if that’s the case then we’re going to be prepared and I think that’s part of the deal to keep us open.”

TCOA collaborated with Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce to deliver “COVID bundles” to community businesses on May 29, jump starting their efforts. Built on a foundation of collaboration, the STAY Big Sky campaign is a joint effort between TCOA, Lone Mountain Land Company, VBS and the chamber along with other local partners.

Morrison applauded the various local initiatives to help relieve the COVID-19 stresses that blitzed the community. TCOA recognized a need for a uniform effort to be developed that would continue assisting businesses as the state moves into Phase 2 of the reopening. “We’re just trying to focus the efforts initially in Town Center and then work with our partners to hopefully get it out to the entire community and beyond,” he said.

TCOA plans to continue supplying area businesses with necessary personal protective equipment and other health and safety related materials throughout the summer and will explore all funding methods to do so. “We don’t want the cost to be a factor in not being able to adopt this and keep this campaign going and keep us open,” Morrison said.

“It’s about all of us. It’s not just Town Center,” Morrison said. “It’s really about all of us in Big Sky from Big Sky locals to second homeowners to destination travelers. Every single one of those segments has a stake in this game.”

Discovery Academy graduates first student

Local Riley Becker receives high school diploma

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – Big Sky Discovery Academy graduated their first high school senior, Riley Becker, on June 2.

After attending Ophir and Lone Peak High School for the majority of her education, Becker transferred to BSDA for her last year and a half of high school, where she was able to strike a balance between her passion for competitive ski racing and academics. BSDA, which ended the year with a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade student body of 52, was able to accommodate Becker's demanding ski schedule, while still satisfying her academic needs and desires.

"I'm really glad that I was able to continue to do what I love doing and still get good grades, because both of those things are important, and I didn't want to choose," the recent graduate said. In addition to being a dedicated athlete, BSDA staff recount Becker as an exemplary student and member of the larger school's family-like community.

"She was definitely a role model and a leader," said Grace Ganoom, BSDA's high school program director and one of Becker's teachers. "She really looked out for the little kids and set a good example for everyone."

The academy's mascot is a Trailblazer, a character BSDA staff believe Becker really embodied during her time at the school. "Riley really embraced the idea of a Trailblazer being a person who is an example and an innovator, a pioneer, someone who is willing to forge new paths in an unknown direction," Head of School Nettie Breuner said. Breuner added that BSDA was proud to send Becker off as their first graduate.

Becker often went above and beyond her standard classroom expectations. In the fall of her senior year, Becker responded to a school discussion about how to contribute more to the natural environment by suggesting a climate strike in Big Sky, a project her teachers helped her see to fruition. Becker also spoke about climate and other environmental issues at TEDx Big Sky the same fall.

To send her off and celebrate her accomplishment, BSDA hosted a graduation for Becker at the Big Sky Community Park, where they presented her with a hand-



Riley Becker became the Big Sky Discovery Academy's first high school graduate on June 2. Becker plans to attend the University of Utah in the fall. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY DISCOVERY ACADEMY

calligraphed diploma. To top off the ceremony, a parade of roughly 20 cars circulated throughout Big Sky, displaying support and love for Becker. It was more than anything she was expecting, she said.

Becker plans to attend the University of Utah in the fall, where she hopes to study political science and eventually environmental law. Leaving the community that she has lived in her entire life, Becker feels BSDA prepared her for her upcoming ventures and is grateful to the people that made her experience so rewarding.

"When it comes to life, being around those teachers, they're super eloquent with what they say and its very obvious that they put a lot of effort and care into what they do and it kind of serves as an inspiration to work as hard as they do," Becker said.

OBITUARY

George J. Gil

Aug. 18, 1953 – May 29, 2020



George Gil and partner Misty Castle

George Gil's life began in a loving family in Brooklyn, New York, in the neighborhood known as Bay Ridge, in 1953. By the time his father Raymond passed of ALS in 1975, he had already left home. His mother Anita, now 104 years old, and her other two sons: Raymond Jr., now married to a wonderful lady Cecily, and Peter, now married to a retired nurse Pat. By the way, they were just blessed with a grandson, born May 30. Reminding me of one of his favorites by Blood Sweat and Tears, "And When I die ... rock on," tried to keep the thread of their family together. Anita remains faithfully in love with Raymond to this day.

He enjoyed the country's biggest iconic free sex, drugs and rock and roll gathering, a few will remember, Woodstock, in 1969. It is there that many of his favorite musicians were cemented, but his No. 1 was Hot Tuna. We went whenever they played near us, Grand Targhee, Gallatin Gateway Inn and finally the Rialto, whereas a belated birthday gift in September 2019 I, with the help of many others, arranged a backstage meeting with Jorma. He was speechless.

Backing up a bit, his wanderlust spirit drew him to the majestic mountains of Aspen, Colorado, where he enjoyed living the life of a ski bum and instructor. His skiing style could only be described as graceful dancing upon the snow. This is also where we met in 1977, remaining friends but with very individual lives until once again our path crossed, this time for good, in Telluride, Colorado, in 1991.

Again, only together, our adventurous souls drew us here to Big Sky for one ski season which has turned out to be many more.

We visited his mother Anita, celebrating her birthday as well as Mother's Day, yearly only missing her 101st due to cancer and her 104th this year, so sad, so sorry. George helped build the tram and got a charge out of riding his 10-speed up the mountain while half his age kids took the lift. He built our home with many of our friends, as one of the two things in life I wanted; in return, I bought him the anniversary issue Harley Sportster, as one of the two things in life he wanted. The other thing we equally wanted was what we found in each other's hearts. Many referred to him as 'the dude with the beard' and a glorious one it was, parting in the middle as he rode.

Our time together included a lot of hard, honest old schoolwork, believing that there truly is a difference of making a good living and selling your soul to make a living. We shared many concerts, hot springs, and rides, me of course being on back.

His long, painful struggle with cancer for over three years ended peacefully on May 29, 2020. Rain began tapping our windows, quickly becoming a torrent. Thunder sounded like it was in our attic and felt like lightning struck our home at least twice. Nothing like "Hear me Roar" being the Leo that he was.

I may have lost his warmth to hold, his holding and protection of me, but not his loving spirit, which remains in my broken heart, forever cherished until the day of my passing when we can once again be together. I hear you can ride the clouds and ski the rainbows, so maybe he will be happy until then. I love you George, you are and always will be the love of my life, always in my heart, your Lady Misty.

Visit dahlcares.com to share condolences and memories with the family.

OUTLAW | News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Town Hall centered on local safety, preparedness

EBS STAFF

The ninth edition of the Big Sky Town Hall series featured local panelists who discussed preparedness and safety as the state continues to reopen. Having progressed to Phase 2 on June 1, the state ended the mandatory two-week quarantine for out of state travelers and allowed businesses to operate in an increased capacity.

The panelists included Tim Drain, general manager of Natural Retreats-Big Sky; Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of both Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce; Erik Morrison, marketing and events manager for the Town Center Owners Association; and Kris Inman, the manager of strategic partnerships and engagement for the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Drain, who is also the president of the Visit Big Sky board of directors, shared that Natural Retreats-Big Sky has witnessed an increase in bookings for the months of July and August, as opposed to last year, since Governor Steve Bullock’s announcement of the progression to Phase 2 of the reopening process. Additionally, Natural Retreats-Big Sky has adapted their cleaning methods to combat the spread of COVID-19 within their properties.

“We’re using specialized equipment that you don’t typically use in a hotel or in a vacation rental. I mean we’re literally using the...cleaning product and the equipment that restoration companies use when you have a viral outbreak on a cruise ship and they shut it down and come in and completely disinfect everything,” Drain said.

Drain also detailed that Natural Retreats-Big Sky is limiting interactions with guests in any way possible, even eliminating in-person welcomes to visitors at properties for check-ins.

Carr Strauss offered that messaging to prospective visitors and communication with community businesses are at the forefront for Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, respectively.

She noted that the chamber recently passed out COVID-19 ‘bundles’ to local businesses, supplying them with personal protective equipment, signage and other materials as they prepare for increased visitor traffic. Coincidentally, Visit Big Sky will once again return to promoting Big Sky as a travel-worthy destination for out-of-state as well as in-state travelers.

Carr Strauss also encouraged businesses to refer to the wealth of resources provided by the county as well as national associations to help better prepare individuals for reopening their respective places of business.

Morrison said that there are varying opinions within the community with regard to the progression to Phase 2 of the reopening process. “People are pretty freaked out about Phase 2 reopening and what that means for Big Sky for sure and depending on who you talk to, you know some are advocating for you know much harder, hardline restrictions and others are definitely not taking it as seriously,” he said.

He highlighted the considerable donation made to the Town Center Owners Association, made by part-time Big Sky resident Will McCollum, to purchase “Montana Masks” for frontline workers, local businesses and community members depending on availability.

Inman, rounded out the panelists for the evening, discussing bear behavior, awareness and preparation to practice as people recreate in bear country, following the recent attack in Big Sky. She recommended making noise, approaching blind corners cautiously, recreating in groups of at least three individuals and equipping yourself with bear spray as well as knowing how to properly use it.

“But you should always just expect that you’re going to see a bear anywhere in Montana now,” Inman said, continuing to describe that encounters in populated areas are on the rise as bear populations continue to follow suit.

Outlaw Partners unveils new real estate magazine: VIEWS

OUTLAW PARTNERS

Why Big Sky? It’s a question we’ve all considered, whether tourist, second homeowner, or full-time resident.

Try, for a moment, to remember your first time in Big Sky, rounding the corner at the intersection of Highway 191 and Lone Mountain Trail.

On a bluebird day, there stands Lone Mountain, snow-covered, white and immense, alone against the sky.

For most, it’s a moment where conversation stops and you’re arrested by the view. Within a few days’ time, that initial impression is bolstered by pillows of powder, picturesque canyon vistas, fly fishing and the countless trails and backpacking opportunities within a stone’s throw.

If it weren’t already under consideration, the thought manifests: I could live here.

And it all started with a view.

That’s the essence of VIEWS, a new Outlaw Partners publication celebrating that first moment in Big Sky and the culminating event of joining its growing and dedicated community situated along the base of the mountain.

With a focus on the real estate market in our town, supplemented with Big Sky living and lifestyle pieces, VIEWS—published three-



times per year—will aim to remind even longtime residents of the roots of their love affair with the beautiful landscapes and people of Big Sky.

On shelves July 4, VIEWS will be available for the summer’s first influx of visitors to enjoy, reawakening a town from shoulder-season slumber. It’s a process, much like in winter, where residents watch as scores of newcomers fall for the charms of our little town.

We remember well visiting the area for the first time, and as we all work to make the town a little better, we know some in the crowd will be by our sides in that pursuit.

A cheers to Big Sky and the VIEWS that make it all possible.

STUDENTS MATTER.

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY, EMPOWERING STUDENTS.

THANK YOU BIG SKY

We are thrilled to announce the successful passage of the Big Sky School District bond, and we have two words for our community: Thank you! Your support is critical to empowering BSSD to become the best district it can be. We are so proud to work in a community that values education and acts on the belief that our students matter! None of these future improvements would be possible without you. The future looks bright for Big Sky students, and we are immensely grateful for your support.

BIG SKY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



Don't hurt famers pg. 19



Youth based movement pg. 20



BZN seeks local artists pg. 27

Youth based movement connects climate, social justice

BY BELLA BUTLER

BOZEMAN – Under a sea of umbrellas, at least 1,000 people showed up in Bozeman on September 20, 2019 to march for awareness and action against climate change. Eight months later, Bozemanites returned to the streets to protest the alleged murder of George Floyd and racial inequality. According to the local nonprofit Sunrise Movement Gallatin County, these two separate demonstrations are inherently tied to one another.

Sunrise, a national movement with chapters or ‘hubs’ across the country, launched in 2017 with the mission of fighting climate change and creating good jobs for Americans in the process. The movement operates by a “theory of change” that includes combining people power and political power to upend what they believe to be oppressive and unsustainable systems to work toward a “just future.”

In the spring of 2019, Bozeman-native Sara Blessing was feeling anxious about the in-depth perspective on climate change she had acquired as an earth science student at Montana State University, and she was eager to translate her pent-up energy and frustration into action. She founded the Bozeman Sunrise Movement hub, holding the first meeting with three friends, her mother and a few interested individuals. The local chapter now has 15-20 regular members, with meeting and orientation attendance sometimes reaching 50 people.

The national movement is largely focused on advancing the Green New Deal, a resolution drafted by U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in cooperation with Sunrise Movement members and other young activists in 2018. The Green New Deal, which Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell called “a radical, top-down, socialist makeover of the entire US economy,” seeks to combine economic and environmental reform through promoting “livable wages,” social and economic equality, corporate accountability and most notably a transition from fossil fuel industries to green energy and commerce.

“It’s a really inspiring piece of writing as a resolution,” Blessing said. “I think it leaves the door open and makes it clear that we need to be tackling other social injustices at the same time and kind of look at the twin crisis of our time, which are climate change and socioeconomic inequality.”

As the nation flares up in anti-racism protests and riots, the connection between climate and social justice is being illuminated. In the *New York Times*’ climate newsletter, Somini Sengupta points to the overlap and where it’s popping up across the county. “Racism, in short, makes it impossible to live sustainably,” she writes. This assertion is one of the primary doctrines of the Sunrise Movement.

The just transition component of both the Green New Deal and the Sunrise Movement dictates that in order to move toward a sustainable future, no one can be left behind; The ideal vision for this future would create an equal place in society for everyone. “It’s not only ethically and morally the right thing to do, but it’s strategic, as well,” Blessing said. “We can get a huge force of people if we give everyone something that will benefit from.”

Sunrise uses a number of localized tactics and projects to achieve these fundamental goals. In addition to the climate rally, Sunrise Movement Gallatin County hosted a Green New Deal town hall in 2019 as well as orientation workshops in Bozeman and Missoula, where attendees had the opportunity to learn about the Green New Deal and the mission and ideals of Sunrise, all grounded in historical and political context.

In the midst of an eventful election cycle, Sunrise Movement Gallatin County has also conversed with candidates running for local and state offices to create a roster of Sunrise-endorsed candidates. Candidates that have either approached Sunrise about an endorsement or who were receptive to Sunrise’s request complete surveys and interviews, which Sunrise uses to gauge the candidate’s alignment with the values and goals of the movement.



At Sunrise Gallatin County’s first training in 2019, participants discussed anti-oppression, the organization’s mission and history and how to best advance Sunrise’s agenda. PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUNRISE GALLATIN COUNTY

Sunrise has only endorsed two candidates leading into the primary election: Tom Winter, a Democratic candidate running for Montana’s vacant seat in Congress and Tom Woods, a candidate for District 3’s public service commission. According to Blessing, Winter publicly endorsed the Green New Deal following conversations with the local Sunrise hub, a considerable win for the group.

Sunrise is a bipartisan movement, but all endorsements by the Gallatin County hub have been for Democratic candidates. Blessing said the group would be open and willing to endorse a Republican candidate if they expressed interest in a Sunrise endorsement and if they qualified by the same metrics that their currently endorsed candidates did.

The movement is youth-based, with members most often ranging from 12 years old to 35 years old, according to Blessing. Bozeman’s hub is mostly comprised of university students, but the neighboring Missoula hub’s youngest member is 11 years old.

While many national headlines pair the Green New Deal with the word ‘radical’, Blessing believes Bozeman has received the local Sunrise chapter well and with general appreciation for young people’s engagement with politics and issue-based work. However, she understands that there is dissonance, even among more moderate members of the Democratic party, the party where the Green New Deal originated.

“The climate crisis is too scary to look at because it does mean a complete societal shift from what we have been doing for decades and decades,” Blessing said. Goals outlined in the Green New Deal, such as achieving 100 percent renewable energy, contradict the success of a country that industrialized and emerged as a global leader by way of fossil fuels.

The Green New Deal and the mission of Sunrise calls into question for many what an ideal America looks like. Fox News opinion writer Justin Haskins published a piece in 2019 with the headline “Green New Deal would destroy American Dream, create American Nightmare.” At the Black lives rally on May 31, an indigenous woman shared her experience living as a marginalized and oppressed person in the United States: “This isn’t the American Dream because so many of us have only lived in its nightmare.”

Blessing thinks that for a youth currently confused and frustrated by an uncertain and daunting future, the Green New Deal and efforts made by groups like Sunrise offer promise and hope to an otherwise bleak picture.

“We have so much to gain from where we are now through transitioning off of fossil fuels and creating a just society that we’ve never had before,” Blessing said, filling an empty glass halfway. “Wouldn’t you love to feel more community, and have a community garden, and to be able to walk to the grocery store or have a community solar field. Things like that that kind of connect us and unify us in more way.”

Blessing said in line with the tenants of unity and community that Sunrise works to uphold, the biggest thing people can do right now, whether energized, motivated or frustrated, is to disrupt the narrative that “nothing you do matters unless you do it by yourself,” and join a collective effort. With a number of sustainability campaigns and rhetoric focusing on individual action, Sunrise examines the role of larger entities and hopes to change a top-down system with an approach that starts at the bottom.



The Bozeman climate strike, organized by Sunrise Movement Gallatin County, was well attended, despite poor weather.

Water Wisdom

BY DAVID TUCKER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

As temps warm and days lengthen, we're all raring to get back outside and stay there, passing the time along our riverbanks, trails, ridgelines and shorelines.

In the Upper Gallatin watershed, we enjoy nearly unencumbered access to outdoor recreation, but with that access comes responsibility. Our actions have impacts, whether we're fishing, floating, biking or hiking.

By taking small steps to mitigate that impact, we can guarantee that the natural resources—especially our aquatic resources—remain healthy and abundant for future generations. Here are tips to adopt as you enjoy your summer outside.

Anglers

For trout-chasers, river stewardship is a no brainer. We spend our days literally knee-deep in the Gallatin, seeking out the healthiest water-dwelling wildlife. How can we keep that resource healthy?

For starters, practice correct catch and release. Keep fish wet, only taking them out of the water for a quick photo. Consider barbless hooks to reduce additional physical damage to fish. And always clean, drain and dry your gear to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Limit your access to established routes along the riverbank to reduce harmful erosion and park your vehicles on hard surfaces like asphalt pull-outs. Doing so protects riparian vegetation that keeps water cold and provides habitat for trout.

Boaters

Running the Gallatin's infamous whitewater is a rite of passage for any regional river rat, but as populations soar, so too does river traffic—and highway traffic traveling to and from put-ins and take-outs. In a normal year, we'd be strong advocates for carpooling. With COVID still a threat to public health, we suggest limiting your exposure to folks within your household. This year, that means no hitchhiking back to your vehicles, unless you're in the bed of a pickup.

Recreating Responsibly

On the river, pack out what you packed in. Make sure wrappers, plastic bottles and food scraps come off the water with you. When launching and taking out, use established access points, being sure to check out the new sustainable kayak launch at the Moose Creek Recreation Area. This summer, the Gallatin River Task Force will be installing another slab launch near Deer Creek as part of their River Access Restoration Program.

Trail Users

Off the river, our recreation still impacts water quality. Hikers, bikers, trail runners and backpackers all have a part to play. If you're using a trail close to a stream or creek, like Porcupine or Ousel, consider how erosion runs off into that nearby waterway. Always clean up after your dog (and yourself). Pet and human waste pollutes ground and surface water, potentially fouling drinking water.

Backpacking into the mountains for a wilderness weekend? Understand the tenets of Leave No Trace and practice them devoutly. Camping, cooking and gathering near water resources can cause pollution, and high-alpine environments are particularly sensitive to outside influences.

Horsepackers

Nothing says Montana like a pack trip into the mountains. High in the saddle, it's easy to get lost in the romance of the 'Old West', but there's nothing romantic about piles of horse poop and invasive species.

Horses and other pack animals can create lasting consequences for aquatic ecosystems, if improperly managed. Be conscious of where stock travel, graze and water. Several animals all occupying the same space for a few days can cause real harm, to both the natural and recreational resources. Stick to trails instead of creating new ones and cross waterways at established bridges if available.

As the saying goes, visitors come to Montana for the winters but stay for the summers. The season is short, but oh so sweet. Small changes to our outdoor behavior can keep it that way as well as keep us from loving this place to death.

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



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Don't hurt farmers to save the Colorado River

BY ANDY MUELLER
WRITERS ON THE RANGE



Andy Mueller is a Writers on the Range columnist and General Manager of the Colorado River District. PHOTO COURTESY OF WRITERS ON THE RANGE

No one denies it: Overconsumption of water and extreme drought caused by climate change are realities driving the Colorado River into crisis. But some solutions are better than others.

Former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt suggested recently in a *Writer's on the Range* column that “retiring” 10 percent—some 300,000 acres—of irrigated agriculture would save 1 million acre-feet of the Colorado River. Secretary Babbitt wants the federal government to pay farmers in both the Lower and Upper Colorado River basins to dry up their cropland.

The imbalance on the Colorado River needs to be addressed, and agriculture, as the biggest water user in the basin, needs to be part of a fair solution. But drying up vital food-producing land is a blunt tool. It will damage our local food supply chains and bring decline to rural communities that have developed around irrigated agriculture.

Let's look at the river's problems. First, Secretary Babbitt minimizes the challenge as the overuse of the river's system is even greater than 1 million acre-feet. The flow is so diminished that the end of the line, the Colorado River Delta, hardly receives any water.

The three states that make up the Lower Colorado River Basin—including the former Secretary's home state of Arizona—have in recent years consumed at least 1.2 million acre-feet more per year than the 8.5 million acre-feet allotted to them under the 1922 Colorado River Compact.

This overuse has been perpetuated because the Lower Basin states and the Bureau of Reclamation fail to account for the losses caused by evaporation from reservoirs and the transit losses during water deliveries. The first step in fixing the imbalance must be elimination of the Lower Basin's overuse.

Through the Drought Contingency Plan, the Lower Basin is actively reducing its water consumption when Lake Mead hits critically low levels. But while this is a good start, more must be done.

Climate change is a major cause in reducing Colorado River flows, with recent studies putting the reduction between 3-5.2 percent for every 1 degree rise in temperature. Important water-producing parts of our basin, such as Western Colorado, have already seen temperatures rise by as much as 4 degrees since 1895, and predictions for a 2- to 5-degree increase in the foreseeable future will compound the trend.

It might be surprising to learn that the Upper Basin's annual consumption of Colorado River water—less than 4.5 million acre-feet—is far below the 7.5 million acre-feet allotted to the four Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico. But this is hardly the time to increase diversions. To sustain the communities and the ecosystems that depend upon the Colorado River, all water users—both Upper and Lower Basin states—will need to consume less water.

The Colorado River District has taken a stand against “buy-and-dry” practices because we recognize the environmental and economic harm of drying up agricultural lands. If the health of the river is balanced solely on the back of agriculture, the 10 percent suggested by Secretary Babbitt today will almost certainly lead to 20 percent tomorrow.

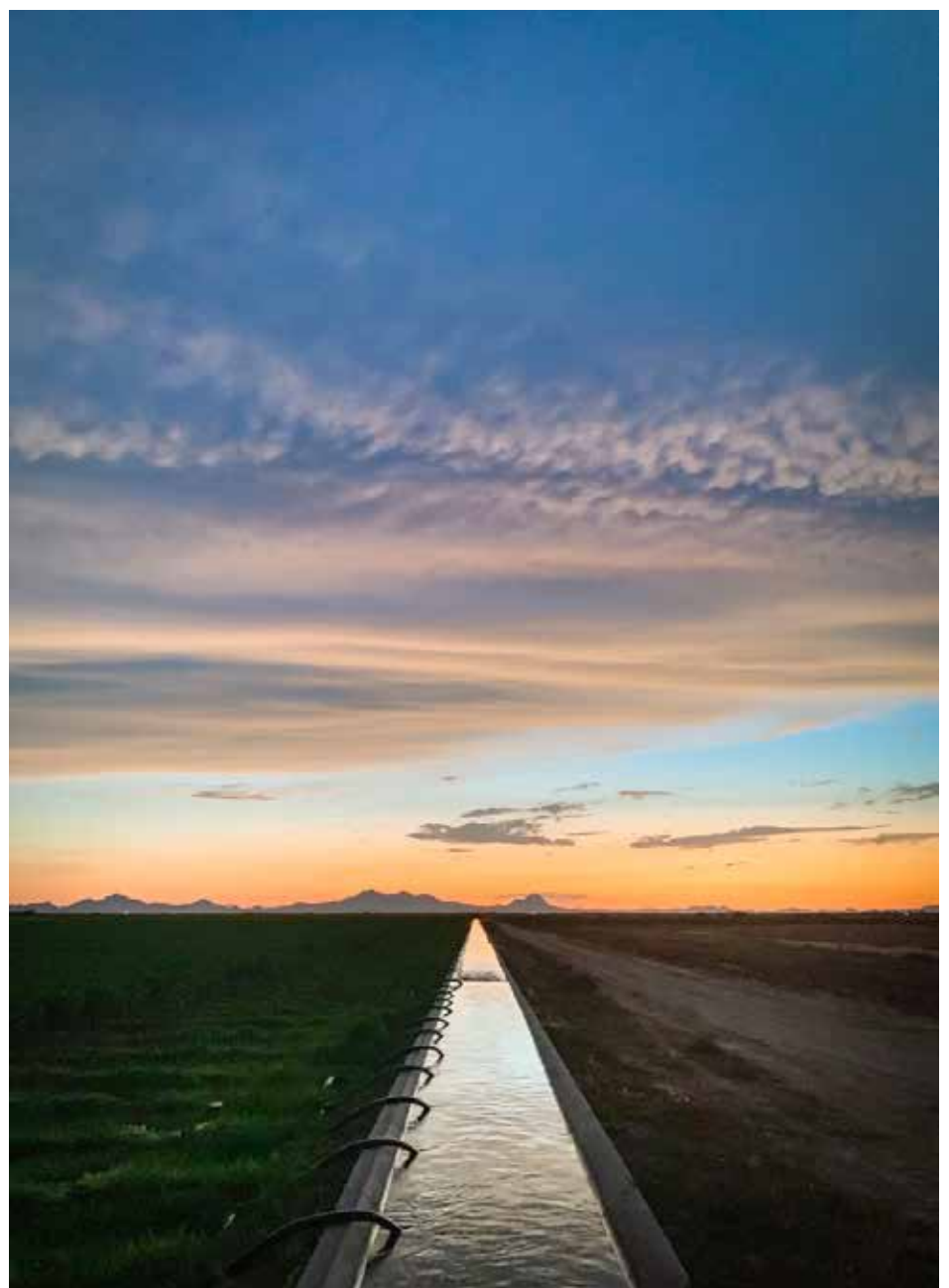
In Western Colorado, most of our agriculture is family owned and operated. These family farms provide a local food supply, form the backbone of our rural communities, and they are already under economic stress. So what can be done to both help the river and keep rural life intact?

Initiatives must be aimed at reducing consumptive losses due to inefficient irrigation systems. At the same time we need to incentivize selective retirement of marginal land, all while providing technical support and funding for growers to switch to higher-value crops. The Lower Basin must reduce the cultivation of highly water consumptive crops in the increasingly hot desert, such as cotton and alfalfa raised solely for export.

Increased funding is better directed to off-farm and on-farm irrigation improvements and growing alternative crops. An example of that kind of effort is the Lower Gunnison Project in Western Colorado, a partnership between agricultural producers, the Colorado River District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This project improves diversion structures by piping delivery ditches and modernizing irrigation technology on farms. The producers are also experimenting with new crops such as hemp and hops.

From a purely mathematical standpoint, the Lower Basin has to reduce its 1.2 million acre-feet in overuse. That's a big start. But in both basins, agriculture must improve the way it uses scarce water taken from the river. We have no time to lose.

Andy Mueller is a contributor to Writers on the Range (writersontherange.org), a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He is general manager of the Colorado River District and spends his time protecting the flows of the Colorado River and its tributaries in Western Colorado



In the Colorado River Basin, agricultural practices account for the greatest portion of water consumption. PHOTO BY FRANKIE LOPEZ

THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

During the 1990s, Dennis Glick, an expert on conservation and growth-related issues, was working for the Bozeman-based Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

Hired away from the World Wildlife Fund where he had helped design a couple of new national parks in Central America, Glick

was tasked by GYC with drafting the first-ever comprehensive overview of conservation issues in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Today, he oversees a small conservation organization in our region called FutureWest that helps local communities grapple with issues that threaten to negatively transform their sense of place.

The inspiration for founding FutureWest, he says, is based upon witnessing jaw-dropping development trends in Greater Yellowstone over the last three decades.

Back in the 1990s, he notes, no conservation organization, not even his former employer, GYC, was carefully scrutinizing the rapidly-expanding footprint of humanity happening in Big Sky, which had once been set in a wildlife-rich corner of the Madison Mountains.

At a hearing before the Madison County Planning Board, then reviewing schematics for the Yellowstone Club and Spanish Peaks, he was the lonely representative of southwest Montana's large professional environmental community to show up.

"I was alone expressing concern basically about the impact that significant development would have over time on the Madison Range. I said we needed to look at this cumulatively, given what had already happened at Big Sky. You can't turn back the clock but you can be smarter looking forward," he said.

Glick now notes in reflection, "What I always say about Big Sky is it only has three problems—location, location, location. When you put major development in the heart of a narrow mountain range, as occurred in the Madisons, the wildlife habitat and passageways animals use to move can easily become fragmented. And that's exactly what has happened."

From a community of just several hundred permanent residents in the mid 1970s, there is no longer any quaintness about Big Sky. Thousands of people live there now and thousands of new residential units are planned. Growth-related problems abound.

In Colorado, at Vail, to which Big Sky often draws comparisons, a forum was recently held on wildlife issues. Numbers of elk, deer and bighorn sheep are falling. "The decline we're seeing in the elk herd goes from Vail Pass to Aspen," said Bill Andree, a wildlife officer for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. "It's not too tough to figure out why when you're looking at the levels of development, recreation and roads."

That's the direction the Bozeman to Big Sky corridor is headed, Glick says. He laments that over the years, with the exception of scrutinizing sewage spills in Big Sky, none of the conservation groups in Bozeman has consistently bird-dogged development in Big Sky and it's a major failing.

He says the current debate surrounding wilderness proposals for the Gallatin Range on the east side of U.S. Highway 191 should consider context for not only what has happened but what is coming. The Custer-Gallatin National Forest needs to demonstrate foresight, too, he adds.

Can Big Sky develop and still protect wildness?

The Gallatin is one of the few mountains in the Lower 48 with all its original large mammal species, ranging from grizzlies and wolves to bison and famous elk herd.

"We can't undo what has happened so far at Big Sky but Big Sky going forward as a community can prove that it respects its special setting and wants to be a good neighbor to Yellowstone and wildlife," he says.

"To accommodate Big Sky ... that part of the ecosystem has already given up a lot," he adds. "Why would you want that kind of impact to have spillover effects across the highway into the Gallatins with industrial recreation? The answer is you wouldn't."

Back in the 1990s people weren't paying as much attention to Big Sky because conservationists were concerned about traditional resource extraction like logging and mining," he says. "I think it's been a big mistake that conservation groups haven't been applying scrutiny to Big Sky the way they would a hardrock mining proposal. And we don't apply the same level of scrutiny to our favorite outdoor recreation activities either."

Today, in viewing Big Sky objectively as an expanding complex of development with a long list of spillover effects, he says "it is one of the greatest ongoing environmental challenges in the entire Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem."

The pause brought by COVID-19 should give citizens who feel a strong connection to nearby Yellowstone National Park and the quality of nature around it a reason to reflect. Glick notes a recent opinion poll that found 47 percent of those surveyed said "the environment is what makes Big Sky, Big Sky."

"If it is really our goal to maintain the wild character of Greater Yellowstone as this place set apart from degraded settings elsewhere, then we all need to become more familiar with the concept of cumulative effects and stop taking a blind eye to impacts we know are there," Glick said.

Wildlife and wildness are what distinguish Greater Yellowstone from anywhere else in the American West. He asks: "How many people who come to Big Sky are aware of that fact and willing to do things to keep it that way?"

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.



An aerial view of Big Sky in winter that shows the fragmentation of landscape. PHOTO BY CHRIS BOYER

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‘Misfits of folk’

Local band Wind and the Willows to release second album

BY BELLA BUTLER

BOZEMAN - On the east end of Bozeman outside of Jereco Studios, four of the eight Wind and the Willows band members are preparing for another evening of recording their second album. They're crammed on a small wooden stoop, talking about the moment when they started to feel like they'd made it. When they headlined a sold-out show where they used to open, when they stopped getting paid in stray bills and free drinks and started filing invoices and cashing checks.

They talk about that sold-out show, which was in February at the Filling Station, and how surprised they all were when the stuffed crowd sang their lyrics back to them. It's crazy, they all agree, to watch a dream materialize from a stage. They end their break and funnel back inside the tight studio to take another step into that dream.

Allured by the mountains and an up-and-coming college town, each of the eight musicians found their way first to Bozeman and then to each other. Wind and the Willows formed organically as word of mouth gathered them early on in their time at Montana State University for jam sessions. In November of 2017, after elevating their performances from living rooms to coffee shops, they officially started the band, and in the spring of 2019, the young Wind and the Willows octet prepared to step into the recording studio for the first time.

Their pilot album, "Bloom and Fade," set the precedent for the unique spin on folk music that the band has come to be known for. Their classic string pieces like the mandolin, banjo, acoustic guitar, fiddle and ukulele are paired with sounds rather novel to the genre; Their primary percussion is a West African djembe drum, while a trumpet and flugelhorn add a rich brass section to the ensemble. Atop the foundation of robust instrumentals, lyrics are expressed in a smooth three-part harmony.

"Bloom and Fade" is a 10-track love story. Rooted in a strong sense of place, the narrative uses the growth and wilting of wildflowers and other natural elements as a motif for the progression of relationships. According to the band, the second album adopted an entirely new narrative.

Bolstered by the comfort and experience of already recording, launching and touring an album, the band was compelled to push the envelope, lyrically and instrumentally, working with new sounds and stories about death. The album, titled "Ode to Shady Grove" is a nod to the old bluegrass reference and the band's own sonic interpretation of the conceptual place.

"I will defend love songs forever and I think they're important and valuable," said Maren Stubenvoll, who sings, plays guitar and writes songs with fellow vocalist and mandolin player Ryen Dalvit. "But I think it was cool to step out of that comfort zone and then write a story about a pair of siblings who murder people or a song about the devil." Dalvit added that writing lyrics in coordination with the music made for an exciting and collaborative creation experience.

"We're still definitely a folk band, but there are elements of experimentation in that," said Tommy Diestel, who plays banjo. Djembe player and percussionist Sarah Budeski described the new album's sound as dynamic and textured, referencing the album's acapella track and a song that features an electric guitar. Diestel said that the addition of the stand-up bass was also pivotal, rounding out the band's higher registered instruments with a new level of depth.

Inside Jereco Studios, Stubenvoll, Davit and Barrette McNaught, the third piece to the vocal puzzle, prepare to record vocals in a room that's longer than it is wide. In the neighboring room, Budeski, Diestel and Stubenvoll's brother, Will, the featured electric guitarist, squeeze together on two leather couches. The entire band isn't present, but



Local Bozeman band Wind and the Willows is preparing for the release of their second studio album "Ode to Shady Grove." The eight-piece group gained a diverse and robust following playing local shows and through the release of their first album. PHOTO BY KIMBERLY ANDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY



Wind and the Willow's second album "Ode to Shady Grove" is the same take on folk music that fans enjoyed in their first album with a few experimental twists. The new album will feature an acapella track, a stand-up bass and the appearance of an electric guitar. PHOTO BY NICK POPIEL

it's hard to imagine all eight of them in this room. Luke Scheeler, the first and second album's sound engineer, moves dials on the soundboard in between sips of yerba mate.

The trio run through the first take. It sounds like butter. The other band members, having only heard the song a few times, nod and raise eyebrows in approval. A complimentary Scheeler takes them back to a few lines to rework and guides them through some adjustments. As the vocalists work through hitting tough notes, their fellow members provide tender words of encouragement and critique through the talk-back. They work through the section until they've come up with something that makes everyone grin with satisfaction and celebrate with high fives.

The band jokes about how unusually well they all get along. Eight people in any social pairing can be strenuous, but they've found a personal rhythm. A year ago, the band traveled to Colorado, where Dalvit and Stubenvoll hail from, to tour "Bloom and Fade." They played bars and backyard shows and lugged their instruments to the top of one of Colorado's classic peaks for a 14,000-foot performance. Even in tight traveling quarters, they found ways to enjoy each other's company.

During quarantine, they say the band was some of their only social interaction. Each member has a unique personality, style and background, yet like their unusual assemblage of musical pieces, they make for a beautiful combination. During their time playing together, they've workshopped the art of collaboration. On the new album, it will be especially evident, they said.

While mostly folk, the band has a hard time really labeling their sound. Especially recently, it can be described as more of a fusion than any one thing. On top of the bluegrass and folk influences, different members of the band each bring something somewhat avant-garde of their own: the traditional echoing thump of the djembe and Budeski's experience with West African music, trumpeter Nick Popiel's passionate jazz influence and Diestel's side gig in a metal band all play a role in the uninhibited and unafraid sound of Wind and the Willows. They try to put more words to it, ultimately deciding that they are just fine being "misfits of folk."

Stubenvoll believes that the many dimensions and themes of "Ode to Shady Grove" will give people an outlet to both process and escape the recent challenges to society. "It's really awesome to be a part of something that can impact other people in such a beautiful way," McNaught said.

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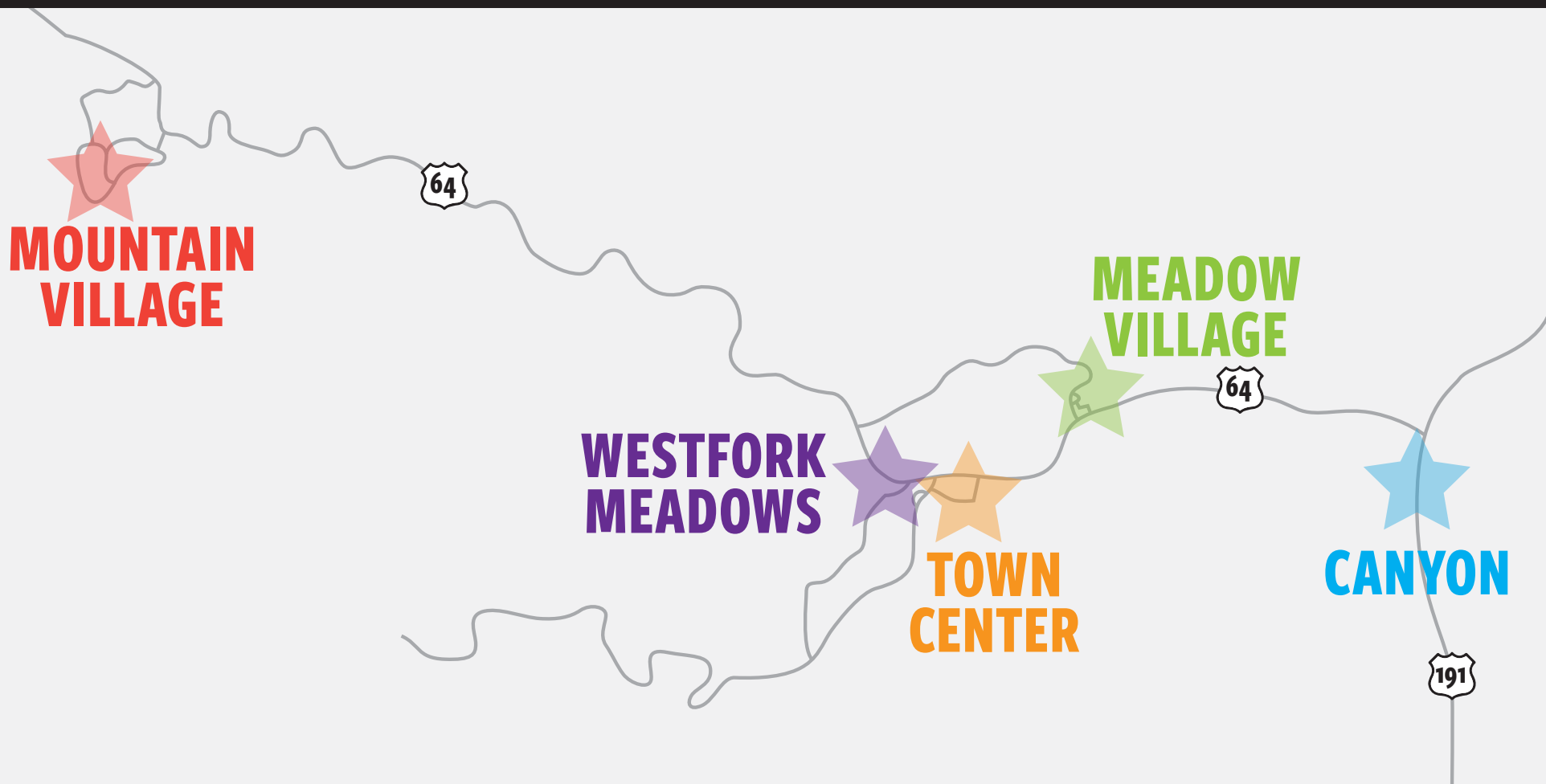
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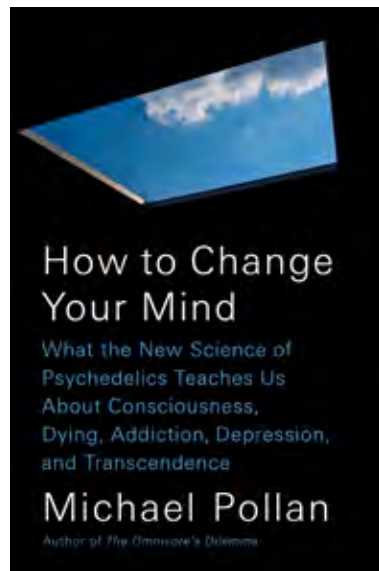
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Summertime reads

As we enter into the season of Montana's infamously long summer evenings, pull up a lawn chair, backyard hammock or porch couch and indulge yourself in some summer reading. Our editorial staff put our heads together to offer up some of our favorites to get you started.

'How to Change Your Mind' by Michael Pollan



What if I told you a lifelong cigarette, alcohol or heroin addict could kick their dependence with a single treatment; that an individual plagued with chronic depression may find joys in life never before realized, even with years of pharmaceutical and therapeutic aid—again, in a single treatment; that a person diagnosed with terminal cancer might come to embrace death rather than fear it?

Such are the findings of an incredible revolution in the application of psychedelic therapies—LSD (“acid”), psilocybin (“magic mushrooms”), MDMA (“ecstasy”) and the like—where marvelous, and I mean *marvelous*, treatment breakthroughs have become increasingly well documented over the last three decades.

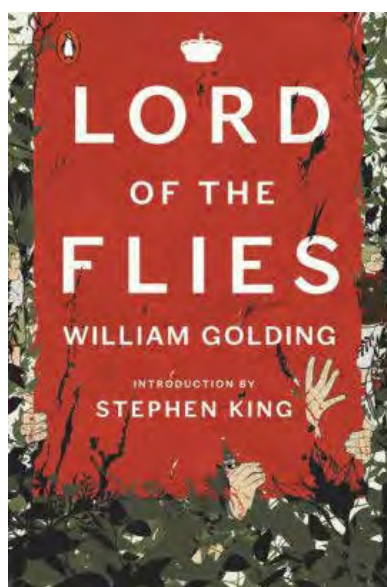
Maligned during the counterculture movement of the 50s, 60s and 70s, psychedelics were pushed to a place of criminality and secrecy—all the while, they may hold the answer to some of the greatest health crises of the modern age.

This isn't just “hippy dippy” theory—author Michael Pollan, the Lewis K. Chan Arts lecturer and professor of practice of non-fiction at Harvard University and professor of journalism at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, breaks down the science in great and compelling detail in his novel “How to Change Your Mind,” which features research from renowned institutions the caliber of Columbia University, New York University and John's Hopkins University, among others sources of vetted knowledge.

A must read if there ever was one.

—Michael Somerby

'Lord of the Flies' by William Golding



With life as we know it slowly returning to some semblance of what it looked like just over four short months ago, what better time to delve into a classic tale and reminisce. In his timeless work, “Lord of the Flies”, William Golding documents the trials and tribulations of a cohort of young boys who find themselves on a vacant island, grappling to form a replication of the society from which they came. As their intrinsic wildness battles the order they've been taught, their internal wars manifest into violent unrest in a graphic examination of true human nature. Golding's story eerily reflects the life we've presently come to know.

It grabs the reader as you yearn to learn the outcome of democratic actions, while the boys attempt to regain their own sense of normalcy. The phrase ‘it takes a village’ couldn't ring truer as the reader begins to believe the group may accomplish their goals, only to slowly watch everything fall apart because members of the group begin to stray from the collective effort, in turn toppling the entire attempt.

—Brandon Walker

'Everything ravaged, everything burned' by Wells Tower



Each character in Wells Tower's collection of short stories is struggling with something: infidelity, dementia, the need to fit in. At the conclusion of each story however, there is no grand revelation, just a cliffhanger ending leaving the reader in the present along with the accompanying unknowns. The book consists of nine stories, each about 15 pages long in which they follow a different character's mishaps and meandering prospects that seem to be going nowhere. Although it may sound depressing, Tower's wit makes it enjoyable, his prose is superbly readable and his craft can be likened to that of two modern greats: David Foster Wallace and Raymond Carver.

Tower is skilled at uniquely describing scenes, concocting sentences that make you pause, reread and guffaw aloud.

“The moose tried to struggle upright but fell again. The effect was of a very old person trying to pitch a heavy tent,” (56) he writes in “Retreat.”

Tower has contributed to The New Yorker, Harper's Magazine and GQ and his work was featured in The Best American Short Stories 2010. He also has a notable piece titled “Meltdown” that opens Outside Magazine's acclaimed short story collection, “Out There,” another misadventure—this time his own—on a trip to Greenland with his father.

Although we all love a good fairytale, Tower pays homage to one very basic fact in life—sometimes, in this moment in time at least, life isn't perfect.

—Mira Brody

'Erosion' by Terry Tempest Williams



As the world as we know it crumbles, Terry Tempest Williams' 2019 collection of essays “Erosion” is a poignant conceptual complement to a society shaken by pandemic. In her classic wistful yet grounded voice, she examines literal and metaphorical erosion as a beautiful, tragic and necessary process.

Through discussion of the contentious Bears Ears National Monument, the upholding of the Endangered Species Act, the fossil fuel industry and other

issues she counts as our modern-day plights, Tempest Williams compels readers to blaze forward through the chaos of political and spiritual undoing and embrace the new landscape that may emerge on the other side. “Erosion” is heartbreaking yet inspiring, as Tempest Williams advises: “We need not lose hope, we just need to locate where it dwells.”

—Bella Butler

BZN seeks local artists for terminal expansion—new date

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport is seeking local artists for their new terminal that depicts the culture and life of the Greater Yellowstone Region. Previously set for two months ago, this call for art had to be postponed due to COVID-19 but is back on, presenting an opportunity for local artist who hopefully have had some extra time on their hands for art and other hobbies. With the easing of some restrictions, they have set new dates for the expansion viewing, submission deadline, board review and installation of this project.

Construction has been underway at Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport as they continue their concourse expansion, which will add 70,000 square feet to the existing terminal. The expansion will add four additional gates, a third food and beverage location, room for additional outbound baggage handling, inside security and retail space. Piece submissions will be considered for the inside and outside of the terminal building and should be compatible with the airport’s existing architectural style.

There is a scheduled expansion viewing that will provide an opportunity for artists to see the space, so that they might include in their proposal a recommendation for placement. That viewing is slated for Friday, June 5 at 12 p.m. The airport asks artist to please contact them ahead of time of their intention to attend.

The airport is accepting previously submitted art works as well as art from those who were unable to submit during the first submission period. The full request for proposals can be found here: <https://bozemanairport.com/requests-for-proposals>.



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

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

Art Proposal Deadline: June 24, 2020

Contact Lisa Burgwin with any questions at (406) 388-6632 ext. 104 or lisa.burgwin@bozemanairport.com

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On May 5, 2020, Big Sky Resort Area District (District) voters approved a 1% “for Infrastructure” increase of Resort Tax. Per District Ordinance 98-01, as amended, businesses legally obligated to collect the 3% Resort Tax, must now collect at the new rate of 4% beginning July 1, 2020.

For more information on the 1% for Infrastructure tax visit:

resorttax.org/about/1-for-infrastructure/



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Summit Hotel 10513 | \$620,000 | MLS# 344166



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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, June 5 – Thursday, June 18

If your event falls between June 19 and July 2, please submit it by June 10 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, June 5

Friday Afternoon Club
EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Saturday, June 6

MLC Yard Sale
Morningstar Learning Center, 9 a.m.

Barks N' Beer

Bridger Animal Nutrition, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

National Trail Days with SMMBA

Leverich Canyon, 6 p.m.

Sunday, June 7

Afternoon Tea
Starlite, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Monday, June 8

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

Tuesday, June 9

Blood Drive
American Red Cross Building, Bozeman,
10 a.m.

Live music: Slate Hudson

MAP Brewing, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, June 10

Birding by Ear
Sacajawea Audubon, 5:30 p.m.

Beginner Mountain Bike Clinic

The Gear Wizard, 6 p.m.

Thursday, June 11

Live music: The Bridger Creek Boys
Red Tractor Pizza, 7 p.m.

Friday, June 12

Free Friday Night at MSC
Montana Science Center, 5 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, June 16

Start a Business with Power Up
Montana Women's business Center
Facebook, 5:30 p.m.



Bogert Farmer's Market at Lindley Park

June 15 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Bogert Farmer's Market is on this summer, starting on June 15 and continuing on every Tuesday through September. Stop by Lindley Park for fresh Gallatin Valley produce, crafts and food vendors. The state is treating outdoor markets as essential businesses and is allowing farmer's markets all over the county operate with restrictions in place.

Going on its 18th year, the Bogert Market is a place for families and friends to gather, socialize and support local in a fun community environment!

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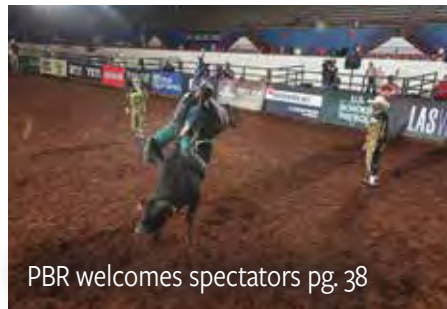


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SECTION 3: BUSINESS, HEALTH, SPORTS & FUN



MIIBS: Gallatin River Guides pg. 35



PBR welcomes spectators pg. 38



McGill's Restaurant pays homage pg. 42

Summer farmers markets deemed essential

BY MIRA BRODY

SOUTHWEST MONTANA – Strolling through vibrant booths of homemade goods, fresh produce and aromatic food trucks; the farmers market is a memory seared into many of our minds. Whether it's picking out a handful of colorful honey sticks, dancing to live music or perusing the aisles of vegetable starts and leafy greens, it is often a mark of summer and, with a few minor alterations, will continue to be in southwest Montana.

The Big Sky Farmers Market, Bozeman's Bogert Farmers Market and the Livingston Farmers Market are all on-par to open this summer, but must comply with social distancing guidelines. Under Gov. Steve Bullock's order, farmers markets are considered an essential service and are treated the same way as grocery stores.

Booths will be spaced further apart, vendors must pre-register, there will be no children's booth allowed until Phase 3, all vendors will be required to wear masks and have hand sanitizer at each station and, in order to prevent large groupings of people, picnic tables will be removed and there will be no live music or entertainment this summer.

Despite these alterations, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the many benefits of a localized food system as consumers recognize the weaknesses in the industrialized supply chain, the importance of eating healthy, fresh foods for immune system support and the power of circulating money in the local economy.

"If it's closer to home, there's more confidence that animals are being treated better and the conditions are better. There's also a lot of evidence that shows the sooner you eat a vegetable that has been picked that day, the more nutritious it is," said Lill Erickson, executive director of Western Sustainability Exchange, the market organizer and a Livingston-based nonprofit that specializes in regenerative agriculture and rural economic development. "The great thing about our local food market is we don't have to wait to make a decision. We can be a part of a solution here, and that empowers people."

According to Katie Plumb, owner of Farm Cart, a Bozeman-based local food subscription service, buying local also ensures a level of accountability that large chains don't feel tethered to because of their distance from their consumers.

"In the national or international food system, the money you spend doesn't really make it into the hands of the people who actually grew it/harvested it/raised it," said Plumb. "Which begs the question of where's the incentive for those producers to create a healthy, quality product if they're only seeing a teeny tiny fraction of the sale of each unit they produce?"

Farm Cart delivers weekly packages within a 10-mile radius to downtown Bozeman and offers a wide variety of local goods from all over the state, including dairy, meat, breads, dips, spices as well as produce and each delivery includes suggested recipes. They buy directly from farmers, ranchers and local businesses and local distributors who are bringing foods to the Bozeman area from other parts of the state, like Western Montana Growers Cooperative out of Missoula, creating an economic radius of about 200 miles, with the greatest concentration within 20-30 miles of Bozeman.

Because of her convenient delivery service, Plumb saw an uptick in subscriptions during COVID-19 and is happy to see that not many people have dropped off since.

"I think that's in part because people are cautious, and in part because once people start getting Farm Cart deliveries, they begin to appreciate



The Big Sky Farmer's Market kicks off on June 17 and will take place along Fire Pit Park and Town Center Avenue. Booths will be spaced out to adhere to social distancing guidelines and although there will be no live music this year, local musicians will be featured "live" broadcasted over the sound system. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY TOWN CENTER

not only the convenience of delivery, but also the quality of the local foods being provided," said Plumb.

Erickson said markets also meet the unmet needs in the community that have been further brought to light since the pandemic. WSE administers the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to Park County by providing \$50 vouchers to low-income seniors for fresh fruits, vegetables and honey. This year, WSE is doubling the number of vouchers to 100 senior citizens and connecting them to proxy shoppers who can do their shopping for them.

At the Big Sky market, roughly 90 vendors sell their products every Wednesday night and this year, the market will stretch from Fire Pit Park down Town Center Avenue and into the new Town Center Plaza by the Wilson Hotel. Farmers markets also produce their own sub-economies—vendors buy from each other—and act as an incubator for businesses. A lot of small businesses get their start at a market booth, outgrow as their customer base expands and makes room for a new start-up.

In lieu of live music, Big Sky is going to live stream performances from local musicians through the sound system, allowing them to support local artists and still be in compliance.

"The farmers market in Big Sky downtown Center is where everyone comes together in the summertime," said Erik Morrison, the director of the Big Sky market, which is in its 12th year. "It's a social celebration of the arts and culture of our little community. It has a special place in all of our hearts."

Big Sky Farmers Market

Every Wednesday from June 17 through Aug. 26 from 5-8 p.m. The market will run from Fire Pit Park down Town Hall Center Avenue and into Town Center Plaza by the Wilson Hotel.

Livingston Farmers Market

Every Wednesday from June 10 through September 16 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Miles Bandshell Park. The Market has designated 4:30-5:30 PM for at-risk patrons.

Bogert Farmers Market

Every Tuesday from June 9 to Sept. 9 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Lindley Park.

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Enjoying the Ride: The Great American Novel-coronavirus



BY SCOTT BROWN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

During these rapidly changing COVID-19 times, I am reminded of a few great quotes from “the father of American literature” and author of “The Great American Novel”, Mark Twain. The first quote of Twain’s that I find applicable today is “Facts are stubborn things, but statistics are pliable.”

It seems that statistics concerning every facet of the pandemic are changing daily. These statistics are being used as pawns in our game of life by politicians which brings in to focus another quote “Our lives, liberty and our property are never in greater danger than when Congress is in session.” Of course, these statistics are also being used by medical professionals, the media, citizens who support the lockdowns and social distancing and by citizens who oppose these policies and want to fully reopen our economy. The danger with much of this behavior is it’s being driven by statistics, not facts.

As a financial planner, I assist my clients with things they can control and things based on known certainties or facts. This is precisely why the cornerstone of my client relationships are a comprehensive financial plan. With that said, as an investment manager, and asset class investor myself, statistics play a vital role in my profession, as they do in many other professions and decisions people, companies, other organizations and governments make every day.

As such, I don’t envy our leaders who are facing these challenges. I can only hope, along with the rest of you, that we as a nation are already preparing and planning for our next inevitable crisis.

At its core, financial planning helps families, individuals and businesses plan and prepare for short and long-term goals as well as life’s ups, downs and uncertainties. Very simply, it is a valuable tool that can assist in better understanding goals, resources to accomplish those goals and how to prioritize both.

Goals could include building an adequate cash reserve, taking vacations, pursuing hobbies, protecting loved ones, purchasing a home, sending kids to college, business continuity, retirement and leaving a legacy. Your resources include total household or business income, savings, investments, real estate holdings, business holdings and inheritance. Once you have identified both goals and resources you are able to develop a financial plan.

Ultimately, the plan is a process or a living and breathing document that can be massaged, and manipulated as your goals, resources and realities change. It is fluid and flexible so that it can change as your life priorities change.

The planning process will identify how goals will be funded and what investment strategies should be considered to reach your goals. It outlines how those strategies should be implemented and monitors your progress towards your goals. Over time it will review existing goals and identify new ones. In our practice, we review these plans at least annually for each client.

In the end, a comprehensive financial plan will give you confidence. It’s similar to the confidence you achieve once you’ve mastered skiing a challenging run. You stand over the entrance knowing how important that first turn is, core engaged, standing strong on your downhill ski, then jumping into the next beautiful arc!

As we continue to navigate our new abnormal, and we hear opinions espoused at how this time is different, I am recalling one last Twain quote, “History doesn’t repeat itself but it often rhymes.” As always, stay safe, be well and never forget to set your sites on your goals and keep enjoying the ride!

Scott L. Brown is the cofounder and managing principal of Shore to Summit Wealth Management. His wealth management career spans more than 25 years and he currently works and lives in Bozeman with his wife and two sons.



Making it in Big Sky: Gallatin River Guides

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – A staple in the Big Sky community for more than 35 years, Gallatin River Guides reopened for business on April 27, just in time for eager, springtime anglers. After assuming ownership over a year ago, Mike Donaldson and his crew were thrown a curveball, having to close for over four weeks due to COVID-19.

Adaptation was GRG's strategy during the time that the store was closed. "In an effort to continue to serve local folks that needed flies and tackle we started a curbside pickup service," Donaldson said. "Our manager, Drew Hay and myself, would take orders over the phone and leave them on the back porch for customers."

Now, adhering to the travel and quarantine guidelines, GRG is once again operating at full capacity, offering their guide services and selling merchandise at their location along U.S. Highway 191.

With the ripple effects of COVID-19 still lingering, Donaldson acknowledged the toughest decision facing him currently is employment opportunities. He intends to employ the usual number of individuals that he would any other summer. Donaldson recently exchanged emails with EBS to discuss GRG's current business happenings.

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

Mike Donaldson: Our routine has stayed the same but lately the things we are working on have changed. Even when the store was closed, we were here working on projects and getting ready for summer. Recently we have started the process of figuring out how to find the balance between conducting business and following guidelines to keep our staff, guides, customers and community safe. It certainly has been interesting but we are confident we can make it happen.

EBS: *How often are you cleaning the shop?*

M.D.: We have been continuously cleaning the shop throughout the day, every day, in a big effort to keep our customers and staff safe. All of our guides are also following routines to keep their vehicles, boats and gear clean and sanitized. It has definitely required a different mind set but it is really important to us and is now a part of our daily operations here at Gallatin River Guides.

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

M.D.: That's a really good question and a tough one to answer. It has literally been day to day since this whole thing started and we expect to see continued fluctuations through the remainder of this year. As with so many other businesses in Big Sky, our primary season runs from June through September and people generally plan trips during those months well in advance. The next 30 to 45 days are going to tell us a lot about how our summer business is going to look. It's certainly going to be different than last year when a good share of our summer trips were on our calendar by the end of May.

EBS: *Have you adopted any new business offerings or practices as you adapt to the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape?*

M.D.: One of the things we have tried to do as a result of the current environment is create some new relationships within our community here in Big Sky. It has been an effort to do some cross advertising and help each other out in certain areas when we can. A lot of local businesses are scrambling to make the best out of this situation and it



Following a closure that spurred an adapted business strategy while Gallatin River Guides doors were shuttered due to COVID-19, owner Mike Donaldson and his staff have resumed operations serving anglers. PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE DONALDSON

has been great to see everyone looking out for one another. Hopefully we see relationships grow as a result and last into the future.

EBS: *Are you receiving an influx of guided fishing trip bookings as life solely returns to normal?*

M.D.: Slowly but surely, we are beginning to come back to life. We are starting to see some interest and book trips for people that are planning summer vacations. The last couple weeks or so have been positive and we are gaining confidence we will see folks interested in getting out on the river this summer. A lot of people we are talking to are excited to spend some time outdoors and enjoy the activities Montana has to offer.

EBS: *How many flies can you tie in an hour?*

M.D.: Good question! It just depends on the particular fly I am tying. Easier patterns like a Zebra Midge or San Juan Worm if I am focused probably close to 30 or 40 flies an hour. Harder patterns like certain streamers or dry flies it could take over an hour to tie a single fly. When I was guiding full time, my winters were pretty much spent behind a vice tying thousands of flies for the upcoming guide season.

EBS: *What is the most popular fly at the shop currently?*

M.D.: We actually did a major overhaul of our fly selection for 2020 and have something like 100 new patterns in our bins this year. Over all our Czech and Euro Nymphing section is really impressive and popular right now. Over the last couple of years, we have seen the European style of nymphing really grow and have discovered it is quite productive especially on the Gallatin and Madison rivers.

This spring our new selection of streamers has been a hit namely the Ménége Dungeon. We have seen it catch some monsters on the Madison River and Hebgen Lake.

EBS: *How have the river conditions been of late? Are the fish biting?*

M.D.: We are in our spring runoff at the moment so river conditions are changing daily. The Gallatin River has been fishing phenomenal with these slightly higher flows and off-color water. With all this warm weather in the forecast we will start to see windows where the Gallatin is just too high to fish. The Madison River this time of the year has an epic caddis hatch that has potential for a memorable day on the water. Overall fishing has been really good and we expect it to continue throughout the summer.

EBS: *What is the largest trout you have ever caught?*

M.D.: The largest trout I have ever caught was a 23-inch brown on the Madison River. It was a super saucy fish that ate a Copper Zonker on a hard drag just above McAtee Bridge.

EBS: *What is your favorite part of every workday?*

M.D.: The favorite part of my workday is when all of our customers that have been on guided trips return back to the shop. It is very rewarding hearing about the day's adventures and seeing how much fun they had on the river. Especially when it is folks that have never fly fished before and you can tell we just introduced them to a new hobby and life long pursuit. All of our guides are amazing and it is really cool to see how much people appreciate the effort they put in when taking people fishing.

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

M.D.: Never stop building meaningful relationships with customers and other people in your industry. Choosing to instead view competitors as potential partners and collaborators can positively impact your business in a big way.

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BIG SKY CHAMBER
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Yours in Health

BY DR. ANDREA WICK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Everything we put into our bodies becomes part of our cells and tissues. Nutrients from our food helps to keep connective tissue and bones strong, hair healthy and skin young and vibrant.

Your food choices can cause disease and inflammation, change your mood and even your mental well-being. If you have any pre-disposition to diabetes, heart disease, cancer or auto-immune disease it is important to be mindful of what is on your fork.

There are many different diet choices out there, ranging from paleo to vegan. There is no right way for anyone to eat, since we all have a different genetic make-up. However, there are a few guidelines to be aware of when making healthy food decisions.

1. Choose organic produce whenever possible. Glyphosate or Roundup, is a pesticide used on most crops. Studies done by researchers at the University of Washington, found that ingesting excess amounts of glyphosate increases the risk of cancer by 41 percent.
2. Know where your meat sources come from. Grain-fed meat has a high omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. A higher omega-6 diet can lead to inflammation, cognitive decline, allergies, heart disease, arthritis and mental disorders. Omega-6 examples include grapeseed, corn, soy, and sunflower oils. Organic, grass-fed meat contains a high amount of omega-3s. To add omega-3s into your diet, eat salmon, sardines, walnuts, chia seeds and flaxseed.
3. Limit your sugar intake. Daily sugar consumption should not exceed 25

You are what you eat

grams or 6 ¼ teaspoons. High amounts of sugar and high fructose corn syrup lead to a fatty liver, diabetes and heart disease.

4. Drink clean water and lots of it! Heavy metals and carcinogens can be found in unhealthy amounts in drinking water, causing tap water toxicity. Reverse osmosis and filtration water machines are a way to ensure you are drinking clean, healthy water. Drink your body weight in ounces daily. Adding lemon to your water is a great way to sneak in extra electrolytes, plus lemons are an excellent liver cleanser.
5. Eat small meals during the day. It is good to eat small meals or healthy snacks regularly, especially if you are inclined to have low blood sugar. Mixed nuts and seeds, guacamole, hummus, or apple slices with nut butter are some great options.
6. Limit caffeine and alcohol intake. Try not to exceed drinking more than 1-2 cups of coffee per day, and do not drink caffeine after noon. Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day. Be mindful when consuming alcohol, as it too can contain hidden ingredients such as high fructose corn syrup and glyphosate.
7. Eat several cups of vegetables a day, mainly consisting of greens such as kale, spinach, microgreens and broccoli. Greens are high in vitamin B, A, K, C, and folate.

Always aim to eat live, whole foods. The less processed and packaged foods you eat, the better you will feel on the inside and out.

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

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TUESDAY, JUNE 23RD | 8:30 - 9:30 AM

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

In response to COVID-19's impact on Big Sky Businesses, the Big Sky Chamber with Visit Big Sky, repurposed \$192,500 from their FY20 Resort Tax Allocations to provide 57 small businesses with 20 employees or less micro grants in the amount of \$2,500 or \$5,000. In addition, 80 Reopening Bundles were supplied to consumer-facing businesses throughout the community leading into the Memorial Day Weekend. Finally, throughout the pandemic, the Big Sky Chamber provided resources for federal and state emergency economic assistance to both businesses and their employees, in English and Spanish, via a Hotline and online webinars.



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BIG SKY CHAMBER

In September 2019, the Big Sky Chamber launched the Inaugural Leadership Big Sky program with 15 participants in this 7-month program dedicated to educating our future leaders on how Big Sky works.



Eggs & Issues

Gallatin - Madison JOINT COUNTY COMMISSION MEETINGS

For three years, the Big Sky Chamber has convened our Gallatin and Madison County Commissioners here in Big Sky for our *Eggs & Issues* discussion around an emerging issue that needs attention, followed by the public Joint County Commission Meeting. This biannual event draws upwards of 100 people representing both businesses and residents alike.



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BIG SKY CHAMBER

PBR welcomes spectators

July event will mark return of fans to PBR competition

BY BRANDON WALKER

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – With three closed-to-spectator events under their belt and another month of events following the same structure, PBR is preparing to welcome the return of fans July 10-12 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Following an unprecedented hiatus from competition of more than five weeks due to COVID-19, the Professional Bull Riders tour began their return to competition by hosting events without spectators in attendance on April 25. After compiling and adjusting safety guidelines from the closed events, PBR is ready to take the next step in their return to competition.

For three nights the Denny Sanford PREMIER Center will play host to the Monster Energy Team Challenge Championship, marking another trailblazing PBR competition. The event will also become the first held at the PREMIER Center since the pandemic broke out.

“We understand that not only the eyes of the community, the region, but our industry will be on us as to how we take care of our business and take care of fan safety and expectation,” said Denny Sanford PREMIER Center General Manager Mike Krewson. “We’re certainly excited for that opportunity so that other people can take what we’re doing, what we’ve done, and translate to their events and [their] venues.”

Krewson also said this will be one of the first competitions in the United States allowing spectators to attend. PBR Commissioner Sean Gleason described that becoming the first sport to hold events and bring spectators into the mix wasn’t a competition with other major sports leagues and that safety is the top priority.

“In Oklahoma, I was thankful our plan was able to bring our cowboys, stock contractors and crew back to work. And now, looking ahead to Sioux Falls we are glad to welcome fans back into the arena to enjoy the sport they love,” Gleason said. “Personally, what it means most to me is I’m proud of our team’s accomplishments during the most challenging period of my professional career.”

PBR and the PREMIER Center collectively laid out detailed safety guidelines for the July event which were first considered and approved by South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, the City of Sioux Falls as well as the ownership of the PREMIER Center.

“We feel we have a very good plan in place, but we still obviously will reserve the right to tweak what we feel as we get closer to the event date,” Krewson said.

Among the lengthy list of guidelines, the plan involves filling the arena that can hold as many as 12,000 to no more than 60 percent occupancy, restricting bathroom occupancy, providing masks to all in attendance, socially distanced seating sections, implementing crowd flow methods, and eliminating points of contact when possible such as

encouraging card purchases at concessions and virtual tickets rather than hard copies.

“PBR drafted our ‘Be Cowboy Safe,’ fan protocols and ASM, the arena operator, has developed its Venue Shield program. We essentially married both plans for the Sioux Falls fan protocols,” Gleason said.

Recently Sioux Falls began allowing businesses to function without restrictions. The relaxation of restrictions permits the PREMIER Center to fill every seat with a spectator, but PBR as well as Krewson and the PREMIER Center are choosing to tread lightly.

“Legally there won’t be any restrictions. We could be at 100 percent capacity. We will probably be at around 60 percent, just to be on the side of safety,” Krewson said.

While spectators may elect to watch from the socially distanced seating area, there will also be a “normal” seating section that will allow spectators to sit as they would’ve before the pandemic occurred. Masks will be provided to all spectators that enter the arena, but not required to be worn, except by PREMIER Center and PBR personnel.

“I’m proud of how the CBS telecasts have still captured an inherently very exciting sport featuring the best cowboy athletes and rankest bulls in the world,” Gleason said. “That said, there’s nothing like the atmosphere of a PBR event with fans in the building. It’s an understatement to say we look forward to Sioux Falls for the championship weekend of the PBR Monster Energy Team Challenge July 10-12.”

Gleason said that PBR is following all guidelines provided by governing bodies and adjustments may be made to any PBR event during the pandemic.



A PBR competitor rides at one of the closed to spectator events in Oklahoma recently. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDY WATSON, BULL STOCK MEDIA

Golf Tips from a Pro: New “Learn at 11” golf clinics

BY MARK WEHRMAN
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The most gratifying part of my job as a PGA Professional is when a student comes into the shop after their round with a huge smile because of recent success on the golf course. They have just shot their lowest score, they gained confidence in their chipping, they played an entire round without a 3 putt, or they hit their longest drive ever! I could go on and on about the happy stories told to us because of hard work and dedication someone has put into their game through practice, instruction, and most of all, simply having fun!

I am so excited to announce the re-branding of our group golf clinics to be offered here at Big Sky Resort Golf Course. This summer we will be offering daily clinics during the months of July and August. The all new “Learn at 11” group golf clinics will encompass all aspects of the game including the full swing, chipping, pitching, putting, bunker play, and specialty shots.

This year we will be limiting the number of participants for each clinic to a max of 4 people. Having a maximum 4:1 student/teacher ratio will be a better learning environment for the students with more individual, one-on-one, time with the instructor. Learn at 11 group clinics are co-ed with the exception being Monday and Tuesday, where they are specific to men and ladies respectively.



Golf season is underway. Now is the time to practice your craft and improve your game. Clinics and individual lessons are great methods to do so. PHOTO BY DAVE PECUNIES, COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

If you are as excited as we are to golf this summer, please don't wait to start working on and improving your game. Personally, I enjoy the game even more the better I play. We look forward to the opportunity to help you improve your game and lower your scores in the process.

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The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
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The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
Tract 3B-1
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The Ranches at Yellow Mountain
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Homestead at the Beacon
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Rocking S7 Ranch Lot 4
Bozeman, MT
20.232 ACRES / \$650K

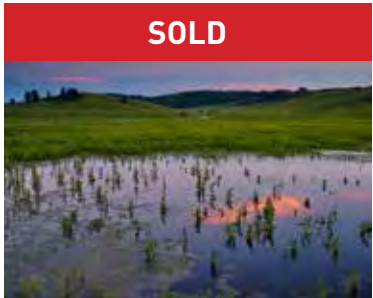


380 Mountain Man Trail
Montana Ranch
20.8 ACRES / \$325K

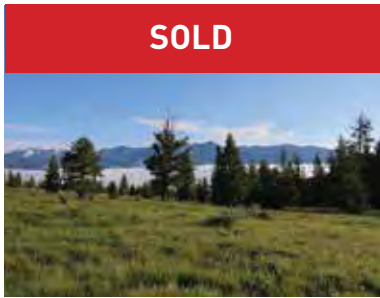


223 Town Center Avenue
Big Sky, MT
2882 SQ FT / 1601 SF Patio
\$1.525M

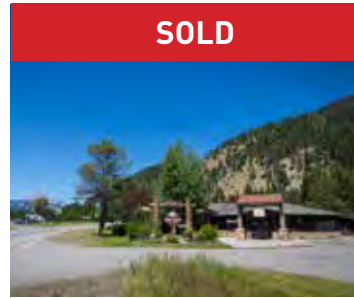
RECENTLY SOLD



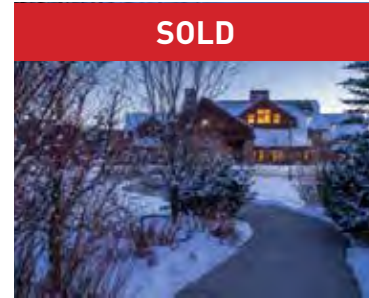
Yellowstone Ranch Preserve
List Price: \$19M



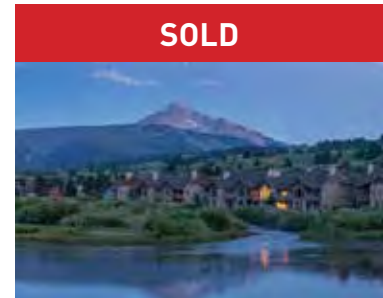
Mountain Meadows
120 Acres / \$3.495M



Big Sky Corner Property
List Price: \$3.24M



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

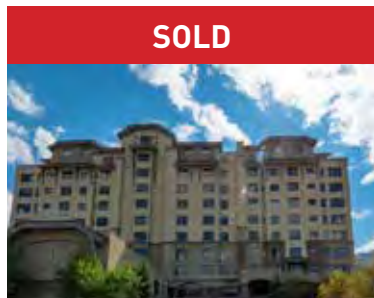


Crail Ranch Unit 40
List Price: \$1.35M

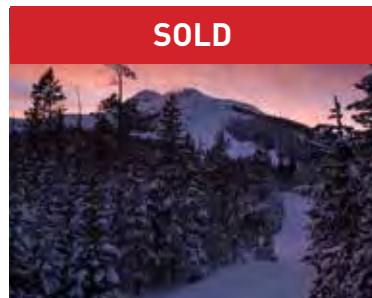
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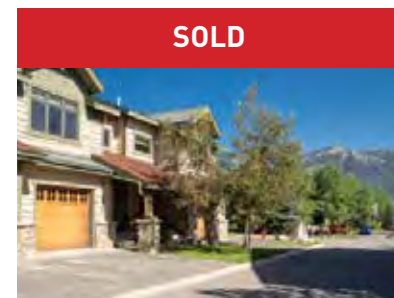
Hidden Village
15 Blue Flax Place
2,788 SQ FT / \$599K



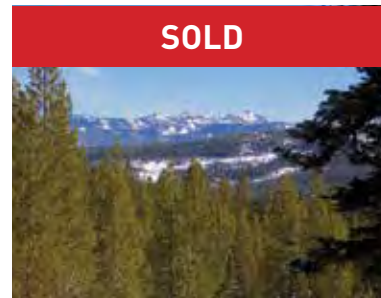
Summit 911/912
List Price: \$595K



Lot 39 Diamond Hitch
1 ACRE / \$595K



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



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

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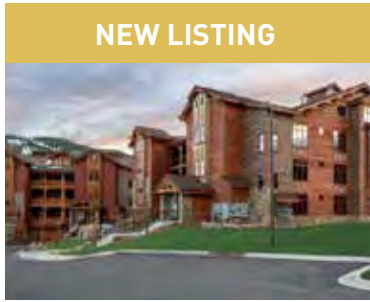
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3,677 SQ FT / \$1.895M



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211 B Pheasant Tail
\$692K



80 Aspen Leaf Unit 4
1400 SQ FT / \$549K

BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA



20 ACRES
20 ACRES
\$699K



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



Lot 71 Morning Glory
3.65 Acres / \$375K



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



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



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



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



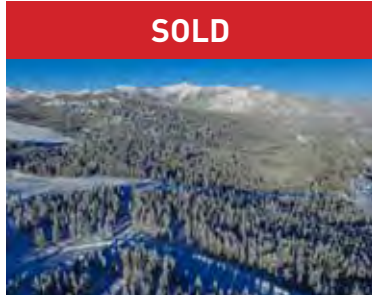
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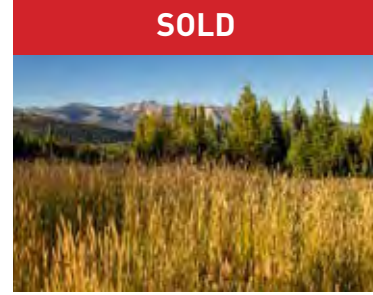
2078 Little Coyote List
List Price: \$1.079M



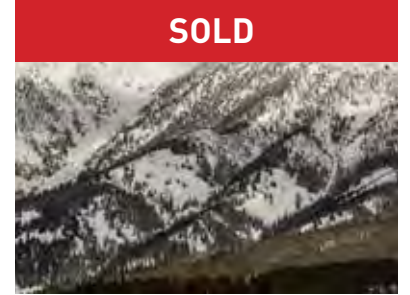
Ski Tip Lot 10
List Price: \$975K



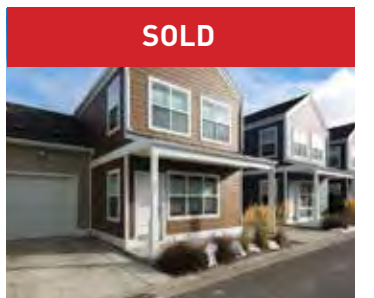
81 Pheasant Tail Ln. Unit 2
2,707 SQ FT / \$839K



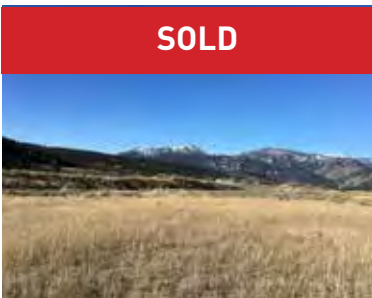
Lot 64 Goshawk
1.04 ACRES / \$775K



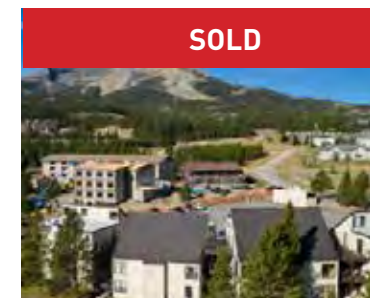
Lot 44 Diamond Hitch
1.25 ACRE / \$699K



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



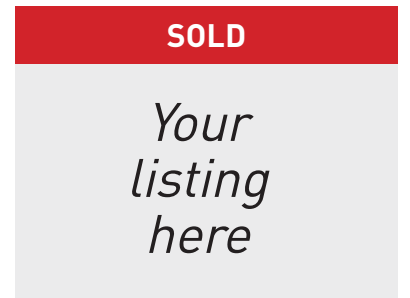
COS 2071 Tract 1 Gallatin Road
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47220 Gallatin Rd. Unit #2
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McGill's Restaurant pays homage to the canyon's first pioneers

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – As Amber Brask rattles off the lengthy history of 320 Guest Ranch in Gallatin Canyon, just south of Big Sky, she recites years, acreage and names without consulting a notepad. That's because she's been working here since she was a little girl—the ranch's history is etched into her upbringing since her father, visiting from Boston, bought it in 1986 after a night out at nearby Buck's T-4.

The ranch was founded in 1898 by Sam Wilson on 160 acres. Wilson's father, Clinton, then homesteaded an adjacent 160 acres, both of which were purchased by Dr. Caroline McGill, the first female doctor in the state and founder of Museum of the Rockies, for a combined 320 acres. At that time it was called the Buffalo Horn Resort and shortly after her death, it was purchased by Jim and Gail Walma who operated it as an outfitter, a space for guests to hunt, fish and relax beside Buffalo Horn Creek and the Gallatin River.

After Brask's father purchased it, he had the cabins built that dot the banks of the creek. Her grandparents, who lived in Arizona, would come up for the summer and her grandfather would re-stain the cabins while her grandmother owned an operated Buffalo Horn Boutique—now the flower shop. Although Brask's parents separated and she left Montana for a few years, she'd always come visit until returning permanently in 2017 where she manages the ranch and lives with her father and children.

"It's just been wonderful to be able to live here and work here," Brask said. "I have two kids, we got some bees and a green house and I love that I can take my kids and integrate them in my working life."

Today, the ranch operates as a guest house, dining hall and wedding and conference venue. Although they no longer have an outfitter license, they do offer horseback rides. Currently, Brask and her team are gearing up to hire

for the summer season and channeling her efforts toward rebranding the restaurant—now called McGill's, in homage to Dr. Caroline McGill.

When you walk into the restaurant, the front part of the building remains from the original homestead that Sam Wilson built. Brask points out the log chinking, noting that someone, during its construction, chose to wedge a few pieces of petrified wood into one corner. In fact, much of the decorum, even in the newer portion of the building, is from Dr. McGill's time at the ranch, from old mule packs, to elk and bison mounts and saddles. The walls are adorned with one of the largest collections of original paintings by West Yellowstone artist, Gary Carter. They depict familiar scenes of Gallatin Canyon, Yellowstone National Park and the Beartooth Mountains.

Whether you're dressed up for a night out or coming in from a long hike in the mountains, Brask wants patrons of McGill's to feel welcome in the fine-dining restaurant saloon. McGill's menu will also continue the land's pioneer spirit, serving up hearty local cuts of bison, elk and trout, but elevating it with a nice sauce or microgreen. Brask's favorite item on the menu is the poutine.

"Caroline McGill, she was doing something no one else was doing and we're trying to continue that pioneer spirit through our food and the vendors that we select," Brask said. They are partnering with local producers and farmers for fresh, local cuisine, which she said is important to keeping the legacy of the ranch and its history alive. "It's about paying homage to the past."

True to 320 Guest Ranch tradition, they are hosting a pig roast every Tuesday this summer and invite local musicians, vendors and a brewery or distillery to sell their goods for a local farmer's market.

Part of rebranding the 320 Guest Ranch's saloon to McGill's was to provide it with its own identity. You don't have to be a guest in order to come stop by for some good local food and enjoy the atmosphere. Whether you're passing through on your way to Yellowstone or Big Sky, or a canyon local, McGill's has plenty of history to go around.



The front entrance of McGill's at 320 Guest Ranch is the original homestead built by Sam Wilson in 1898. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

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.

No better time to embrace the pineapple



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

Long the symbol of wealth, prestige and hospitality, the pineapple is needed now more than ever.

Though native to South America, pineapples are now grown all over the world. Furthermore, it was Columbus's discovery of them on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe that catapulted them into Europe and Asia.

However, this took some time.

Pineapples require a warm, humid tropical climate for optimal growth, and that isn't exactly abundant in Europe. Soon the British and Danish mastered cultivating them in hothouses as early as the 1700's. but they took time and supply was very small and in high demand. Leave it to Europe's royalty and elite to crave them even more. Soon they would become a symbol of great wealth and high class because they would be purchased to be displayed to guests as a sign of prestige.

And it also meant that if you served pineapple or merely even displayed it, you were viewed as someone who embraced kindness, generosity and a welcome home.

And in typical snobbish fashion, if you couldn't afford to purchase one (which could be several thousand dollars in today's money), you could rent one to simply carry around at a party like a small dog to enhance your image of wealth, only to be returned the following day.

Today, the pineapple is as commonplace as any other fruit we see in the produce section, as well as canned in the middle of the grocery store, yet they are far from ordinary.

The pineapple tree is in fact not a tree but a plant, and a large one at that. It grows pink and red flowers that eventually turn yellow when they mature. When the flowers are just starting out, they are a cluster of many individual and separate flowerets called an inflorescence that fuse together as they grow larger and expand.

And take note the next time you see someone carefully select one in the grocery store that is under ripe and tell you they will be clever and store it upside down on the counter at home to finish. They are also one of very few fruits or vegetables that stop ripening the moment they are picked. When you buy it, you get what you get.

If they aren't unique enough at this point, the points that make up the outside of its surface follow a diagonal spiral pattern which falls into what is called the Fibonacci sequence mathematical equation.

But back to hospitality.

With all the turmoil we now face in the midst of pandemics and civil unrest, perhaps its time to move the pineapple to the front of our focus. Make a pineapple upside-down cake, a summery cocktail or infuse some local Montana vodka. Or maybe just dice it up fine and incorporate it into lime green Jell-O like my grandmother did for decades at, quite literally, every single family gathering.

Or better yet, what if one day a year, all across this nation, the hospitality industry displayed a pineapple in one great gesture of hospitable solidarity?

As we all re-open in whatever form or fashion that looks like, lets think about what this otherwise usual fruit represents.

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



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American Bank, headquartered at 1632 W. Main St., Bozeman, MT, 59715 is seeking regulatory approval to relocate the American Bank Big Sky Branch from 1700 Lone Mountain Trail, Big Sky, MT, 59716 to 78 Meadow Village Dr., Unit A, Big Sky, MT, 59716. Any person wishing to comment on this application may file his or her comments in writing with the regional director of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation at the FDIC San Francisco Regional Office, 25 Jessie St. at Ecker Square, Suite 2300, San Francisco, CA, 94105-2780, not later than June 20, 2020. The nonconfidential portions of the application are on file at the appropriate FDIC office and are available for public inspection during regular business hours. Photocopies of the nonconfidential portion of the application file will be made available upon request.

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American Life in Poetry:

Column 792

BY TED KOOSER

U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

I've shown you a couple of poems from the anthology, *Local News: Poetry About Small Towns*, from MWPB Books, P.O. Box 8, in Fairwater, WI. Here's another, by Mark Vinz, who lives in Minnesota. Time and timelessness. We've all been in this café, haven't we? His latest book of poetry is *Permanent Record*.

Center Café

Well, you're in town, then. The boys from the class reunion wander in and take their places in the corner booth, just as they might have fifty years ago—grayer, balder, wearing hats announcing places far away. Their conversation rises, falls to the inevitable—a missing friend who worked right up until the end, another who is long past traveling. Smiles grow distant as their silence overtakes the room. The busy waitress pauses, nods. She's always known the boys.

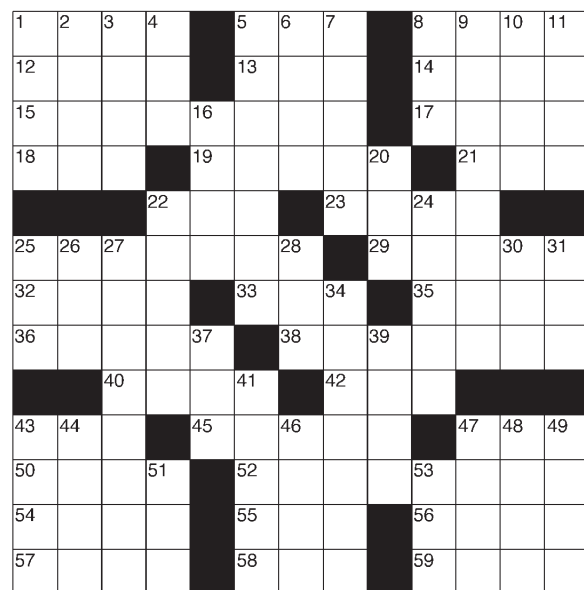
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Weaverbird
 - 5 Compass direction
 - 8 P.I. dyewood tree
 - 12 In the same place (Lat.)
 - 13 Rend
 - 14 Victory site of Napoleon
 - 15 Lija
 - 17 Ger. admiral
 - 18 Corpulent
 - 19 Alliance
 - 21 Move a camera
 - 22 Soul or spirit (Fr.)
 - 23 Glowing
 - 25 Tyro
 - 29 Earth (Lat.)
 - 32 Cone of silver
 - 33 Briefly
 - 35 contemporary
 - 35 Ruminant
 - 36 String of mules
 - 38 Sea green
 - 40 Fly
 - 42 Kind of keel
 - 43 Bachelor of Fine Arts (abbr.)
 - 45 Dravidian language
 - 47 Detective
 - 50 Berne's river
 - 52 Regatta (2 words)
 - 54 First principles
 - 55 Romanian money
 - 56 Black
 - 57 Ooze
 - 58 Addams Family cousin
 - 59 Rubber tree
- DOWN**
- 1 Trivial quarrel
 - 2 Son of Samuel
 - 3 Handle
 - 4 Soft drink
 - 5 Grape-vine disease
 - 6 Unless (Lat.)
 - 7 Spartan magistrate
 - 8 Fr. pronoun
 - 9 Granat (2 words)
 - 10 Fancy
 - 11 Hold on property
 - 16 Smoke
 - 20 Used to express
 - negation
 - 22 Drove of horses
 - 24 Car
 - 25 Amazon tributary
 - 26 With (Ger.)
 - 27 Dropsy
 - 28 Sinbad's bird
 - 30 Classic car
 - 31 Scot. alder tree
 - 34 Recalcitrant
 - 37 Cereal grain or grass
 - 39 Lively song
 - 41 Heb. teacher
 - 43 Semitic deity
 - 44 Gooseberry
 - 46 Water-filled ditch
 - 47 Forbidden
 - 48 Ecology (abbr.)
 - 49 Recent (suf.)
 - 51 Yorkshire river
 - 53 Alkali

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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



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A122

Corner Quote

You can hike into the Yellowstone backcountry. You can camp in the Yellowstone backcountry. You can take food into the Yellowstone backcountry, and you're surrounded by grizzly bears. And it's—it's a very, very thrilling, peculiar situation. Every sound that you hear in the night, you wonder is this a grizzly bear coming to tear into my tent?

—David Quammen

BIG SKY BEATS

"Losing My Religion" – R.E.M.

"Losing My Religion" was a song built around its recognizable mandolin riff and a bassline inspired by Fleetwood Mac's bassist John McVie. The song was released as the first single from the group's 1991 album *Out of Time*, and considered an unlikely hit for the group, earning extensive airplay on the radio as well as MTV and VH1 due to its critically-acclaimed music video.

Despite the song title, lead singer Michael Stipe has repeatedly stated that the song's lyrics are not about religion but a southern expression that means losing your temper or civility, feeling frustrated or pining for unrequited love. Stipe compares the song's theme to that of "Every Breath You Take" by The Police, saying, "It's just a classic obsession pop song," one that gives the listener the ability to relate, no matter where they are or what they're going through.



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”

Plastic Runs Through It

Turning the tide on plastic pollution will take all hands on deck

BY SOPHIE TSAIRIS

David Breck follows Black Butte Creek, tracing its flow upstream in search of its headwaters. Trudging through 4 feet of snow, he snowshoes toward the northwest corner of Yellowstone National Park.

Three miles in, his GPS app shows he has reached the spot he's looking for. He kneels down, sinking into the snow, and using the claw end of a hammer, starts digging. The snow is too deep, and unable to access the source, he walks downstream a quarter mile to find an accessible patch of open running water.

Breck co-owns and manages Bridger Brewing, and has been a Bozeman, Montana resident for over 20 years. He admits that when Adventure Scientists first emailed him about helping with a microplastics project, he didn't respond right away. In fact, at the time Breck had no idea what microplastics were.

In 1955, *Life* magazine published a story titled “Throwaway Living.” The article celebrated plastic as a miracle material that would save the American housewife from drowning in dirty dishes. Two generations later, we are drowning in plastics.

Each spring, the blanket of snow covering the Northern Rockies and Greater Yellowstone melts, unveiling water bottles, Snickers wrappers, ski straps, and a myriad of other miscellaneous plastic, discarded or lost but far from decomposed.

Plastics were first created in 1907 by Leo Hendrik Baekeland to replace a demand for ivory used for making billiard balls, but exploded onto the market after World War II. Since this boom in production, about 8 billion tons of plastic have been produced, making our daily lives easier and cheaper with lighter, stronger goods. Once used, plastics are recycled, or more often thrown in the trash. They may crumble into tiny pieces, but nonetheless can persist in the environment for thousands of years.

Until January 2018, the United States was exporting at least one-third of its recycling to other countries, with half of that slated for China. For decades China has sorted through the recycling of other nations, but has recently declared a trade ban on 24 kinds of solid waste in an effort to protect its environmental and health interests. As piles of recyclable plastics build up in developed nations with nowhere to send it, the question becomes where the “away” in “throwaway living” will be in the future.

Plastic has been a gateway to innovation in medicine, production, outdoor recreation and efficient living. Our consumption of it has outpaced scientific study of its impacts on human health and the environment, but research is catching up and the prognosis for the planet is dire.

The Dominican Republic, known for its pristine ivory beaches, has been gaining international attention for a continuous and shocking wave of plastic garbage crashing onto its shores. The plastic is being pushed to the beaches from trash piles that have formed out in the ocean, far from any major city. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, located between California and Hawaii, is the most infamous of these piles, and has become a graveyard for at least 87,000 tons of discarded plastic and debris. The Garbage Patch and its plastic wave are only a few symptoms of the larger global problem.

There is a perception that plastic pollution is a coastal problem, but people are beginning to connect the issue with headwaters communities throughout the inner-mountain West. The rivers in our small mountain towns eventually lead to the ocean and within these towns, individuals, organizations and businesses are making waves that can help turn the tides of plastic waste.

Having located the source he was searching for, Breck pulls a metal growler out of his pack, a vessel he is familiar with. Today he will not be filling the canteen with beer, but with water samples from Black Butte Creek. He fills it with water, caps it, labels it and puts it back in his pack. This is the third site Breck has been to in the past few months, collecting water samples for Adventure Scientists' Gallatin Microplastics Project. He now knows that a microplastic is a piece of plastic smaller than 5 millimeters long, and is volunteering his time to collect data that will help scientists learn how they are affecting his community, and what to do about it.

Adventure Scientists, a nonprofit based in Bozeman that provides researchers with difficult-to-obtain data relating to environmental issues, has been studying microplastics



At the confluence of Black Butte Creek and the Gallatin River, David Breck holds water samples he took for Adventure Scientists' Gallatin Microplastics Initiative. PHOTO BY CHELSEA KADERAVEK

in the world's oceans since 2013. The organization began looking at the problem locally in 2015, in freshwater ecosystems closer to home.

The goal of the project was to collect baseline data on microplastics in the Gallatin River watershed—where they exist, their concentration, and how they might affect the local ecosystem and surrounding communities. More than 60 trained volunteers, like Breck, returned to varying sites on the Gallatin River and its tributaries, sampling for microplastics to create a profound picture of plastic pollution throughout the watershed.

Known widely for its appearance in the film *A River Runs Through It*, the Gallatin River flows from a source 7,000 feet above sea level in Yellowstone National Park. Its watershed forms the headwaters of the largest river system in the Lower 48 states, the Missouri-Mississippi.

“We wanted to know if this river, with its headwaters system located in America's first national park, flowing through both wilderness areas and federal land, is part of a local problem as well as a global problem,” said project director Katie Christiansen.

After sampling 72 sites in the watershed, the study showed 57 percent of Gallatin River water samples contained microplastic pollution.

The long-term effects of plastic pollution on freshwater ecosystems are still understudied, but known threats include entanglement or entrapment of fish and other aquatic organisms in larger pieces of debris. Less visibly, microplastics can accumulate in fish and other organisms that ingest them, causing endocrine disruption and behavioral changes. The tiny plastics act like magnets, attracting other pollutants like PCBs, a group of toxic, man-made chemicals that can impair the health of aquatic organisms. Once ingested, these pollutants can travel up the food chain.

“Microplastics are here,” Christiansen said. “They are in the air we breathe and in



Thermophiles that grow in Yellowstone's hot springs, such as the Morning Glory Pool pictured here, are being studied for their potential in recycling plastics. PHOTO BY NEAL HERBERT/NPS

the water we drink. If we are finding microplastics in high alpine lakes and at the headwaters of remote rivers, then they are everywhere.”

Christiansen says business owners like Breck are the key to getting the community involved with this issue. “He is so concerned about the way his business is contributing to the problems in our world and he has taken steps to do something real about it,” she said. Bridger Brewing has eliminated as much one-time-use packaging as possible and now uses glass mason jars and metal straws in place of plastic.

“We’ve taken small steps in the right direction,” Breck said. “But the most important thing that has come of it is that it starts a conversation with people about plastic waste when they come through our door.”

Kirsten Kapp holds a bachelor’s degree in wildlife and fisheries management and a master’s in conservation biology. She spent years studying bear-human conflict. Now Kapp is a professor at Central Wyoming College where she studies and teaches about how fish are affected by water pollution. Nobody seemed to be doing research on plastic pollution in freshwater rivers, so she turned to a source in her own backyard.

In July 2016, Kapp began a study sampling and documenting microplastic pollution in the Snake River, which flows for 1,078 miles and is the largest tributary of the Columbia River. Beginning at its headwaters at the boundary of Yellowstone National Park in the remote Wyoming mountains, she took samples along every 50 miles of the river as it flows through Idaho, Oregon and Washington, where it meets the Columbia River.

Kapp’s study provides baseline data of microplastics in a freshwater river and locates several hotspot areas that stand out for the quantity of microplastics found. “Microplastics and marine debris are solvable problems, but we need data, and we need to raise awareness,” she said.

Kapp’s study on the Snake River detected some level of microplastics in nearly all of the water samples. She found that fibers were the most dominant type of microplastics in the river, and that the highest concentrations of plastics were in areas of low population density but high agricultural use.

She doesn’t think sampling rivers for microplastics is as different from studying bear-human conflict as people might expect.

“Often when we received calls about a nuisance bear it was often an animal getting into someone’s garbage,” Kapp said. “We ended up setting traps around dumpsters to catch the bears and relocate them. I always thought it was odd that we had to relocate the bears instead of trying to change human behavior.”

Kapp thinks nuisance bears and plastic pollution have some things in common. Both issues require better understanding of the problems, and the willingness of people to change their behaviors. “And,” she added, “I’m still dealing with people’s trash.”

Few creatures can survive the conditions of Yellowstone National Park’s iconic geysers, which appear to the naked eye to be devoid of life. However, Brent Peyton and Dana Skorupa have been studying thermophiles, or heat-loving microbes, specifically adapted to living in a hot spring environment.

Peyton, the principal investigator on the project and director of Montana State University’s Thermal Biology Institute, and Skorupa, assistant research professor, are working with the Thermal Biology Institute at the University of Montana to understand these exceptional organisms. Their goal is to grow these thermophiles in their lab and use them to develop green technology for recycling plastics.

The microorganisms flourishing in Yellowstone’s hot springs are dining on the same “plastic soup” that can be harmful to most other creatures. The team has found that they are breaking down plastics that fall into the hot springs and using it for food. To test this, they are collecting a mixture of sediment and water from hot springs in the park, and transporting it back to their lab at MSU. In the lab, they’re growing these microorganisms with only plastic as a food source in an environment that replicates that of a hot spring, in temperatures around 150 F.

With the help of Park Service rangers, Peyton and Skorupa collect plastic trash that has fallen into the geysers. Under a microscope, the team will be able to tell if the plastic samples are already being colonized and decomposed by microbes.

“When we go to the hot springs to get samples for DNA extraction, at least half of the organisms we detect are so different that we can’t even name them,” Peyton said. “There is a lot of unknown, but I think in the next year or so we will hear a lot of discoveries of organisms that can degrade plastic.”

He is optimistic that some of the organisms could naturally break down plastics into their raw components. This would allow them to be used to make new plastic products. The research is still in its beginning stages, but Peyton says the potential of finding long-term stability of the world’s plastic problems is hopeful.

“If we can use microorganisms to biologically degrade plastic materials and form the degraded compounds into a new plastic bottle or packaging material this would lower the level of plastics we either send to the landfill or incinerate,” Skorupa said.

Yellowstone National Park Lodges runs accommodations, food and beverage, and transportation programs in the park. Dylan Hoffman, director of sustainability, says having a “softer footprint” is part of the company’s founding values. In 2016, they stopped selling plastic water bottles and have since adopted a canned water bottle, made of aluminum. The can, which is easier to recycle, is outfitted with a re-sealable aluminum screw top. Hotel lobbies and food service outlets are outfitted with water bottle filling stations, so guests can use their own refillable bottles in place of buying new ones.

Before Yellowstone Lodges stopped selling plastic water bottles, they were going through about a quarter of a million plastic bottles annually. “The water in Yellowstone is amazing; it is coming from the top of the watershed. It is free, clean and quality water. We are encouraging guests to drink it,” Hoffman said.

Yellowstone Lodges is working with the Philipsburg Brewing Company in Philipsburg, Montana, to bring “Yellowstone Water” to their patrons. The owners of the brewery bought Montana Silver Springs, an old bottling plant, in 2014, and are working toward commercially canning water. Hoffman said the next order that is put in for canned water will likely be filled by Philipsburg Brewing Company.

“We are always trying to find the latest and greatest in sustainable action,” Hoffman said. “Some of it may seem small, but low hanging fruit grows back.”

Gianna Savoie, a scientist-turned-natural history filmmaker, grew up in the Ocean State of Rhode Island and moved to Montana in 2010 to teach at MSU. After establishing the nonprofit organization, Ocean Media Institute, she received a grant from the Bozeman Community Area Foundation to launch a middle school program called Mountain Mermaids and Mermen, which explores the impact of mountain communities on oceans, and vice versa.

As part of the program, eighth graders from Headwaters Academy approached local Bozeman businesses, asking them to stop offering plastic straws to their patrons. The students convinced 16 local businesses to sign the pledge.

“Every community has a plastic problem,” Savoie said. “We work with communities to learn about the plastic problems most affecting them and then create a locally led, solutions-driven campaign with them to solve it.”

She considers recycling to be a good first step, but to really make an impact, she suggests that consumers avoid as many single-use plastics as they can, and to continue to educate future generations about the problem.

“Ocean issues are not on many people’s radar here in the Rockies, but they do impact us intimately in terms of the rivers we fish, the food we grow, and even the powder we shred,” Savoie said. “Plastics work their way into our fish species and right up the food chain; they are even being detected in beer! This is definitely a wake-up call for those of us in the mountains.”

Most of us use, wear and spend our lives surrounded by plastic. As we walk, hike or ski, we are unknowingly leaving behind invisible trails of microfibers. Knowing this, we can choose to participate in the many solutions it will take to reduce plastic pollution.

It is going to require scientific research and creative initiatives that can be applied locally, as well as globally, to make a dent. As individuals we can encourage progress by voting for elected officials who prioritize the environment, supporting local businesses that minimize their use of single-use plastics, staying up-to-date on research, and supporting local initiatives. In our daily lives we can practice conscious consumption by avoiding disposable products and those that contain excessive or non-recyclable plastic.

Throughout the Northern Rockies, innovative solutions in research and education, and simple shifts in business practices are making strides in the right direction. Americans have come a long way since the “throwaway living” era, and most would agree that a sink full of dirty dishes is preferable to a sinkhole of plastic waste in our oceans. The solutions are endless, even exciting, and they begin with each and every one of us.

A version of this story first appeared in the winter 2019 edition of Mountain Outlaw Magazine

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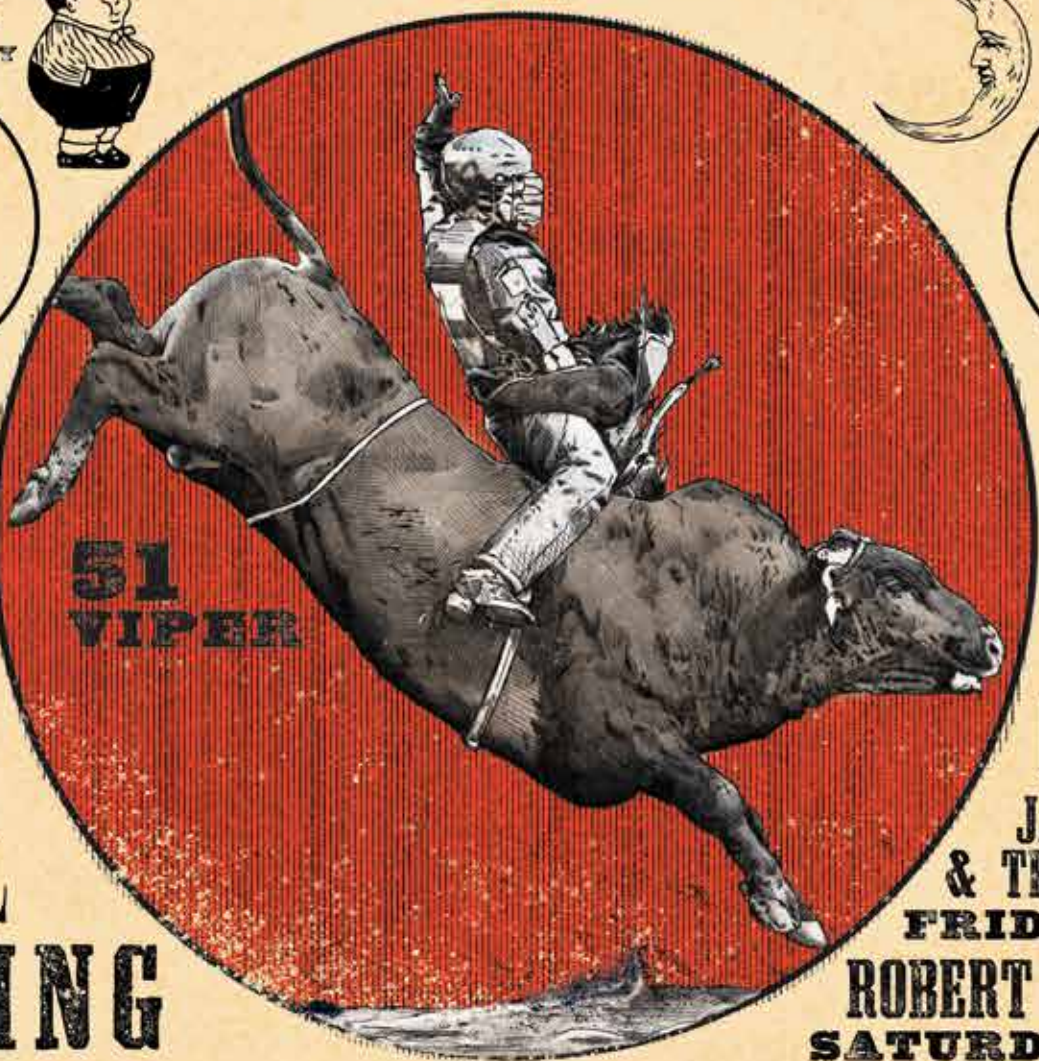
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