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ON THE COVER:

Chris Kamman captures the evening traffic jam from above at the intersection of U.S. Highway 191 and Montana Highway 64. The \$2 million Montana Department of Transportation bridge deck repair projects have exacerbated already extensive commuter traffic. With only one way in and one way out, pack a snack on your next trip out of Big Sky. It might be a while. OUTLAW **PARTNERS PHOTO**

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Big Sky's traffic woes

These days in Big Sky, it's worth planning ahead. Increased traffic along with equipment and weather delays are exacerbating wait times at two Montana Department of Transportation bridge deck construction projects. As one bridge falls behind schedule, crews are working to get back on track.

Back to school?

The Big Sky School District is currently considering five learning models, ranging from 100 percent distance learning to a mix of distance and in-person learning methods. The BSSD school board met on July 21, to discuss the possibility of reopening school this fall.

State, MSU partner for testing initiative

At a July 22 press conference, Gov. Bullock announced a new partnership between the state and Montana State University, pausing a relationship with Quest Diagnostics. The partnership will allow for Montana to ramp up testing once again.

Revised forest plan revealed

The U.S. Forest Service recently proposed its final plan for the management of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Roughly six years after Custer and Gallatin national forests merged to produce a joint 3.2-million-acre swath of protected forest, the forest service renewed the two former plans that were last updated in the 1980s.

Game on for MT high school athletics

Break out your stadium seats, foam fingers and masks—high school athletics are slated to resume this fall in the state of Montana. On July 27, the Montana High School Association released tiered methods and requirements for high schools to consult as they resume athletic activities this fall.



There truly are "no bad days" at Green Bridge. A great way to cool off in the Gallatin River or a perfect jumping photo opportunity makes the Green Bridge a popular destination for summer afternoons in the canyon. PHOTO BY TUCKER HARRIS

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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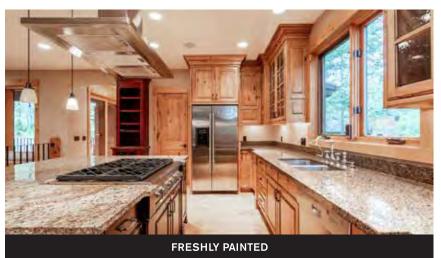




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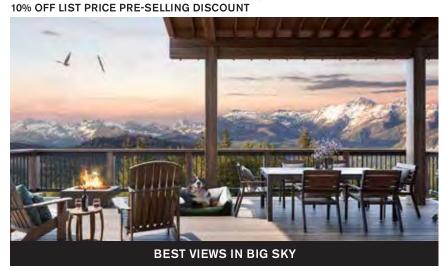
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BSSD is working on education plans for the fall semester. How would you balance the importance of in-school learning with the health of students?



Samantha Riley Big Sky, Montana

"I think online teaching would be a great idea as long the community can ensure that all students have the same access to higher education because it is very easy for students to slip through the cracks."



Nick Dala Los Angeles, California

"I think it would be good for kids to have fun outdoors and stay healthy until we solve this crisis. If they fall behind like 10% in their learning, that's okay—they will catch up."



Allie Campbell
Big Sky, Montana

"As a teacher myself, I think collaboration is a key part of learning. I think keeping students engaged is a big part too so keeping them socially distant and allowing collaboration is a huge part that we will have to do safely."

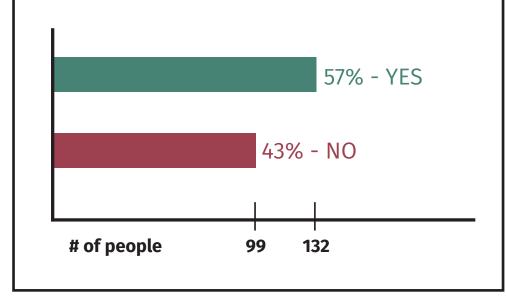


Jill Hartsock
Cincinnati, Ohio

"As an educator and a parent, I think that it's important for the community, school districts, and everybody involved to consider a safe, gradual transition back into in-school brick and mortar opportunity for school this year. It may be fluid, but I think safety needs to come first."

The Montana Governor's office recently released guidelines for schools to reopen across the state (dphhs.mt.gov). As local schools and universities plan and prepare for various reopening strategies this fall, EBS polled our audience to better understand our readers' stance regarding the reopening of schools.

Are you in favor of schools reopening and holding in-person classes this fall?



LETTERS

To the Editor:

In the middle of a pandemic, we all want both change and stability. Here's one certainty you can count on: In three months, things will change for Montanans.

This November, Montanans will elect a new governor, a new congressional representative, and possibly even a new senator.

I urge you to vote for three Montanans whose record of service is well known: Kathleen Williams for the U.S. House of Representatives, Mike Cooney for governor, and Steve Bullock for the U.S. Senate.

These three candidates have more in common than their Democratic Party affiliation.

- 1. Bullock, Williams and Cooney have prioritized service over personal gain. There are easier and more profitable career paths than government. But they chose public service early on and devoted themselves to making our state better and healthier. Experience matters to effectiveness.
- 2. Cooney, Williams and Bullock are longtime Montanans. They share Montana values that cut across party lines, including a dedication to protecting the public lands that make our state—and Big Sky—so attractive and livable.
- 3. Williams, Bullock and Cooney say they prioritize the important stuff—accessible healthcare, jobs that can support a family, and a government concerned for public health—and have demonstrated records to show they do what they say.

I think 2020 is a year none of us will look back on with too much fondness. Get registered now (absentee voting is easy if you need it) and let's make a positive change for 2021.

Barbara Rowley Big Sky

Op-ed: Forest plan a positive step for Gallatins, but work remains

BY STEVE JOHNSON, EMILY CLEVELAND AND JOHN GREENE

The Gallatin Forest Partnership—a group of local hunters, anglers, mountain bikers, conservationists, horseback riders, skiers, business owners and citizens who care deeply about the Gallatin and Madison Ranges—is working together to chart a future for the Gallatin and Madison Ranges that protects the wildlife, clean water, wilderness and recreation opportunities so important to all of us. Together, we've built broad support for a community-developed proposal with endorsements from over 900 individuals and 100 organizations and businesses, including the Park, Gallatin and Madison County Commissions.

Our agreement took an important step forward when the Custer Gallatin National Forest released its draft final forest plan, called the Custer Gallatin National Forest Land Management Plan, in early July. We're pleased that the U.S. Forest Service has incorporated important aspects of the agreement into the forest plan, and we will continue working together to ensure that some missing elements are added to the final plan.

The good news

In her draft decision, CGNF Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson wrote that, regarding the Madison and Gallatin Ranges, she "... found the work of the Gallatin Forest Partnership to be the most compelling ... due to the area-specific recommendations combined with local knowledge, and the outreach and coalition-building across diverse interests that accompanied their proposal."

In accordance with the GFP agreement, the forest plan recommends designating new wilderness along the Gallatin Crest and around Sawtooth Mountain, critical wildlife corridors between Yellowstone National Park and Hyalite Peak in the heart of the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area. This is a historic recommendation in a landscape for which the Forest Service previously recommended zero acres of wilderness.

The plan designates West Pine as a non-motorized backcountry area to keep the northeast corner of the WSA undeveloped, a marked improvement for an area that almost lost all protection in the 1988 Montana Wilderness bill. The Forest Service also included provisions embracing the GFP's recommendation to improve mountain bike access in the area.

Finally, the final forest plan prohibits future development and secures existing recreational access for mountain bikes, dirt bikes and snowmobiles in the Buffalo Horn Backcountry Area, key tenets of the GFP agreement.

Room for improvement

We are disappointed that some significant elements of our agreement were omitted, however, and believe they represent an opportunity to further strengthen the new plan.

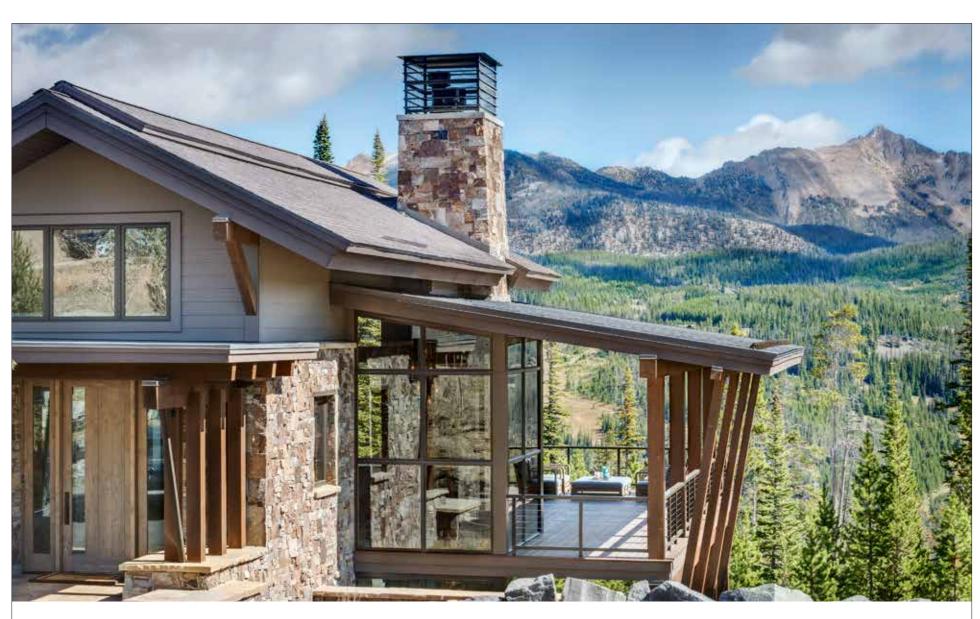
The Forest Service overlooked GFP's recommendation for wilderness in Cowboy Heaven in the Madison Range, replacing it with a backcountry area designation, in part for mountain bike access. The Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association, Livingston Bike Club, and Big Sky Mountain Bike Alliance all helped develop the partnership's agreement to balance mountain bike access along the edge of Cowboy Heaven with the strong protections of wilderness for this area that connects the Spanish Peaks and Bear Trap units of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. Dropping Cowboy Heaven from wilderness recommendations makes no sense.

In Hyalite, the Forest Plan cuts the partnership's proposed Watershed Protection and Recreation Area in half, excluding South Cottonwood, Mt. Blackmore and the Bozeman Creek watershed, with no apparent explanation. These are some of the most heavily used areas in the Gallatin Range, as well as the headwaters of streams that provide clean water to the Gallatin Valley. Not doing more to protect these areas is a significant oversight.

Some elements of the plan also present challenges for the partnership's vision of an improved trail connection from West Pine to Bear Lakes. Our agreement is intentionally crafted to balance the interests of each partner. We are committed to ensuring everyone's interests are met.

The Forest Service's new plan is an important positive step toward protecting the Madison and Gallatin Ranges, though work remains to be done. We're looking forward to helping the Custer Gallatin secure wild places, recreational access, wildlife habitat and clean water for all forest users by fully implementing the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement.

Steve Johnson is a longtime Big Sky resident, Emily Cleveland works for the Montana Wilderness Association, and John Greene is a member of the Livingston Bike Club. They are all part of the Gallatin Forest Partnership.





PREMIER LIFESTYLE CRAFTERS



NEWS IN BRIEF



Big Sky Community Library reopens

BIG SKY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Community Library is reopening with restrictions starting this week. Library hours will be Monday through Tuesday from 1-6 p.m. To ensure the safety of all patrons using the library we are implementing certain expectations.

- All patrons visiting the library four and older are required to wear masks. Masks will be available if you do not have one.
- Visitors will be limited to six visitors at a time and your time will be limited to 30 minutes per visit.
- Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult.
- Please do not reshelf your own books, if you touch a book please put it on to a nearby cart to be shelved.
- Remember to socially distance and remain six feet apart from others at all times.
- Please use the provided hand sanitizer and wipes throughout the library.
- Computer time will be limited to 30 minutes per visitor.
- Please return ALL books and materials in the outside bin.
- We will do our best to keep you safe, please help us out by being aware of the sanitary procedures that we are practicing.

We have missed you and the books are lonely. Thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times. We will get through this together! For those of you uncomfortable coming into the library, curbside pickup is still available.

Spring Family Farm conserved

GALLATIN VALLEY LAND TRUST

BOZEMAN – This month the Gallatin Valley Land Trust secured its latest conservation easement, protecting the 100-year-old Spring Family Farm. The 313 acre farm was established in 1902 by homesteader George W. Spring and sits northeast of Belgrade in in the Springhill/East Gallatin area. The Spring family maintained the farm through the Great Depression, producing crops and award winning shorthorn cattle. Wilbur Spring, Jr. "turned the swampy pasture land into a thriving hay and grain operation." Today, the farm remains in agricultural production, including wheat, barley, oats, and canola and alfalfa hay.

The Spring siblings wrote to the Gallatin County Open Lands Board that a conservation easement "ensure[s] that future generations will also be able to experience the feeling of peace that overtakes anyone who walks through the hay fields while gazing at the beautiful Bridger Mountains and watching the antics of the Sandhill cranes and the other creatures that inhabit this paradise."

The Spring Farm is home to a variety of native species, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, waterfowl, great blue herons, Sandhill cranes and more. The land also serves as a stopover food source location on agricultural fields for a multitude of migratory species. Incomparable scenic beauty encapsulates the land, with the Bridger Mountain range providing a gorgeous backdrop to this historical working farm. Locals can enjoy the picturesque property from the public Penwell Bridge Road, which runs along the southern boundary of the property. The legacy of the Spring family will live on in their land, which is now protected in perpetuity with the help of the Gallatin County Open Lands Program, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the generosity and dedication of the Spring Family.

Adult workshops with Arts Council

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

BIG SKY – The Arts Council is offering two adult art workshops this August, one in plein air painting and one in mosaic art. Both will take place at the Big Sky Community Park yurts.

Join award winning artist Loretta Domaszeski for a weekend of Plein Air painting in the inspiring landscapes of Big Sky, Aug. 15-16. The two-day workshop is broken into four sections, which will focus on painting a variety of scenes under the big sky. Artists can sign up for any session they choose, or make a weekend out of it and participate in all four sessions. The cost for this is \$75 per session, or \$250 for all four.

Loretta Domaszewski is a contemporary artist who has been exhibiting her work and teaching all ages and levels locally and nationally for three decades. She has participated in the Arts Council of Big Sky annual Auction for the Arts event as a silent auction artist, and has had solo exhibitions in Nantucket, Mass., Bozeman, Ennis and Coeur d'Alene. Her passion is to be active, explore nature, create art and encourage self-discovery through artistic expression.

On August 29, join local mosaic artist Michelle Kristula-Green in connecting discarded, broken and found pieces into beautiful and meaningful works of art. Participating in this workshop, you will enjoy the experience of learning the mosaic building process, making unique mosaics all while telling your personal story through art. This one-day workshop is \$75 and includes materials and lunch. Participants are encouraged to bring broken and discarded pieces, including broken pottery, plates, keys, beads, buttons, jewelry pieces, small metal bits, bobs and gears, sea shells, stones, pebbles, sea glass, crystals, etc.

Michelle is a contemporary mosaic artist who resides in Big Sky. She trained at The Chicago Mosaic School in Chicago, the only not-for-profit mosaic art school in North America. She uses local stone, glass, smalti and ceramics to create artworks that tell a story and are inspired by the natural world and places she has lived: Montana and Japan.

The Arts Council is implementing COVID-19 protocols for these workshops. Masks are required while indoors and when social distancing is not possible. Much of the instruction will occur outdoors, weather permitting. Hand sanitizer will be readily available and class sizes will be limited.

More information and registration details can be found at bigskyarts.org. For further questions, call 995–2742.

MDT seeks input on Highway 84 corridor study

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – This spring the Montana Department of Transportation contracted design consultant Morrison-Maierle to conduct a corridor study along Highway 84 between the Warm Springs boat launch and Red Mountain campground. The study was warranted based on heightened vehicle collisions within the stretch.

On Aug. 5, MDT plans to host Zoom conferences at 11 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. to gather public feedback on Morrison-Maierle's findings and possible options to improve safety on the identified stretch of Highway 84. The Zoom conferences will last approximately an hour with allotted time for question and answer periods as well as time for general feedback on the possible solutions and overall findings. Registration for the conferences can be completed by visiting bitly.com/highway84.

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The waiting game

As Big Sky traffic increases, so does the wait time for bridge construction

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – These days in Big Sky, it's worth planning ahead. And allowing for extra travel time.

Increased traffic as well as equipment and weather delays are exacerbating wait times at two Big Sky bridge deck construction projects as of late. The roughly \$2 million Montana Department of Transportation projects are continuing to progress, but MDT officials noted that one of the construction zones—the West Fork bridge project near the entrance of the Conoco Travel Shoppe on Montana Highway 64—is roughly a week behind the anticipated schedule. Crews are working to get back on track.

"We're catching back up," said MDT Project Manager Craig Walker. "We had some weather delays and then some equipment delays, which delayed the paving on Phase 1 of the West Fork structure."

The West Fork bridge project began in late May and MDT originally anticipated completion by the end of July, but it will likely push into the beginning of August after the recent setbacks, Walker said.

Walker acknowledged that wait times at the MDT construction zones have increased in recent weeks due to an increase in the volume of traffic flowing in and out of Big Sky.

"There is no easy solution to it," he said. "Whether we work during the day or night, the traffic control is still the same. The traffic control company is doing their best to get everybody through."

According to recent MDT traffic counts taken just west of the West Fork bridge project, traffic has increased steadily since April. Daily traffic averages for April totaled 5,450 vehicles per day, then increased to 6,953 vehicles per day in May, before jumping to 8,425 daily vehicles in June.

The increased delays have impacted daily commuters within the Big Sky community. On a July 23 EBS Facebook post about the traffic, people voiced their frustration. Commenters discussed wait times of more than an hour, while others made note of the lengthy line of vehicles that can run all the way to Town Center.

Big Sky resident Stephanie Kissell said she usually anticipates a

10-minute wait at the construction zone on her morning commute from Ramshorn, but also said she often witnesses courteous drivers who allow her to turn left onto Highway 64 at the intersection with U.S. Highway 191.

"I would say there's a little bit of understanding and grace with some of those drivers and I would say [they] are the ones who probably drive it every day," Kissell said. "But it is inconvenient ... I think it's easy to get mad, but you just kind of have to roll with it."

During a typical work week, specifically Monday through Friday, MDT witnesses the heaviest traffic counts. The daily average traffic flow on weekdays for the month of June was 9,638 vehicles. By comparison, for the month of June, MDT counted a daily average of 6,018 vehicles on Saturdays and 5,090 vehicles on Sundays.

As construction equipment and materials move throughout the Big Sky community on flat-beds and dump trucks, these delays may hit the building and development industries the hardest. Matt Kidd is managing director at CrossHarbor Capital Partners, whose Big Sky development arm is Lone Mountain Land Company. LMLC has seen workers' daily commute times impacted due to the longer wait times at the bridge construction zones.

"We understand and appreciate necessary infrastructure improvements and it will be good to have the new bridge," Kidd said in a statement provided to EBS. "We are managing our teams' schedules accordingly to make the delay less impactful."

Property management companies have been forced to adjust to the delays as well. "We manage homes down in that area on both sides of the construction and that's been a challenge obviously as well, as far as responding and getting to the sites in a timely manner," said Adam Farr, owner of Ascend Properties.

Farr, who resides near Lone Peak High School on Highway 191, experiences the delays firsthand and said his employees have made adjustments in their schedules to avoid the times when traffic flows are at their peak, starting as early as 6:30 a.m. Farr noted that some guests of his properties have voiced frustration about the extended wait times, but sees the work as a necessary byproduct of growth.

"It's manageable," he said. "Obviously work that needs to be done and so most people are understanding of that. We're used to road traffic season ... This has been a bit of a pain to say the least, but it is what it is."

Cameras mounted on temporary traffic lights at the construction zones remotely monitor traffic. Wait times fluctuate based on the volume of traffic from any given direction, and camera operators can allow a certain lane of vehicles to progress through the construction zone for longer periods of time as needed, according to Walker.

The West Fork bridge project is the only one behind schedule, while the Middle Fork bridge is progressing as anticipated and should be completed in November. After the West Fork bridge is completed, construction will begin on a bridge located on Highway 191 roughly two miles north of the Conoco station, and is anticipated to finish in September.

"Plan ahead for travel because we are seeing heavier traffic and longer delays than anticipated," Walker said. "And then be cautious when driving through the project of workers and equipment."



An aerial view of traffic backed up at the West Fork bridge project along Highway 64. Construction on the bridge began at the end of May and following some delays is scheduled to be completed in early August. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO





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BSSD sells bond, preps for reopening options

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – The Big Sky School District school board met on July 21 with the primary focus of the meeting on the Reopening Taskforce, who led the discussion for the district's process for possibly reopening school this fall.

BSSD currently has five learning models in place to consider ranging from full to partial distancing learning. The task force is currently in the preliminary stages of discussion and have not made any decisions yet, but are working closely with the Gallatin City-County Health Department school liaison and recently conducted a consultation walk-through with Matrix Medical Consultants, who recommend best practices for health safety.

The learning models are as follows.

- 1. 100 percent distance/virtual learning.
- 2. 50 percent in-person, 50 percent virtual/distance learning.
- 3. 100 percent in-person learning with restrictions.
- 4. 100 percent in-person learning, no restrictions, full operations.
- 5. 100 percent in-person kindergarten through seventh grade, 50 percent in person/virtual learning eighth grade through 12th grade.

"We haven't made any decisions yet on how were going to reopen this year, but we have many plans in place that depend on everything going on in the fall," said District Superintendent Dustin Shipman in a July 23 phone interview.

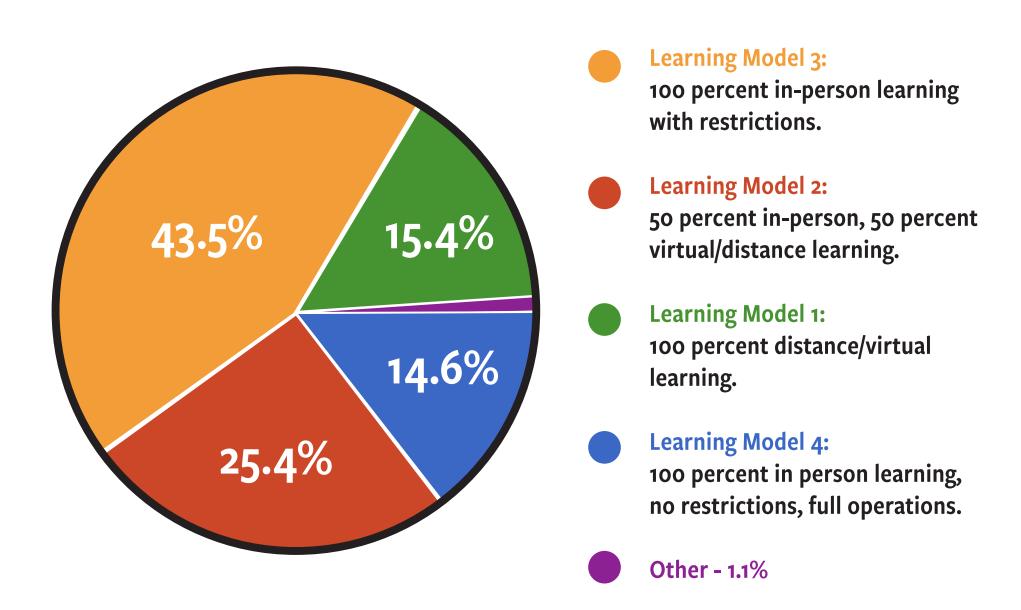
BSSD is also in the process of collecting input from parents and teachers within the school district. Initial results can be found on their website, with data collection currently ongoing. As of right now, model No. 3, 100 percent in-person learning with restrictions is preferred by those who answered the survey.

Board members emphasized that measures were being taken to research the effects that these different models would have on the development of students in each age group, including impacts to social and emotional health. They also discussed the importance of sports.

Under any model, the school campus will have temperature check stations at each entrance and staff will be fully trained on distance learning software.

Also discussed at the meeting was the announcement that the school bond that was approved by voters in the spring was sold at a good interest rate, freeing up funds for much-needed upgrades to the quickly-growing school district. With the bond, the school district hopes to expand their vocational offerings, allowing students a broader range of educational opportunities.

BSSD's reopening poll shows that most parents and teachers prefer some form of in-person learning for the upcoming school year. Results are as of Wednesday, July 29.



Water and sewer district sued for alleged wrongful discharge

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – Alleged illegal discharge is the issue at hand according to a recent lawsuit filed against the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District No. 363. Bozeman-based Cottonwood Environmental Law Center filed the suit, alleging the district is violating the Clean Water Act.

"For us, the bottom line is that the water and sewer district is discharging nitrogen pollution out of a pipe into water of the U.S. without a Clean Water Act permit and that is in direct violation of the Clean Water Act," said John Meyer, Cottonwood Environmental Law Center's executive director and general counsel.

According to the suit, plaintiffs Cottonwood Law, Montana Rivers, and Gallatin Wildlife Association claim that the water and sewer district is violating: "... the Clean Water Act by discharging pollutants into the West Fork of the Gallatin River without a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit ..."

The suit, filed July 10 with the United States District Court for the District of Montana in Butte, identifies Ron Edwards in his capacity as the general manager of the water and sewer district, as well as the district in its entirety as defendants. According to the suit, Cottonwood Law initially sent out an intent to sue letter to the water and sewer district on April 27, fulfilling the 60-day notice prior to the filing of a suit.

Edwards directed EBS to an April 30 water and sewer district meeting, where he addressed the intent to sue letter. At that meeting, he stated that the discharge in question is not leaking from the ponds themselves but is rather groundwater stemming from a Montana Department of Environmental Quality-specified and permitted underdrain system comprised of a series of pipes that run underneath the holding ponds. Edwards added that groundwater does not require a discharge permit from the DEQ.

"... The reason they're there is because our ponds are so deep it intersects groundwater and if you've got liner sitting in your groundwater, as that water table comes up you run the risk of having the groundwater pick [up] your liner and float it up off the bottom," Edwards said.

Meyer said that multiple water samples have been collected. The samples were taken from above, below, and at a pipe, the identified site of the alleged illegal discharge.



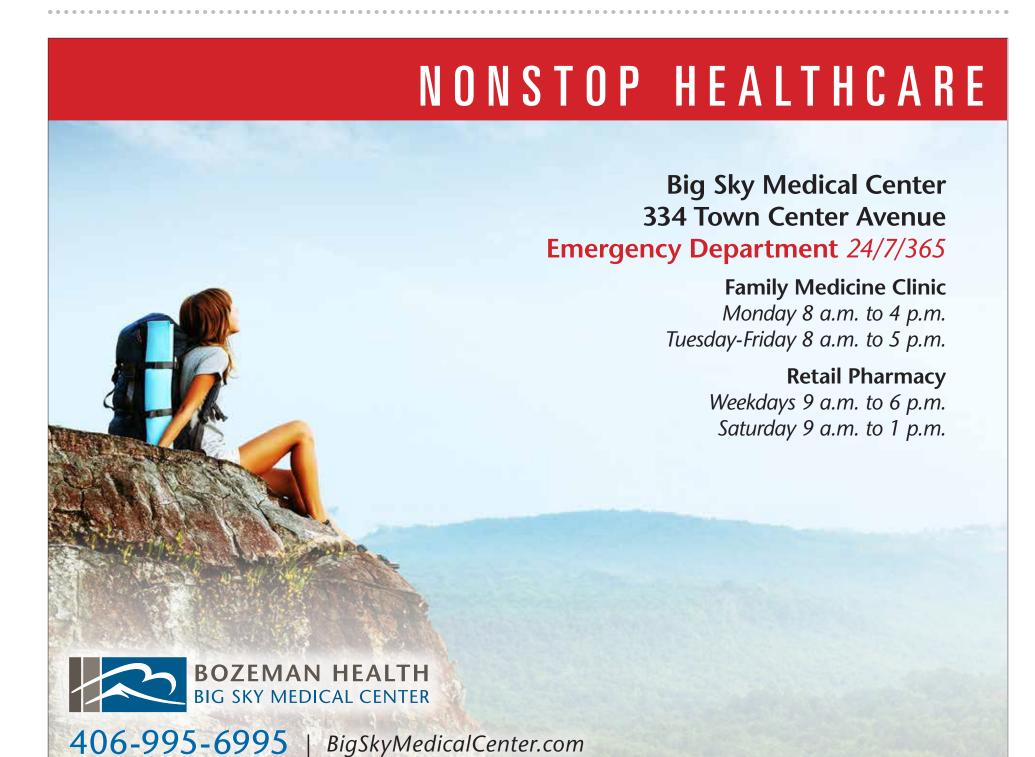
One of the holding ponds at the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District. A recent lawsuit filed against the district claims discharge from the district is violating the Clean Water Act. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

"We want to ensure that Montana's rivers are clean and safe," Meyer said. "We want clean water and healthy rivers."

According to the suit, a lab analysis of samples collected around the district's wastewater holding ponds shows heightened detectable levels of material including calcium, chloride, and nitrogen, among other inorganic materials.

"The original ponds were lined with a Bentonite Clay, which did not work very well, so the ponds were effectively leaking into the groundwater for 20 years," Edwards said at the April meeting. The ponds were upgraded with liners in 1996 and 1997, according to the video, allowing groundwater to flow without pooling underneath the liner.

"The West Fork of the Gallatin River is already water-quality impaired from nitrogen, so the fact that they're discharging without a permit just makes it even worse," Meyer said.



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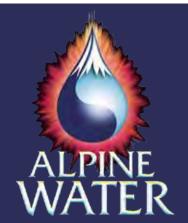




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Bullock announces MSU testing partnership, adopting local measures

BY BELLA BUTLER

HELENA – At a press conference on July 29, Gov. Steve Bullock played to Montanan's pathos in order to communicate the continued severity of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Caty Gondeiro, a 23-year-old Helena resident, shared her experience with COVID-19 after receiving a positive test on July 7. Gondeiro, who described herself as young and healthy, didn't think she was at risk for contracting the virus until she did.

"The symptoms are very real, this is nothing to be taken lightly," she said, stating that three weeks later, she still struggles with shortness of breath and lingering neurological symptoms.

"I think it's really important for people in the 20-29 age group to understand that we're driving the spread of this..." Gondeiro said.

Three quarters of cases in Gallatin County are among people under 40, and 58 percent of cases are among people under 30, a trend that is replicated in other hot spot counties like Missoula and Yellowstone.

"Young adults are certainly more likely to socialize in larger group sizes and we know that large gatherings continue to play a role in the rise in cases," Bullock said.

Bullock identified nine of Montana's 56 counties as hot spots following reports that the counties cases comprised 80 percent of the state's total case count in June and July. These counties are Flathead; Lake, Missoula, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Gallatin, Bighorn, Cascade and Yellowstone counties.

"At this time we're carefully reviewing the patterns we're seeing in these nine counties. I know the capacity to get our hands on this virus in some of these communities is actually getting difficult," Bullock said. "We'll be working with local public health officers in the upcoming days to determine if additional commonsense measures can or should be taken to both deploy additional resources and/or steps to limit the spread."

Bullock said that some communities may have to take special measures to accommodate unique circumstances not present in other parts of that state.

Bullock referenced a recent discussion in the U.S. Senate that explored the option of allocating more federal money to states to be distributed to local and state government, which the governor said would allow for more of Montana's currently possessed COVID-19 support money to be used to help businesses, nonprofits, healthcare providers and others.

Bullock emphasized that given all of the unknowns that lie ahead, holding onto a portion of the originally allocated \$1.25 billion is a way to take care of Montana in the long term.

"It's absolutely critical that we spend this money responsibly and are able to adapt to any future changes or challenges," he said.

During a July 22 press conference, Bullock shared that three months after gaining access to the \$1.25 billion in COVID-19 support from the federal government, \$800 million has been allocated, with \$100 million being distributed through various types of grants spread across all 56 Montana counties. The relief fund is intended to last through the end of the year.

"Because we've held back some money, we've retained our ability to be flexible and react quickly when new needs are identified," Bullock said.

In the way of testing, Bullock announced a new partnership between the state and Montana State University at the July 22 press conference after pausing a relationship with Quest Diagnostics. The partnership will allow for Montana to ramp up testing once again, including COVID-19 surveillance testing for frontline health care personnel, essential workers and other groups, according to a press release that followed the conference.

In the last four weeks, Bullock reported that 70,000 tests were administered in Montana, putting the state in a good position to continue to work toward administering and processing 60,000 tests per month. MSU is currently working with the state lab to validate their machines and will have the capacity to process up to 500 tests per day using four qPCR devices as early as next week, according to Bullock. The university is also developing pooling methodology, which "combines a handful of surveillance tests into one testing run," Bullock said, affording greater testing capacity, increasing the state's capabilities three- to four-fold. The state will pay MSU \$100 per test.

"I'm confident with MSU's research enterprise and ingenuity. Montana will have much of its testing capacity done here in state at the university and through our state lab," Bullock said before welcoming MSU President Waded Cruzado to the microphone.

"This is not just an issue of having the right equipment but of having the right people," Cruzado said. "For decades, we have been building our capacity, and today, our state's largest research institution and one of the most research-intensive universities in the region, Montana State has the necessary expertise among our students, faculty and staff to run this project and to assist our state."

The governor also announced that the state recently finalized a contract with MAKO Medical in North Carolina, a reference lab that will process an anticipated 1,000 tests per day from Montana.



To the slickest community editor this side of the Mississippi: We love ya and we'll see ya soon. Bon Voyage (for now), Bella Butler!

Love, The Outlaws



OUTLAW.

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Art Auction draws art, furniture, jewelry lovers under the Big Sky

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – The fifth annual Big Sky Art Auction presented by Outlaw Partners, the publisher of EBS, attracted a steady flow of visitors in and out of the big white tent in Town Center on July 18 and July 19.

It was the first large outdoor event of the summer held in Wilson Plaza Town Center and the hundreds of attendees who previewed and participated graciously adhered to social distancing and sanitation safety precautions and mask protocols. Big ticket items that sold included a beautiful Tom Gilleon painting at \$50,000 and Jackson Hole Jewelers' Picchiotti Turquoise and Diamond Bracelet for \$42,000.

Carolyn Heppel, a lucky live auction bidder who attended with her husband, arrived with her heart set on a unique engraved bracelet from By Western Hands that they had seen being made in Cody last year.

"It's beautiful engraving work," commented Heppel. "We've met [the artist] before and seen him demonstrate his work and it's just a really gorgeous engraving."

By Western Hands is a nonprofit with a legacy of preserving this wild, frontier spirit in the works of the master craftsman they support. It was their first time partnering with the Big Sky Art Auction and they brought with them 30 functional art pieces.

"Auctions like this are typically built around paintings and bronzes, so to be able to have functional art in this auction is a real privilege," said Doug Nordberg, of Nordberg Furniture, who was at the auction with By Western Hands. Nordberg's focus is on antler furniture and his work can be spotted in galleries all over the Northern Rockies. "This is the first of it's kind. This is the first auction that has let a lot of these pieces in here, and I hope we get to come back next year."

In addition to By Western Hands and Gilleon, other notable artists included Shelly Bermont, who presented "Silver South Sea Pearl" necklace and Gina Daws, creator of "The Rambler," an impressive bear print.

It was a year of firsts—it was also the first time the Big Sky Art Auction was both virtual and live, allowing artists to reach a wider audience, including those who may not have wanted to gather in a group setting. Outlaw said they will continue to enhance and expand these platforms in the future to accommodate both audiences, including a more streamlined live feed and pre-bidding opportunities online to maximize exposure for the artists and participants pre-event.

"We are grateful for the community's support of the fifth annual Art Auction and really enjoyed seeing it take shape in its new location at the Wilson Hotel Plaza in Town Center," said Megan Paulson, chief operating officer of Outlaw Partners. "It's more important now than ever to support our local and regional artists, businesses and nonprofits, so being able to safely bring the community together and see success is a big win. We had a remarkable lineup of auction items and look forward to growing the event in the future."

Special thanks to the sponsors who made the Big Sky Art Auction a success: Magleby Construction, Jackson Hole Jewelry, Lisa Gleim Fine Art and Old Main Gallery.

Nonprofits discuss doing more with less on Town Hall

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Leaders from the Big Sky nonprofit community gathered online for the 11th installment of EBS's Big Sky Virtual Town Hall to discuss operating during the pandemic, and how they've been meeting greater community needs with fewer resources.

"The interesting thing about our organization is...since the pandemic has hit, we've actually been dealing with higher use and resources than we've ever seen before and we're doing it on less resources," said Big Sky Community Organization CEO Ciara Wolfe. Wolfe said that trail use increases have ranged from 25-350 percent, parks are often occupied and during Montana's shelter-in-place, 14,000 people participated in their virtual community programming that offered things like online cooking classes and kid's activities.

Similarly, the Big Sky Community Food Bank, which typically recounts the greatest need during the fall, reported servicing the community this spring three times more than they usually do in the spring, surpassing even the fall counts.

"While it was shocking to happen in the spring, it wasn't something that we were unused to," said Sarah Gaither-Bivins, operations manager and services navigator for the BSCFB. Gaither Bivins said that while this year hasn't yet come in with the highest numbers, anecdotally, clients of the food bank have been distinguishably more fearful due to factors like housing and income insecurity.

"By the numbers...2017 has been the worst year for people, this spring has been the scariest for people," she said.

Jean Behr from Women in Action shared the collaborative efforts that WIA has been a part of over the past four months with a particular emphasis on behavioral health needs, which have spiked since the start of the pandemic. WIA, in addition to working on community programming with BSCO, provided two months of free mental health counseling and continues to work with interested individuals on sliding scales.

"We don't believe that it's enough just to offer access to mental healthcare, but we need to ensure that it's affordable to all," Behr said.

The Gallatin River Task Force has also taken on additional work with a recently filed lawsuit claiming that elevated nutrient levels in the water around the wastewater holding ponds is due to a leak. As part of a 20-year contract that GRTF has had

with the Department of Environmental Quality, the task force monitors this part of the Westfork watershed. According to Kristin Gardner, executive director of GRTF, Cottonwood Environmental Law Center's claim that the ponds are leaking is "in fact likely not the case."

Even with the increase of services, organizations are left with their standard, if not sub-standard, budgets. Gardner said that even after significantly reducing its request, GRTF's resort tax award was still well under their ask. BSCO also stated that their resort tax request was dramatically reduced this year.

Many of these organizations historically rely heavily on fundraising opportunities, most of which have been stunted. GRTF's annual fundraiser Hooked on the Gallatin, usually a banquet hosted at the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill, will be a week-long virtual auction event this year from Aug. 7-14.

"We anticipate we will have less income from the banquet this year but hoping to make enough to get by," Gardner said. To compensate for the funding disparity, Gardner said the task force has been writing more grants, which takes more time and management.

"We need to survive and we definitely want to make sure that the Gallatin is there for our future generations and so we'll do what we can to make it work," Gardner said.

BSCO also has an adapted version of their usual Parks, Trails and Recreation Celebration, with a week's worth of honoring BSCO's community outdoor spaces. Throughout the week, BSCO will be offering guided hikes, selling raffle tickets for an e-bike and an online auction. BSCO's fundraising goal is \$150,000, just shy of the \$200,000 Wolfe said is typically brought in at the event.

The food bank has also diversified options for support, offering opportunities for interested donors to sponsor families receiving services from the food bank or a specific commodity, such as eggs.

Despite the challenges that these 501(c)(3)s have faced recently, they continue to press forward on their missions to support the community of Big Sky's people, resources and landscapes.

"[I've] always been a big believer in the not-for-profit sector," said Wolfe. "You listen to your community, you serve your community with what they're greatest needs are and the resources will somehow fall into place."



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SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT







THE NEW WEST

BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Jane Goodall is likely the most widely recognized conservationist on Earth. But what gives her standing gravitas is that she is universally beloved, respected for saying animals deserve human compassion, and, even as an octogenarian, demonstrates fearlessness in calling upon companies to demonstrate more social responsibility in maintaining a livable planet for all.

Goodall reserves a particular fondness for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, she has told me on multiple occasions. She enjoys coming here. She says there are several symbolic issues that people, no matter where they are from, ought to care about in our region. And she believes that Greater Yellowstone has attracted a high caliber of devoted advocates, young and old, who grasp what is at stake.

This summer was to be a special one for Goodall. She had planned to "go home" to Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania. It was 60 years ago that she arrived as a young woman in East Africa, fulfilling a childhood dream of going there after reading Tarzan of the Apes and Dr. Doolittle. As circumstances fatefully happened, she accepted an assignment from paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey to study chimpanzees.

Demonstrating hardiness, empathy and insight, Goodall became the best-known primate researcher in the world, providing proof that our genetic cousins are highly intelligent, sociable and can use tools. She adds that they have personalities and emotions as we do. Today, seemingly indefatigable, she is a formidable voice for consideration of non-human beings that often are mere afterthoughts in the human-centric mania that has delivered us into the "Anthropocene," or the most recent geologic time period defined by human impacts on the world.

Last autumn, Goodall was in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, staying with her dear friend, photographer Thomas Mangelsen, at his home outside Moose. They were looking through photographs that Mangelsen took in 2018 when Goodall escorted him on a hike through the jungles of Gombe looking for descendants of the chimps she studied and helped protect.

The Mangelsen picture she selected as the official image for Gombe's 60th anniversary is titled "Laid Back" and it captures the relaxed posture of a then-10-month old named Gombe, who is the grandson of Gremlin, a chimp Goodall studied long ago. Yes, family ties spread across three generations, not unlike famous Jackson Hole Grizzly 399 and her cubs.

The covid pandemic has put a kibosh on plans for having a large gathering of Gombe scientific alums and local people who are evolving their own form of sustainable environmental stewardship. Instead, Goodall, working harder than ever, has been holed up at her family home in Bournemouth, England, staying connected via Zoom and other platforms to keep raising awareness about threats to nature.

In May of this year, she expressed excitement upon learning that Grizzly 399 had emerged from her den with four new cubs. A few years ago, when Mangelsen and I were invited by current U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, to give a presentation on 399 in the U.S. House theater, Goodall made an impromptu video that was aired. Recalling her first sightings of Greater Yellowstone bears with Mangelsen, she condemned hunting grizzlies as trophies and for fun.

From chimps to griz, Goodall is a global wildlife ambassador



For the 60th anniversary of Jane Goodall's first trip to Gombe Stream National Park, the famed primatologist and anthropologist chose "Laid back," Thomas Mangelsen's image of the chimpanzee Gombi, the grandson of Gremlin, a chimp Goodall studied years ago. PHOTO BY THOMAS D. MANGELSEN

While one might think the primary reason COVID-19 interrupted festivities at Gombe was to protect Goodall and other humans, part of her reasoning for staying away was actually to safeguard chimps that might be vulnerable to catching the novel coronavirus.

The U.S. National Institutes of Health circulated a paper that serves as a dire advisory. "The viral infection may also represent an existential threat to our closest living relatives, the nonhuman primates, many of which have already been reduced to small and endangered populations," it reads. "Our study suggests that apes and African and Asian monkeys, as well as some lemurs are all likely to be highly susceptible to [COVID-19], representing a critical threat to their survival. Urgent actions may be necessary to limit their exposure to humans."

This is especially worrisome for Goodall and it illustrates something she has said for years: it isn't just one thing threatening wildlife being pushed to the edge. Often it's a combo of things. And it shows how much more vulnerable island populations of species are, be they chimps in Gombe or grizzlies in Greater Yellowstone.

Along with genetic concerns and more people causing more habitat fragmentation in Greater Yellowstone, climate change impacts and more conflicts between people and bears resulting in grizzly fatalities, there can be diseases that come seemingly out of nowhere. If they strike with a high level of lethality, an island population of animals can quickly suffer devastating losses.

It's why Goodall says we need sustained vigilance, to remember that such populations are not only magnificent, but fragile. Grizzly bears will be a species that, in the Anthropocene, will warrant continuous conservation attention for the long foreseeable future, she says, just like chimps.

Mangelsen (at mangelsen.com) is donating proceeds from the sale of his photograph, "Laid Back," to Goodall's organization, Roots and Shoots (rootsandshoots.org) that foremost is solidifying connections between millions of young people and the natural world while helping them discover the empowering rewards of wildlife advocacy as a passion for life.

Todd Wilkinson is the founder of Bozeman-based Mountain Journal and is a correspondent for National Geographic. He's also the author of the book "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" (featuring photography by Thomas D. Mangelsen), about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399.

Custer Gallatin releases new forest plan

Stakeholders applaud new protections while fighting for more

BY BELLA BUTLER

CUSTER GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST – Roughly six years after Custer and Gallatin national forests merged to produce a joint 3.2-million-acre swath of protected forest, the U.S. Forest Service proposed its final plan for the management of the forest, renewing two former plans that were last updated in the 1980s.

In July, CGNF Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson published a final draft, offered as a preferred alternative, of the Custer Gallatin National Forest Land Management Plan after multiple years of public comment, evaluation and planning. The more-than-30-year-old individual plans were dated, Erickson wrote in her decision, and factors like increased wildland fires and an exploding population in the Big Sky and Bozeman areas warranted an updated approach.

"These changes in resource demands, availability of new scientific information, and promulgation of new policy ... all speak to the need for an updated land management plan that is relevant and responsive to current issues and conditions," Erickson wrote.

The 2012 Planning Rule created by the Forest Service guides the individual management plans of 154 national forests, 20 grasslands and one prairie. All national forests are reviewed and updated on rotating timelines based on this rule, and this renewal for the Custer Gallatin will be the first to join the two formerly independent forests under one unified plan.

Among the many components of the proposal is a list of recommended Wilderness areas. Wilderness designation provides the highest form of land protection that can be designated, shielding wildlands from activity such as resource extraction, road-building, off-road vehicular use and industrial development.

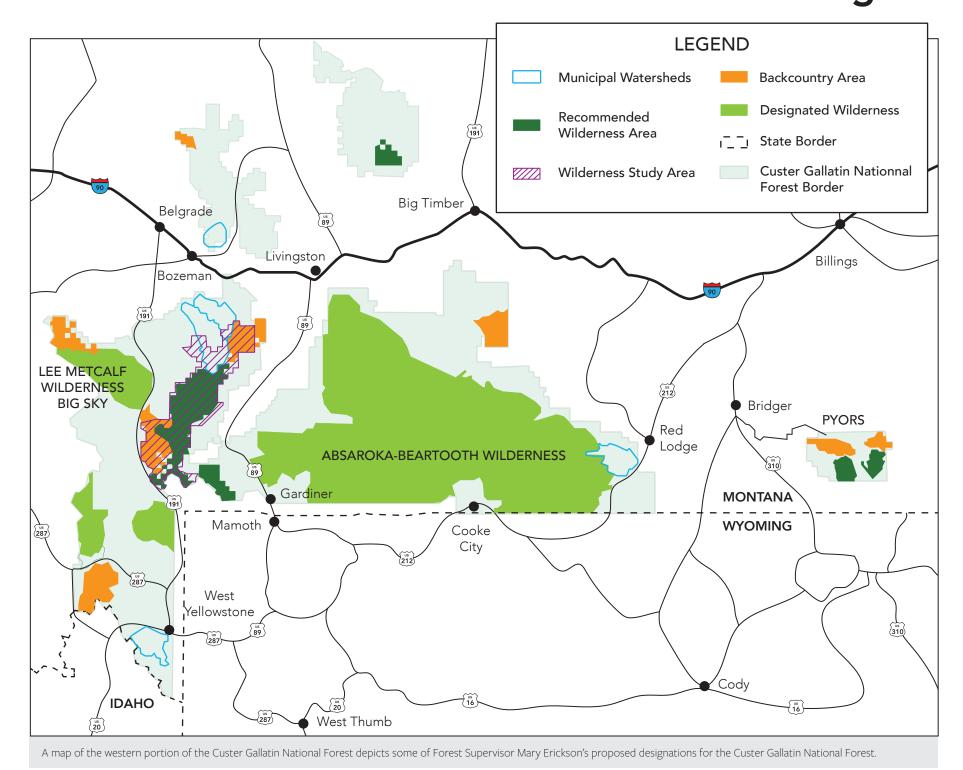
Wilderness is designated by Congress per the Wilderness Act of 1964, but the Forest Service, among other federal agencies, may recommend land for Wilderness designation. In the most recent forest plan, Erickson recommended more than 125,000 acres of land for Wilderness designation in the Custer Gallatin, including land in the Pryor Mountains; Absaroka Beartooth Mountains; the Gallatin Crest; Sawtooth Mountain; Taylor Hilgard in the southern Madison Range as well as the Bridgers, Bangtails and Crazy Mountains. The new plan also removed a recommendation for Wilderness in the Lionhead area south of Big Sky.

"There's a lot of things in this plan that we are really happy to see and there are others that we're disappointed about," said Emily Cleveland, senior field director for the Montana Wilderness Association. MWA is a founding member of the Gallatin Forest Partnership, a coalition of 14 area stakeholders ranging from conservation groups to recreation alliances to outfitting businesses.

GFP launched in 2016, when the Forest Service's revision and planning process began, in order to formulate a cohesive agreement informed by diverse perspectives about the management of Forest Service land. The partnership submitted its final agreement during the planning process in March 2018, which included 124,000 acres of recommended Wilderness in the Gallatin Range, Taylor Hilgard and Cowboy Heaven. Outside of the partnership, MWA was also an advocate for continuing the recommendation for the Lionhead.

"For this landscape (Gallatin and Madison ranges), I found the work of the Gallatin Forest Partnership to be the most compelling," Erickson wrote in

Custer Gallatin National Forest- Western Region



her decision. "This was due to the area-specific recommendations combined with local knowledge, and the outreach and coalition-building across diverse interests that accompanied their proposal." Erickson also noted that the GFP agreement was endorsed by the Gallatin, Park and Madison county commissions.

Erickson included GFP's proposal in an original draft of the plan that fielded public comment, but ultimately honored only parts of their recommendation in the preferred alternative of the final draft.

"What's important about the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement is that it's a package of designations," Cleveland said. "They're all kind of intertwined and we as members all signed onto this agreement kind of looking at this as a collective group of solutions and so when pieces get chopped out it ... threatens the integrity of our whole agreement."

GFP also recommended the designation of 56,100 acres in the Gallatin and Madison ranges as "wildlife management areas," a protection less stringent than Wilderness designation that still does not permit the use of motorized vehicles. In the plan, however, Erickson calls these "backcountry areas," which permit the continued use of pre-existing motorized and mechanized recreational activities.

One such designation was made in Cowboy Heaven, northwest of Big Sky in the Madison Range. "Our desire to protect the characteristics of this place is shared with the Gallatin Forest Partnership proposal, but I felt that this designation affords better flexibility to manage the rustic administrative cabin, primitive road, and grazing infrastructure and retains more options for future fuel and restoration work in the area," Erickson wrote.

Erickson also dissented from the GFP agreement on the partnership's recommendation for the Hyalite Watershed Protection and Recreation Area. This GFP proposal cited two main reasons for stringent protection and management of the area: Hyalite's heavy recreational use and how the watershed provides the majority of Bozeman's municipal water supply.

The forest plan classifies a portion of Hyalite, smaller than that recommended by GFP, as a "recreation emphasis area," a designation that Erickson wrote establishes objectives for "increasing and enhancing recreational opportunities." The plan includes nearly 225,000 acres of recreation emphasis areas.

Other key stakeholders recognized by the plan are indigenous nations that hold tremendous value in many parts of the Custer Gallatin. The Forest Service consulted with more than 19 tribes during the planning process and the plan recognizes "areas of tribal importance."

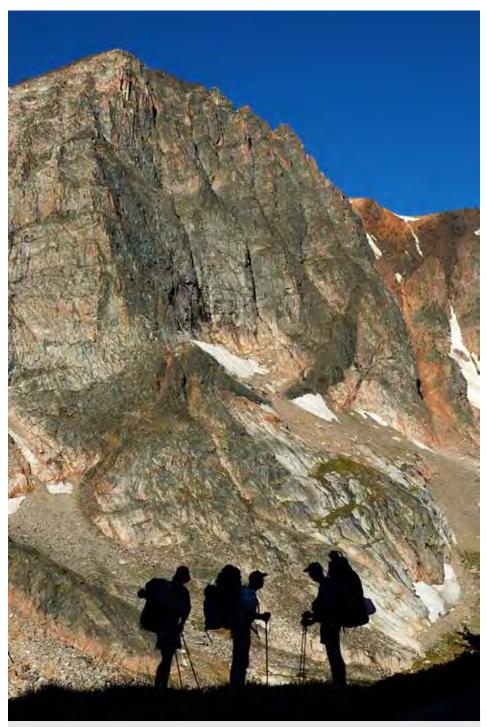
Portions of the Crazy Mountains that are also sacred to the Crow Tribe are protected by the revised plan through recommended Wilderness and backcountry area designations. Shane Doyle, a Crow tribal member and the founder of Native Nexus, an American Indian education consulting firm, said consulting tribes was a key step for the plan.

"The Crow Tribe has had a long-standing spiritual connection to the Crazy Mountains for many hundreds of years, and we're very pleased that the Forest Service has chosen to designate areas—ceremonial areas—which tend to be the higher peaks to the south and toward the eastern side, as Wilderness and backcountry," Doyle told EBS on July 27.

"These are places where ... for hundreds of years Crow people have gone to pray without food and water and believing that that's a place of great spiritual power," he added.



Individuals gather around a table in Bozeman at one of more than 100 meetings that informed the creation of the draft land management plan for the Custer Gallatin National Forest. PHOTO COURTESY OF CUSTER GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST



A trio of hikers enjoy a classic montane view in the Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness, which is encompassed in the Custer Gallatin National Forest. PHOTO BY TERRY JONES

While Doyle expressed gratitude for the protections afforded to the Crazy Mountains in the plan, he also hopes to see more Wilderness designation beyond areas of Crow significance.

"Overall, for myself and for the tribe I think Wilderness is a high priority," he said. "The Wilderness area is really the only way that we can maintain the integrity of quiet solitude that those places have enjoyed."

The final draft of the Custer Gallatin National Forest Land Management Plan is currently in the stage of public comment, where those who have already provided public comment and engaged in the process have the opportunity to pose objections to anything in the draft for further discussion before the new plan is officially adopted. Cleveland said that MWA and GFP are still combing through the proposal and will present objections before the Sept. 8 deadline.

"The plan really is a balancing act of social, economic and ecological sustainability," Mariah Leuschen-Lonergan, CGNF's public affairs specialist wrote in a statement to EBS. "The Forest worked hard to build and maintain a robust public engagement process with over 100 public meetings and webinars, kiosks, youth engagement and much more and we had great engagement across the spectrum."

In a video produced by CGNF, Erickson explores the draft plan and rationale for her decisions. She acknowledges that the Custer Gallatin is not only one of the most diverse landscapes, but also an area with some of the most diverse interests, making the planning process a true matter of compromise

"The process we've worked on and developed and engaged with people on, we've tried to pull that together and integrate our basic requirements under the law, really redeem our basic responsibilities for stewardship and then think about how you integrate all those values and perspectives into a framework for managing the Custer Gallatin National Forest for the next 10-15 years," Erickson said.

To review the final draft of the Custer Gallatin National Forest Land Management Plan, visit fs.usda.gov.



Big Sky, Montana

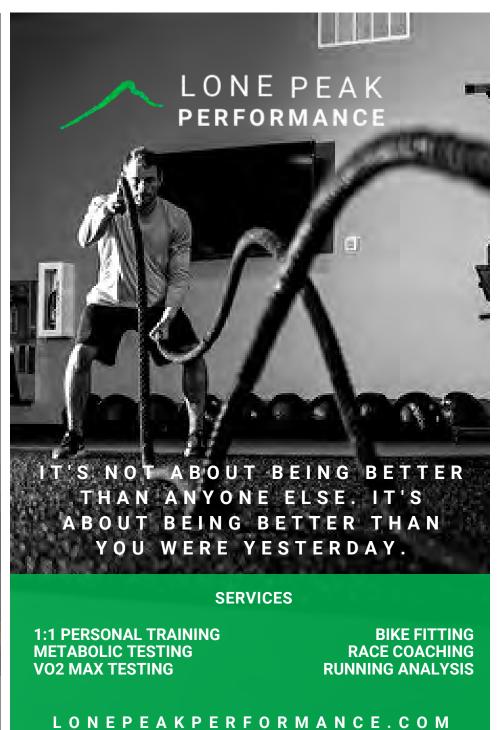
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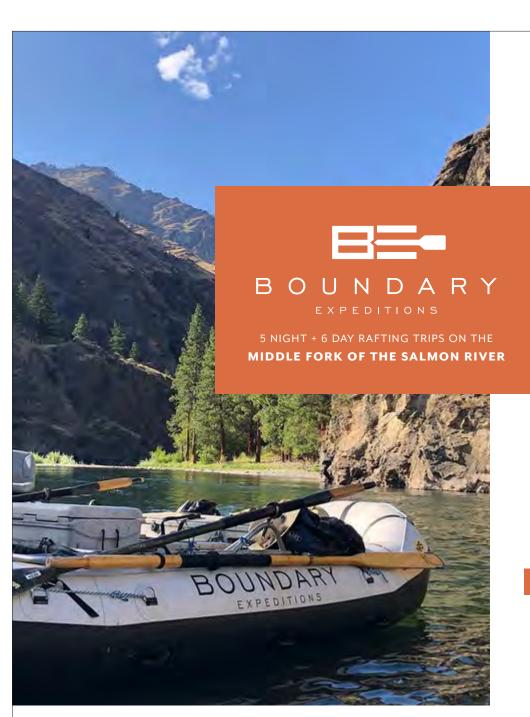
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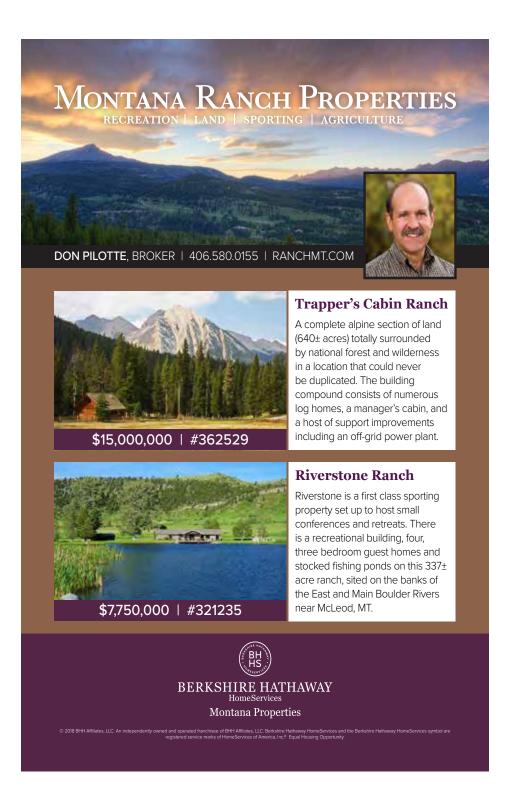
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Water Wisdom

BY DAVID TUCKER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It's no secret that Big Sky's water resources are fragile. Water quantity and quality are heavily dependent on a deep winter snowpack and large rain events in the spring, summer and fall. This precipitation recharges our groundwater resources. As summer wears on and precipitation decreases, aquifer levels drop, but then fall rolls around and the snowpack builds again, stockpiling water in the form of snow that will melt come spring, continuing the perpetual cycle.

Even small changes in weather patterns, climate and usage can disrupt this balance. Across southwest Montana, climate scientists predict rising average temperatures that could lead to a decrease in average snowpack. Scientists also predict increases in the speed and duration of runoff, meaning water would rapidly leave the watershed, potentially leaving our aquifers without adequate recharge.

However, the biggest observable change so far has come in the form of usage and land development impacts on water quality. There are far more people living, visiting and recreating in our headwaters community than there were even a decade ago, and all these people use a lot of water, and produce a lot of wastewater.

"Large groundwater withdrawals can affect stream flow by intercepting water that would return to the stream as springs," said Mike Richter of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology. "These springs are critical to maintaining cold base flows in late summer. Additionally, increasing numbers of septic systems add nutrient load to this shallow groundwater system. Combine these two effects and we are more likely to see impacts to our river, including harmful algae blooms."

One area of particular concern is the river corridor between Highway 64 and Beaver Creek. The canyon, as it's referred to by locals, is poised for significant development relative to what we have there now. To better understand water quantity and quality in this area, the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) has launched a Ground Water Investigation Project, or GWIP, that started this summer and will continue over the next two years.

Mining for Water

The goal of this project is to "assess the cumulative effects of existing and future residential and commercial development on water quality and quantity," according to James Rose of MBMG. The project also hopes to gain knowledge of the groundwater to surface-water relationship in this area. Where does the river lose water into the aquifers and where does the river gain flow back? "This is critical to understanding what the recharge sources are to the aquifers, especially the shallow aquifer under this area that is seeing increasing nitrate trends," Richter said.

Project researchers will collect groundwater level data, measure surface-water flow in the Gallatin and adjacent tributaries, sample groundwater and surface-water chemistry and install monitoring wells. Based on what they find, we'll gain knowledge of the area's aquifers and how closely they are tied to the Gallatin River.

"We know our water resources are fragile, and we know more development and increased populations are inevitable," Gallatin River Task Force executive director Kristin Gardner said. "To plan for that inevitably, we need hard data that will tell us what's possible, without compromising the Gallatin River." To gather that data, the Task Force submitted the canyon area to the GWIP program. "Understanding the canyon's capacity is critical to making sound management and development decisions," Gardner continued.

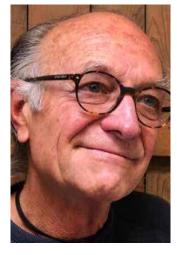
At the end of the study, researchers hope to have a water budget, or a comprehensive accounting of how much water flows in and out of the study area. They'll also be able to map how future septic systems could impact surface-water resources. Understanding how groundwater flows, how much there is and its nutrient make-up are all essential for determining future threats and making wise land- and water-use decisions.

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





The bomb and me, 75 years later



BY PAUL KRZA

It's been a decade since I reflected on radiation, both the kind emitted by nuclear tests and the radium inserted up my nose to shrink swollen adenoids.

The nuclear bomb and I became senior citizens in 2010. But this summer's 75th anniversary of this country's first exploded atomic bomb—dubbed Trinity—has been overshadowed by a virus that's even pushed nukes aside.

To recap: Trinity was detonated into the atmosphere of New Mexico in the early morning of July 16, 1945, mere hours after I entered life the day before in Rock Springs, Wyoming. Trinity fallout probably dusted my baby body, blown north by southwest summer winds.

Several years later, my personal relationship with radioactivity took another turn. In the early 1950s my parents traveled to Salt Lake City to visit Dr. David Dolowitz. He offered cutting-edge technology—"nasopharyngeal radium irradiation"—what the Saturday Evening Post called an "amazing" treatment to shrink swollen adenoids.

Into each nostril went a small, radium-filled rod, which was left there for 10-15 minutes. More sessions followed, and altogether, my face received about a hundred times more radiation than Japanese nuke bomb survivors, or the equivalent of several thousand dental x-rays. The musician Frank Zappa was among the estimated half-million to 2 million children who were treated this way.

More radiation wafted my way throughout my early life in Rock Springs, from the more than 100 above-ground tests in Nevada. Along with another 900 underground tests, the site earned the nickname, "the most bombed place on earth."

Then, in 1999, my family moved from Casper, Wyoming, to Socorro, New Mexico, only 45 miles from Trinity's ground-zero. Over the next 15 years, we learned much from locals about the test, vividly recalled by many as "the day of the double sunrise."

A few years later, a piece of "Jumbo" bomb casing from the Trinity site was installed at the city plaza, a few blocks from our new home.

Six years ago, we moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, not far from Los Alamos, where the bomb was developed. To the south, stored in the Manzano Mountains, are a couple

of thousand nuclear warheads, part of this country's 6,000-plus nukes. The rest can be launched in minutes from missile silos in Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota, as well as from submarines and bombers.

Nearby, we hear about the lingering radiation effects on Navajo and New Mexican uranium miners, as well as their families living next to radioactive dumps. The Tularosa Basin "downwinders," doused with Trinity's radiation, continue to press for federal compensation for cancers and other diseases. And the subsequent Nevada testing also carried radiation downwind to residents of Arizona, Nevada and Utah.

Nukes are scattered about the world—Russia, with about 6,500 warheads—and another thousand-plus in seven other countries, from France to North Korea. In the U.S., trillions of dollars are spent to maintain and "refurbish" the bombs. The Trump administration plans to buy 100 brand new bombers for about \$600 billion each.

Alas, unlike the modernized bomb, my body ages with childhood radiation lurking, sort of a "Nagasaki up the nose." So far, I've avoided maladies attributed to radium irradiation—throat cancers, neck tumors or teeth falling out.

Yet I haven't escaped unscathed: my ground-down teeth have all been crowned and I live with persistent nasal sores I suspect, but can't prove, came from close brushes with radioactive rods. Last year, an ear, nose and throat doctor said all nasal passages looked fine. He also said he'd never heard of nasopharyngeal radium irradiation, which these days sounds like a bizarre treatment.

But so far, so good: I cross my fingers.

The atomic "doomsday clock," maintained by nuclear scientists, ticks in 2020 "closer than ever ... 100 seconds to midnight." "Any belief that the threat of nuclear war has been vanquished is a mirage," the scientists said. The Trump administration dumped the Iran nuclear deal, tore up our plans to withdraw from warhead reduction treaties and has discussed resuming nuclear tests.

These days, though, worries about nukes have been overshadowed by virus fears. Just south of Trinity, a private federal prison in New Mexico's Otero County is a COVID-19 hotspot, with nearly all 500-plus inmates testing positive. But while masks and social isolation efforts may have replaced duck and cover and bomb shelters, both viral disease and nuclear war remain threats that are insidious, and deadly.

Paul Krza is a contributor to Writers on the Range (writersontherange.org), a nonprofit devoted to lively conversation about the West. He is a writer in New Mexico.

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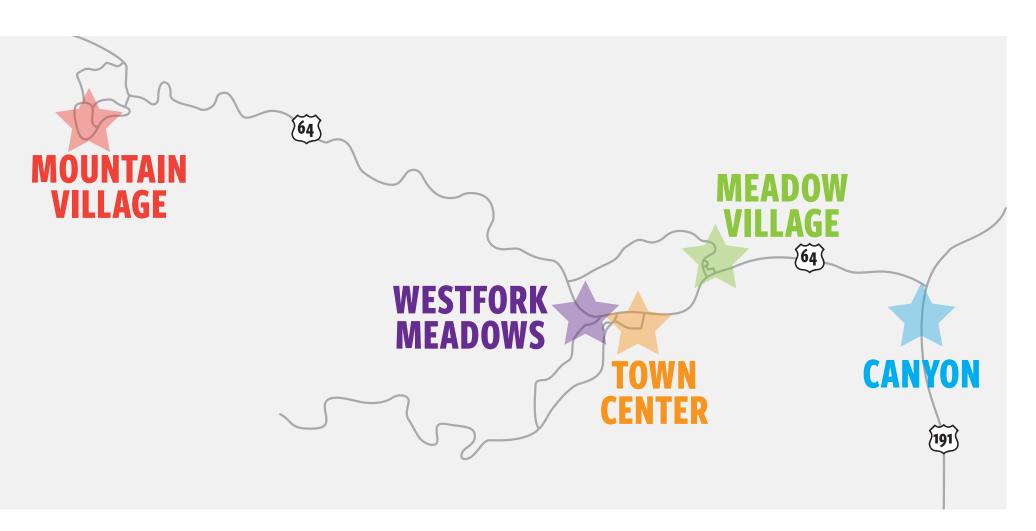
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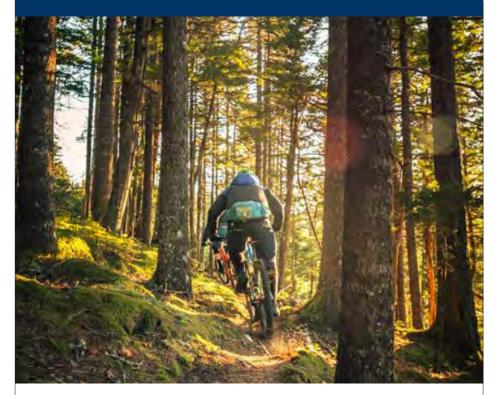
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Why small streams are so big to me

BY PATRICK STRAUB EBS FISHING COLUMNIST

We've all heard that bigger is better, right? When fly fishing for trout, that is usually the case, unless you are talking about the size of the river or creek on which you are fishing or plan to fish. I've been blessed to fish the world-over and catch a variety of species—from Golden Dorado to Giant Trevally to Tigerfish—but when it comes to fly fishing for trout, I will choose a small creek or river over the bigger rivers every time.

Why so? You may ask would someone who has been to the proverbial fly fishing mountain top many times, take small when they've had big. And, that is exactly the point, I've been there and done that so I can say with absolute certainty, that the great things in fly fishing come in little packages. Here are some of the reasons why fly fishing small creeks and rivers are so important to me.

Intimate experiences

When standing in small creek, feeling the rush of water against your legs, the world around you is narrowed down to you, the water, the fish, and what you need to accomplish to catch a trout on a fly. The playing field is leveled—there is no boat to help you get to the fish and the only way to get to the next spot is to walk. The sights and sounds are amplified because you are now a visitor in a trout's home environment. Your movements—either by wading in the stream or casting too far or too soon—may all be detected by a wary trout.

Learning curve is much steeper

Anglers who spend more time walking and wading smaller waters become better anglers quicker. Having been a guide for over 20 years, I've seen anglers improve dramatically after a day of small water walking and wading when compared to a day spent in a boat. On a creek you have to cast at least 30 feet. Your hands have to work together constantly—your line-hand and rod-hand work in tandem ensuring you manage the drift of your fly and the slack in your line. And you have to set the hook entirely on your own. In a boat, the rower can row away from your fly so you don't really need to be a good caster, they can row till the cows come to ensure you get a long drift and they can even set the hook by quickly back-rowing.

More active

When fishing small creeks and rivers you need to walk from spot to spot. For many anglers this active approach just feels better than standing or sitting in a boat all day. Spending a day walking over rocks, stepping over trees, and bending around boulders or banks is not only good for the soul but good for the body.

In high-summer

During the summer, many of the mountain streams offer a cool water respite from heat so common on the larger, lower elevation rivers. These smaller waters might require a little hiking or walking to access, but the reward is often worth the extra effort. Anglers who explore and enjoy some of the cooler mountain streams might also find the fish do as well—trout want cooler water temps and often migrate upriver to find lower water temperatures.

Dry fly and streamer fishing often rule the roost

If simplicity is desired, fly fishing smaller creeks and rivers often mean you can forego the two-fly tungsten bead head nymph indicator, drag-and-plop, clunk-and-go rigs that so many boat anglers fish these days, and choose single dry flies and single streamers. Going simple doesn't mean you may catch fewer fish, in fact it means you may catch more because you'll spend more time fishing and less time untangling and re-rigging.

Small creeks and rivers always serve up something new

Because each bend of a creek or small river is different, new things are learned throughout the day. From one day to the next, the fishing is slightly different. The sun may shade a bank or run in the morning but not in the afternoon, causing you to adjust where you place your fly—in the shade or not in the shade. But, because you are standing in the creek and not floating by, you can do both to see which works.

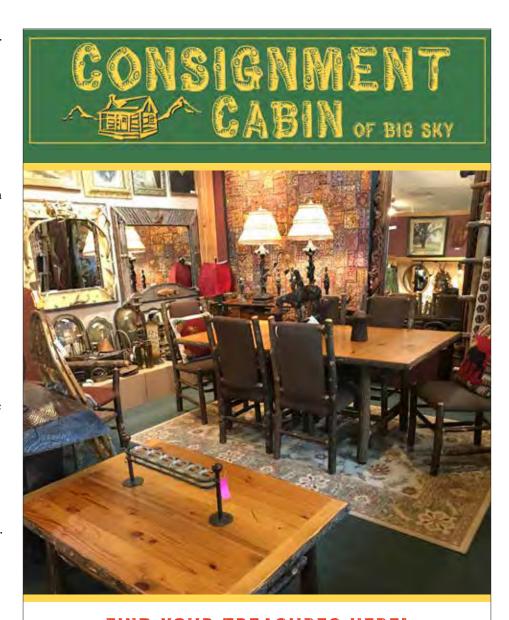
Recently I guided an angler who notched his 40th year on his metaphorical fly fishing belt. For years he'd hired the same outfitter on a well-known central Montana tailwater. On this popular tailwater he'd caught ridiculous amounts of big brown trout on little dry flies—accomplishments to be proud of indeed. After the two of us wrapped up a week of fishing on a variety of spring creeks, small creeks and rivers, his parting words were "Tve learned more and caught more in these five days than I have in 40 years on the big rivers. Where have you been all these years?"



Fly fishing small streams offers an intimate experience not found on larger rivers. PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK STRAUB

I replied, "Right here all along. Going small, when others go big." He proceeded to book two weeks for next year.

Patrick Straub is a veteran guide and outfitter and has fished the world over. He is the author of six books, including "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Fly Fishing" and has been writing the Eddy Line for eight years. He's owned a fly shop and was one of the largest outfitters in Montana, but these days he now only guides anglers who value quality over quantity. If you want to fish with him, visit his website, https://www.dryflymontana.com/.



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Starlite Drive-in Theater's revival in Big Sky country

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – The historic Starlite Drive-In Theater sign, which once shone proudly at its 7th Avenue location in Bozeman back in 1950, has seen its share of adventure since the theater shut down and it retired in 1989. Last year, half of it was stolen from Erik "Ole" Nelson's studio, before being returned by apologetic revelers. Nelson acquired the sign from its original owner in 2000, based on a promise to never sell it—he believed the piece of history was for the public to view and enjoy.

Last Friday and Saturday, the Starlite light up once more as a fully functional drive-in theater, showing "Walking Out" on Friday, July 24 and "Ballad of Lefty Brown" on Saturday, July 25.

Drive-in movie theaters gained popularity in the 1950s following the baby boom, a car ownership boom and the growth of the suburban lifestyle. Families and first dates would gather to watch the latest from Hollywood from the seats of their cars. Gallatin Valley was not exempt from this fad—the Starlite Drive-in Theatre, which existed just north of Interstate 90 long before the interstate existed, was open for four decades.

"We had talked about that Starlite sign over the years and how it needed to come back to life some day," said JP Gabriel, owner of Filmlites Montana, a motion picture equipment rental and production company in Bozeman. "[The sign] really did end up springing the light bulb."

This revival is the result of a team effort between Filmlites Montana, Jereco Studios, Rocky Mountain Rigging and Ole Nelson, who owns Media Station. Together, the team gave the venue a major technology upgrade, with a 25-foot LED light screen that allows for film screening in full daylight with an uncompromised picture.

Gabriel has been steeped in Montana's booming film production industry for 30 years and was integral in working with Gov. Steve Bullock to get a tax bill passed that credits Montana 20 percent of film production expenditures. Nelson was the man behind the sign—he also restored the original Rialto signage that now adorns downtown Bozeman's Rialto Theater.



Filmlites Montana, Jereco Studios, Rocky Mountain Rigging and Media Station gave the drive-in venue a major technology upgrade, with a 25-foot LED light screen. PHOTO COURTESY OF FILMLITES MONTANA



Starlite presented "Walking Out" on Friday, July 24 and "Ballad of Lefty Brown" on Saturday, July 25. PHOTO COURTESY OF FILMLITES MONTANA

"It had everything to do with COVID," Gabriel said of the drive-in theater project. "I never would have attempted it without the isolation that COVID has created and the safety that viewing a movie from your car provides. No one would want to open a drive-in theater nowadays with all the amazing amount of technology that's available, but COVID has opened up a whole new revisit to that market."

Although there may be some poetry to resuscitating a retro industry in the uncertain climate of a pandemic, Gabriel, who has fond memories growing up near the Great Falls drive-in, says he doesn't think it runs that deep.

"I think people just want to get outside, they want to see some live entertainment, and are searching for it within the restrictions we're living in," he said.

Regardless, it'll be a way to bridge the gap between those who remember fondly the days of drive-in movies, and those who have never experienced one. Gabriel says they'll consider expanding the genre, using the platform as a safe way to broadcast comedy shows and music as well.

"We need to be able to experience it with the viewers and we want people to be satisfied with their experience," Gabriel said. "We're going to find out with them [on Friday], so we hope they'll be patient as we find out what is possible and what our limitations are."

Gabriel, who was in the middle of producing two films in Montana when production was shut down, says those in the film industry are waiting in limbo as they figure out how to proceed with COVID-19 restrictions—the pandemic put a damper on film tax credit momentum in Montana.

The drive-in launched with a focus on featuring Montana-made "home-grown" movies that not only capture the beautiful landscape and character of Big Sky Country, but were also made in Montana by a Montana film crew.

Showtime and tickets are available at starlitedriveinmontana.com and the theater is located 6465 River Road, just north of the Cottonwood Golf course on River Road.

Arts Council launches campaign to save bison sculpture

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

BIG SKY – The Arts Council of Big Sky has kicked off a public campaign to keep the popular bison sculpture in Fire Pit Park as part of its permanent public art collection. The sculpture, "Waldazo," was installed in 2018 and is made of hundreds of collected metal objects. It is on loan from artist Kirsten Kainz until 2021, but the ACBS wants to make sure the iconic piece remains in Big Sky forever by purchasing it outright.

"The bison sculpture has proved immensely popular with locals and visitors," said Megan Buecking, who runs the Arts Council's public art program. "We love the location and would be sad to see it go, so we want to make sure it stays in our community."



"Waldazo," was installed in 2018 and is on loan from artist Kirsten Kainz until 2021, but the ACBS wants to make sure the iconic piece remains in Big Sky forever by purchasing it outright. PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

The Arts Council began raising the funds neccassary to purchase the sculpture with a \$10,000 lead gift from the Glore Fund in memory of long time local Maude Glore's mother. At the organization's Auction for the Arts event in February, 35 additional donors responded by donating over \$25,000 to honor the Glore gift. Since then, the ACBS has raised an additional \$6,000 and hopes to complete fundraising with the final public phase of the campaign .

"We're hopeful that the Big Sky community can help us reach our goal," said Katie Alvin, Development Director for the Arts Council. "Thanks to the generosity of our lead donors, the end is in sight. This is the perfect time for us to get everyone in our community involved."

The Arts Council currently owns three permanent sculptures and manages the placement of three others. Plans are also in the works to install two more contemporary pieces in the Town Center over the next two years.

"The public art program is fast becoming one of our biggest assets," said Buecking. "We have exciting plans for the future that we think will make Big Sky an even better place to live and visit."

The community can donate online at bigskyarts.org, or support the campaign by purchasing bison-themed merchandise at the Arts Council's tent each week at the Big Sky Farmer's Market in the Town Center. For more information about the project please call 995-2742 or visit bigskyarts.org/give.



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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, July 31 - Thursday, Aug. 13

If your event falls between Aug. 14 and Aug. 27, please submit it by Aug. 22 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

FRIDAY, JULY 31

Parks, Trails & Recreation Celebration Big Sky Community Organization, 6 p.m.

Best of 406 Market Marketplace, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUG. 1

Gallatin Valley Farmers Market Gallatin Valley Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.

Business & Pleasure The Extreme History Project, 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUG. 2

Observational Drawing for Adults Sign up: selisa@centurylink.net, 9:30 a.m.

Emma's Story Crail Ranch, 1 p.m.

MONDAY, AUG. 3

STEM in the Park Montana Science Center, 10 a.m.

TUESDAY, AUG. 4

Bozeman Farmers Market Lindley Park, 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 5

Open Lab Sessions Montana Science Center, 10 a.m.

Hike Big Sky: Ousel to Yellow Mule Ousel Falls Trailhead, 9 a.m.

Big Sky Farmers Market Big Sky Town Center, 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUG. 6

Open Lab Sessions Montana Science Center, 10 a.m.

Books in Common: Larry Watson Country Bookshelf Facebook Live, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUG. 7

Hooked on the Gallatin Online Auction hookedonthegallatin.org, 12 p.m. to Aug. 14 at 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUG. 8

Sweet Pea 5k & 10k vritual run Downtown Bozeman, 7 a.m.

The Beaten Path Veteren Benefit Hike Bridger Bowl, 7 a.m.

ARTventures: Montana Animal Illustrations Arts Council of Big Sky, 10 a.m.

Stand Up Paddleboard Yoga Bozeman Beach, 10:30 a.m.

SUNDAY, AUG. 9

Observational Drawing for Adults Sign up: selisa@centurylink.net, 9:30 a.m.

2nd Annual Gallatin Valley Community Car Day Zoot Enterprises, 11 a.m.

TUESDAY, AUG. 11

Swing for Hope Ladies Golf Tounament Valley View Golf Club, 9 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12

Hike Big Sky at Crail Ranch Crail Ranch, 9 a.m.

Big Sky Farmers Market Big Sky Town Center, 5 p.m.



ARTVENTURES WORKSHOPS Arts Council of Big Sky

ARTventures are free art workshops and activities designed especially for young artists who love a good creative adventure outside of the house, studio or classroom. They are free and open to all young artists! This workshop is open to artists ages 6–13 and will teach kids step by step techniques to draw a variety of Montana animals and will create their own animal illustration. The workshop will conclude with a mini-art show at 12 p.m. and artists will bring their artwork home with them! Learn mire and register at bigskyart.org/events.





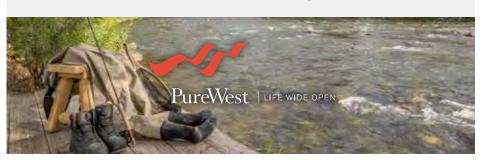




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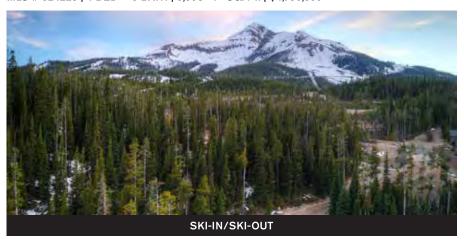
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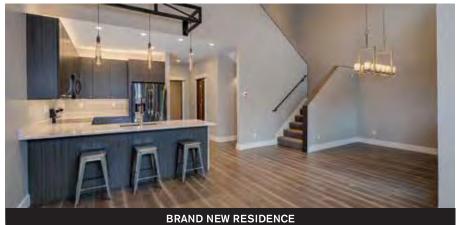
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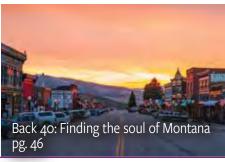


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SECTION 3:BUSINESS, SPORTS, HEALTH & FUN







MT high school sports hit the field

BY BRANDON WALKER

MONTANA – Break out your stadium seats, foam fingers and masks—high school athletics are slated to resume this fall in the state of Montana. On July 27 the Montana High School Association (MHSA) released tiered methods and requirements for high schools throughout the state to resume athletic activities this fall.

MHSA consulted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Federation of High School Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, as well as health officials at various levels throughout MT, while also factoring in all directives from Gov. Steve Bullock in their requirements.

MHSA Executive Director Mark Beckman said it is important for student athletes to return, citing personal growth, plus emotional and mental wellness as some key beneficiaries of athletic activity.

"That seems to be a real issue after spring sports," Beckman said. "When you take a look at the studies that're being done that there was a lot of issues with the mental and emotional wellness, so we think that's important and then of course it's important for their physical safety too and that's why the restrictions and requirements and considerations were put into place."

Athletes will not be required to wear masks while competing on the field of play, however MHSA is consulting the governor's office regarding any possible mask requirements for athletes on the sidelines. Beckman did clarify that cross country athletes will wear masks in all staging areas prior to the start of a meet. Additionally, MHSA has left the decision to permit fans at athletic contests in the hands of each individual school, while abiding by any restrictions and receiving input from local health officials.

"I think it's so important now [for us] to follow through," Beckman said.
"Some of these things may not be what somebody wants to do, but hopefully they will do it so that those individuals on the floor, on the court on the course will be able to continue to play."

"Being physically active and developing a competitive mindset is extremely important in my opinion, but probably the most crucial element is student athletes learning what it means to be a part of a team and creating camaraderie with their peers," said Lone Peak High School Athletic Director John Hannahs. He continued to state that the safety and well-being of student athletes will come before anything else as athletics resume.

MHSA's aforementioned requirements include: social distancing when feasible, frequent hand washing, sanitizing of equipment including the ball, no shared drinks, eliminating contests with out-of-state schools, limiting group sizes at practices and eliminating competitions that would draw multiple teams outside of golf and cross country competitions.

"This pandemic certainly has made everything much more complicated, but I am confident that we will be able to work together with our staff and make the best of it," Hannahs said.

LPHS varsity football coach Adam Farr is eagerly awaiting the season. He said summer workouts have drawn the largest participation that he has ever witnessed during his tenure with the Big Horns.

"I'm super excited, you know our squad is definitely on the younger side but there's some excellent athletes amongst the group and they're all dying to actually have a season so it's outstanding to hear that it's currently on schedule," he said.

While Farr recognized there will be some hurdles to overcome, including instances such as dressing before a game in a locker room setting, he doesn't believe it will significantly impact competition on the playing field.



LPHS junior TJ Nordahl (5) spikes the ball in a match against the West Yellowstone Wolverines last fall. PHOTO BY BRANDON WALKER

"They're ready to get out there and do something," Farr said. "They're tired of being cooped up."

Farr's sentiments about his teams' anticipation were echoed by LPHS varsity volleyball coach Missy Botha: "The girls are over the moon about actually getting to play. They understand it won't be a traditional season, but their enthusiasm hasn't waned."

Botha recognized that restricted crowd capacities will be an adjustment, but she believes it will work in the Lady Big Horns favor this season. "... They have to be their own No. 1 fans," she said. "Positivity within themselves and with their teammates is something I stress on a regular basis. That mentality is going to pay off for us especially in tight matches."

Of the five tiers that MHSA outlined in their plan, the fall athletic season is set to commence at Tier 1 and Beckman noted that MHSA had received mainly positive commentary on July 27, the day that the plan was released.

Tier 1 entails schools beginning their athletic practices and game schedules when originally planned. As a result, LPHS is slated to host their first athletic contest on Aug. 28 as the varsity boys and girls soccer teams take on Hamilton, followed by a home contest for the varsity girls volleyball team on Aug. 29 and a road varsity football matchup on the same day.

The other four tiers of MHSA's plan all involve a delayed start to the season or a disruption in competition during the course of the athletic season. Beckman noted that these tiers would likely only occur due to another stayat-home order or similar shutdowns as directed by the Governor.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) requires coaches to complete certain coaching training courses through their online education system prior to coaching high school athletes. NFHS recently released a free COVID-19 coaching course on their website, which Beckman said he will strongly encourage all coaches to complete, but it is not required at this time.

"But I think that we have to make sure we focus in on what the most important thing is, that they're playing out on that field or playing out on that court or running out on you know the course," Beckman said. "I think that's probably our most important thing, so even though it may feel a little different at least those kids are getting that opportunity."



BY DR. ANDREA WICK EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Viruses have always been a nuisance to humankind and will continue to be as long as there is life on this planet. The human body's immune system has an innate power of knowing how to heal itself. We need to give our bodies more credit for the intelligence they possess and even learn how to enhance it. Here are some tips to keep yourself healthy and some supplements that I recommend taking, at this time, to keep your body in balance.

Lately, patient after patient has told me they feel stressed, fat and bloated. The No. 1 word here is stress. Stress can cause a myriad of symptoms and is the most important element to keep under control. When we feel as if we don't have control over what is happening in our world, stress may seem impossible to control.

Cortisol is a stress hormone secreted by the adrenal glands and its main function is to control blood sugar, regulate blood pressure and metabolism. Cortisol is a fundamental steroid hormone for the immune system. There are many tools that you can use to keep cortisol in balance. Moving your body is important, however be mindful of not over exercising since intense exercise can increase stress on the body.

I recommend trying daily yoga, qigong, meditation, and walking outdoors. Getting adequate amounts of sleep, ranging from eight to nine hours along with a healthy diet (decreasing sugar, alcohol, caffeine and processed foods) will help to keep cortisol levels normal as well. Practicing these habits will help you keep your weight in check and stress manageable.

Here is a list of supplements I recommend taking regularly at this time:

How to boost your immune system

- 1. Vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin, is a fat-soluble vitamin that is important for regulating the immune system. If you are unable to get 20 minutes of sun exposure daily without sunscreen, I recommend taking 5,000 IU per day. In order to ensure you aren't getting too much vitamin D, you can always have your blood levels tested by your doctor.
- 2. Zinc is a mineral that is important for the healing process and helps to regenerate body tissues. Zinc glycinate and picolinate are the best, highly absorbable forms, take 20-30 mg daily.
- 3. Vitamin C helps to repair tissue and protect the immune system. Liposomal vitamin C is the gold standard because it is more readily absorbed into cells and easy on the stomach; I recommend 2,000 mg daily.
- 4. Chaga mushrooms are powerful for boosting immunity and have properties that help to fight infection and cellular communication.
- 5. Adaptogenic herbal remedies, help to regulate cortisol and help with energy and sleep, blends that include: ashwaganda, rhodiola, magnolia and l-theanine are most helpful.

In conclusion, know that not all supplements are the same. Just as it is important to read the labels on your food, read the labels on your vitamins. Do not buy supplements that have fillers such as corn syrup, corn, soy, aluminum, polyethylene glycol, and dyes such as red No. 27.

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.





Making it in Big Sky: American Bank

BY BRANDON WALKER



American Bank branch manager Ross Pfohl spoke with EBS on the economic landscape of the Big Sky community as the pandemic progresses. PHOTO BY ALLISON GILLEY

BIG SKY – For 22-year Big Sky resident Ross Pfohl the promise of lingering economic adversity long after the pandemic has passed is reminiscent of the lasting effects of the 2008 recession which were felt until roughly 2013. Unknowns continue to circulate regarding the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but to this point Pfohl is optimistic based on the current state of Big Sky businesses.

American Bank Branch
Manager Pfohl and his team
dealt with stay-at-home orders
and business shutdowns the way
that most every business did: by
closing their lobby and working
remotely as well as virtually to
the best of their abilities.

After witnessing the evolving economic and social climate, American Bank shut down their lobby for a second time three weeks ago after reopening to walk-in patrons for about a month and a half. They continue to operate their drive-thru lanes at the bank all while moving to a new location within the Big Sky Meadow Village two weeks ago.

Pfohl recently spoke with EBS over the phone to discuss the economic landscape of the Big Sky community as the pandemic progresses.

Explore Big Sky: Can you describe what it was like to transition from your daily routine of communicating with consumers in the lobby to suddenly having to work with them remotely?

Ross Pfohl: "We went to more phone meetings and people using the drivethru. We still do meetings by appointment where we wear masks. But I would say most customers choose to do business by phone. Still some people like to meet in person and have eye to eye contact. Fortunately, we also have a very good electronic banking options that we offer our customers."

EBS: Can you describe the financial impact that the pandemic has had on Americans?

R.P.: "The restaurant and bar businesses have been heavily affected and so has any business that requires you to be in a group or in a confined space such as tourist buses, that kind of thing. Otherwise it's kind of interesting, building is busier than it's ever been and from what I can tell the real estate [market] is busy up here. In my casual observation, it seems a lot of people want to move to Montana now and get out of the cities. We obviously have less foreigners visiting, but it seems like a lot of Americans have chosen to come west for their vacations."

EBS: Have you ever witnessed an event or happening that has had a financial impact similar to that of the pandemic?

R.P.: "2009 to 2012 was pretty devastating up here. I would say it was

probably worse than what we have experienced so far. People had invested in second homes, speculative properties and flipping properties. Then the recession hit and people lost a lot of liquidity. The building pretty much stopped, prices fell and people weren't buying anything even with the lower prices. There wasn't any VRBO around to rent your houses out to supplement your income, so a lot of people got hurt. I would say it was probably worse than this, for right now. I mean we're still in the first phases of this, so we'll see where this goes. For the bank the financial impact is very different when facing this health crisis versus the financial crisis of 10 years ago."

EBS: Are you witnessing an increase in loan requests due to the pandemic?

R.P.: "We were busy before and we're busy now. We did a number of PPP loans and I think we helped out a lot of people with those. It's kind of interesting, you know no one knew what to expect when this shutdown came so a lot of people applied for PPP loans and some people needed it, and some people didn't, and some people even gave it back. Things have kind of calmed down now and there's obviously some businesses out there that are going to have some issues down the road unless things get straightened out, but so far most businesses seems to be hanging on and doing okay and some businesses seem to be doing just fine. We are just concerned how long this health crisis will last and the long-term impact."

EBS: From your observations, how would you describe the economic mindset of local businesses currently?

R.P.: "I think everybody's paying attention. I think everybody is on their toes. We're all kind of waiting to see how this all plays out. Everybody's trying to keep their powder dry and you know prepare for the next round. I mean this could go well or could go south again."

EBS: As a manager, can you describe how it felt to close down the bank's lobby for a second time?

R.P.: "It was kind of surreal. We have pandemic meetings on a regular basis. The goal of these meeting is how do we protect our staff and our customers. When cases were on the rise and some businesses in Big Sky got hit, I thought we should probably close again. We had [a] meeting and I didn't get the reaction I thought I'd get from the staff. They were all like, 'Let's just keep it open for a little longer and see how it goes.' Our staff is very customer oriented and they enjoy the customers. They enjoy the interaction and there's a lot of fun that goes on back and forth between them and so we kept it open for a couple more weeks and then finally I was like 'Okay people we've got to close the lobby.' ... When we did close, the timing could not have been worse. We were all set to show our new bank to the Big Sky community."

EBS: If you could choose one aspect of life before the pandemic to restore, what would it be and why?

R.P.: "That's easy, I love music. I love the Music in the Mountains series that we have here in Big Sky. I love the arts, you know going to the Warren Miller [Performing Arts] Center. I also like going to the movies and sporting events. I guess that's more than one, but you get the general idea. I mean if there was only one it would probably be music, but those could all move around depending on how I'm feeling."

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

R.P.: "We have a motto here at American Bank that came from Bruce Erickson, who was the bank's founder and longtime supporter of Big Sky, which was 'Work hard, make money and have fun' and that's what we do."

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TUESDAY

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5:30-6:45pm Heated Flow

7:00-8:15pm Virtual Raja Vinyasa Yoga

WEDNESDAY

7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga

10:00-11:00am Community Yoga in Town Center Plaza

4:15-5:15pm Gentle Flow Yoga

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga

11:00am-12:15pm All Levels Yoga

> 7:00-8:15pm Virtual Raja Vinyasa Yoga

FRIDAY

9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga

12:00-1:00pm All Levels Vinyasa Flow Yoga

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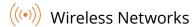
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Golf Tips from a Pro: Effective course management

BY MARK WEHRMAN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Are you close to reaching your goals but just can't get over the last hurdle? Is there one part of your game that continues to hold you back from reaching your scoring goals? Do you have goals for your game like being a better putter, breaking a personal scoring record, or just having more fun? I am asking these questions because it might not be a change in your swing or putting stroke that is needed to achieve your goals, instead it could simply be better course management.

As I was talking with one my staff today about his goal of breaking par this summer, I realized that in my opinion, he doesn't need to change his swing or stroke to realize his goal, he just needs to get better at managing his game around the course.

So, what is course management? In a nutshell, having good course management means making sensible decisions that have minimal risk. Things like aligning yourself to the target, where if you mishit your shot you are not penalized, and even club selection are examples of proper course management.

Here at Big Sky golf course we should always be playing short of the hole when hitting your shot to the green. Why you may ask? Because all of our greens slope from back to front so, if you miss long then getting up and down for par is almost impossible from behind the green as the slope is running away from you.

Other course management practices include playing a predominant ball flight, meaning don't try to play a draw with every shot on the course if you normally fade the ball. The old adage I learned when I was a junior golfer growing up was "dance with the lady you brought." This means you can't try to change your game on the course, but instead go with the shot that comes naturally.

When I conduct lessons on the course with students, I am always right next to them for every shot, asking questions such as why they're aimed where they are. What if you miss to the right or left and, if you do, are you going to be in trouble?

Another thing we emphasize is club selection. If your ball is in the deep rough, you shouldn't be trying to hit a 3-wood but instead using a short-lofted iron to get yourself back in play. If you are between clubs, what is your rationale for making a club



Mark Wehrman, PGA, hitting a 3 metal off of the tee versus utilizing a driver for positioning purposes at Wolf Creek golf course in Mesquite, Nevada. PHOTO BY GINGER WEHRMAN

choice? Are you looking at the trouble around the green?

Big Sky golf course sits at 6300 feet elevation and because of the thinner air we breathe, we should generally be taking the lesser of the two clubs, so we don't miss long, for the reason I mentioned earlier.

Many times, I notice that golfers select a club based off of that one time when they hit that club perfect. But what about all of the times you didn't hit it perfect? How far did it go then? Does that club normally curve to the right or left? These are all questions we need to ask ourselves before deciding on a club.

The final piece of the puzzle are unforeseen factors like wind, soft and dry conditions, uphill and downhill shots with significant elevation changes, and weather. Wind will obviously affect a golf ball and the choice between more or less club to compensate is vital.

If the golf course conditions are dry then the ball will roll a little more and transversely, if the

conditions are wet then there won't be a large roll after the ball lands. If you have a significant elevation change then you will need to choose more or less club to compensate.

If you are hitting into a strong head wind, are you teeing the ball lower? If you are down wind, are you teeing the ball higher? A majority of the time, these outside factors will make or break your round. One misjudgment or miscalculation can make all the difference. So, the bottom line is analyzing and managing play throughout the course will most likely lead to less mistakes and hopefully help you reach your goals.

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





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It's official, we've gone too far



BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

Rarely do I immediately address the title of these pieces until sometimes as far as halfway through. But not today.

With regards to modern IPAs, we have officially gone too far

India Pale Ale was first brewed by Great Britain for transport to India while under their rule. They were originally a slightly stronger, more heavily hopped pale ale or extra strong bitter, which is a style extremely similar to pale ale.

The British discovered that it wasn't merely the alcohol that acted as a natural preservative in beer, but also the hops.

As Americans, we have seemed to acquire a particular fixation on this beer style: India Pale Ale. Or by true judging guidelines, simply IPA in America because, true to history, American IPAs never went to India.

We make some respectable and very true-to-style IPAs all across this nation. But we started altering this style by brewing more and more heavily hopped brews. Then somewhere along the way, we took this style to places it shouldn't have gone.

Bitterness is measured in something called international bittering units, or IBUs. About 20 years ago, 50 IBUs was the standard for any balanced, well-made IPA. Today, I can't tell you how many establishments I'm in that have menu boards with a plethora of IPAs with numbers as high as 100.

Next, we started brewing IPAs with fruits like mangoes, apricots, pineapple, raspberries and grapefruit. Then we moved to ginger and lemongrass. But then...

Smartmouth Brewing Company in Norfolk, Virginia, has brewed an IPA with Lucky Charms cereal.

I harkened back to my childhood and my grandmother trying to get me to like her beef stew by pointing out that since I like steak, and potatoes, and carrots, I must like her beef stew—which I did not.

Lucky Charms are fine I guess, if you're eight. And I love beer, but the thought of the two of them together sounds positively dreadful.

I was speaking with a server at Post Falls Brewing Company in Post Falls, Idaho, last year, where they brew no less than nine different IPAs. It was her opinion that making so many variations of IPA was a positive thing in that it provided great exposure to the style. To which my counterpoint was that by creating so many spin-offs to the point of barely recognizing what the style was intended to be, are you really exposing someone to it in the end?

There are hundreds of fascinating beer styles from around the world that are worth exploring by today's talented brewers. We have found a new fascination of late with the sour style. But again, in my mind, we are unnecessarily adulterating them with fruits and other adjuncts.

Steam Beer, or California common, and Cream Ale, are two beer styles indigenous to the U.S. Plus, both are still being brewed today by their respective breweries.

Cream Ale has also found new life by today's brewers, including right here in Big Sky. But the Steam Beer – a beer brewed at ale yeast temperature with lager yeast – hasn't taken hold on a large scale yet, unfortunately. It is a national classic.

I am all about experimentation and the creation of new beer styles. But I fear that in our quest to reach the other shore, we've lost sight of the one we left.

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. This column was original published on March 16, 2019.



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American Life in Poetry:

Column 801

BY TED KOOSER U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

S.C. Hahn is an American poet now living in Stockholm where, as you'll see, it can be every bit as hard to get out of bed after an operation as it is here. You can hear the machinery creaking, can't you?

Getting Out of Bed After Surgery

This site has no industrial crane that swings an arm around and lowers it to receive a load to raise—pallets of bricks for a wall or rods of steel rebar that will arc in a bridge high over a river: here is only a bed, the low hill of a sheet, and an older man whose gears, stiff with disuse, are leveraging his body, first untucking the legs to lower them down to the floor, then bracing the beam of a left arm against the mattress, the right hand gripping a bed rail, and then the engine of pain turns the whole contraption of bone and flesh into a slow motion, up in increments like a demolition film that's run in reverse until a newer center of gravity is reached, and the laws of physics require that whatever is down must rise to meet a life that stands waiting.

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Corner Quote

"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble." - John Lewis

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- Family member Food
- Botanist (abbr.)
- 12 Dagger 13 Fish sauce
- 14 Abridged (abbr.)
- 15 Malay title of
- respect 16 P.I. dyewood
- tree 17 River (Sp.) 18 Under 20 Brit. saint

- 22 Join 24 12 (Rom. numeral) 25 Spirit (Ger.)
- 26 Musical
- instrument (percussion) 30 Air-to-air missile (abbr.) 31 Knot lace
- 32 Inclined 33 "Beowolf" monster

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- 36 Edging loop 38 Belonging to
- 39 Ass 40 Stoppage
- 43 Zoroastrian 44 Television
- channel 45 This one (Lat.) 47 Uncanny (Scot.) 50 Half-boot 51 Spiders' nests
- 52 Eucalyptus
 - secretion 53 Donkey (Fr.) 54 Lamb 55 Ironwood

DOWN

- 1 Mountain standard time (abbr.) S.A. hérb
- Interim Virail's hero
 - Religion River in "Kubla Khan'

CLOD HOURI BOITE BOUNDS ALPACA INGETINESEC FDA TUBA GIRL FORLORN MESNE OTB PIN MAPLE POSSESS AGALNAREFHA

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

ABYS

UDEN coin 8 Pastry

MALLET

 $I \cup U \cup U$

- 9 Fishhook point 10 Fetish
- 11 Instrument (suf.)
- 19 Deed 21 52 (Rom.
- 22 King killed by Samuel 23 Rip 24 Totem pole 26 Evil (Sp.) 27 Great Lakes island

I N S A N E C A S C A

OGEE

- 28 Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
- (abbr.)
 29 Attorney (abbr.)
 31 Decimal unit
 34 New (Ger.)
- 35 Laurel nymph 36 For (Sp.) 37 Rom. house 39 Rom. province
- 40 Mulberry-bark cloth
- 41 Dayak people 42 Behold! (Lat.) 43 Foot (pref.) 46 Trouble 48 Rom. first day
- of the month 49 Unclose

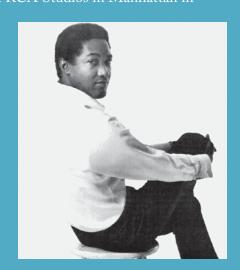


52



"Chain Gang" was singer, songwriter and civil rights activist inspired after a chance meeting with an actual chain gang of prisoners on a highway, seen while Cooke was on tour. Moved after watching the men at work, Cooke and his brother Charles pulled over and gave the men some cartons of cigarettes. Cooke initially recorded the song at RCA Studios in Manhattan in

January 1960, but was reportedly unsatisfied and returned three months later to redo some of the vocals to get the effect he wanted. "Chain Gang" has been including the "Chain Gang Medley," which is said to have been folk singer and songwriter Jim Croce's final hit of his career.



BACK[1]

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"

Finding the Soul of Montana with the Toss of a Dart

On the hunt for 'Wild Meat'

BY SARAH GIANELLI

This story began with a dart toss. I was blindfolded and spun around before taking aim at a map of Montana. Wherever the tiny arrow landed, I would go in search of the soul of that place.

My first attempt missed the target entirely and landed in a flower pot. My second toss landed in a sparsely settled region of western Montana near Georgetown Lake, a predominately summertime community where the main attraction is a 2,800-acre reservoir known for some of the best fishing in the state. In high season, the population swells into the thousands and dwindles to a few hundred in the winter. In mid-March, winter was still going strong.

Georgetown Lake has two year-round businesses, both bars, and they seemed like a good starting point. After a long loop around the lake, past vacant, snowbound summer homes, I pulled in to Seven Gables Resort, a watering hole just off Montana Highway 1 at the turnoff to Discovery Ski Area.

With no other patrons in sight, the bartender, Summer Payne, had plenty of time to chat.

"So long as you don't ask me about my ex-husband, the Montana militiaman," she said with a laugh. She was referring to Ryan Payne, who was involved in the anti-government wildlife refuge takeover in Oregon, and had recently been sentenced to 37 months in federal prison.

Originally from California, Summer Payne has lived in the area for 10 years and said she'd never leave.

"I love Montana. I love the people—everybody's friendly around here. People wave when you go through town; if you break down or get caught in a snowbank, someone is going to stop and help you," she said.

When Payne's house was broken into and she lost everything, the community organized a fundraiser that helped her refurnish her home and care for her kids.

When asked to share some stories about the locals, Payne said, "Nope, nothing that I can share ... we're pretty tight-lipped around here about what we do."

She suggested I head to Philipsburg, a former mining-turned-tourist town about $10\ \text{miles}$ to the north.

With a population of 800, and located halfway between Yellowstone and Glacier national parks, Philipsburg consists of a few colorful blocks lined with gem stores, hotels, historical museums, restaurants, and a brewery with a statewide reputation.

I popped into the town's famed candy store, the Sweet Palace, where I met proprietor Shirley Beck, a short, spunky redhead in her early 70s. Her spiel about the shop and her neighboring sapphire gallery was as polished as the emporium's pink embossed-steel ceiling.

Beck has owned the Sweet Palace for more than 20 years, and is nearing her 40th year as an area resident—she's also a fierce champion of the town's tourism-based economy.

In 1988, after renovating the community's 100-year-old grocery store, she and her business partner, Dale Siegford, combined their sales and gem expertise, and opened a jewelry gallery that features the sapphires found in the surrounding mines.

A few years later, Beck felt the need to diversify and she and Siegford opened what is now one of Philipsburg's main attractions. "Philipsburg was dying and in pretty sad shape when we [opened the Sweet Palace] in 1992," she said. "There were tumbleweeds in the street."

Beck's been an officer of the Philipsburg Chamber of Commerce since 1990, and pointed to the town's resourcefulness throughout its boom and bust history.

"I happen to think there is no such thing as luck; I think you make your own luck," Beck said, adding how crucial it is to be able to spot opportunity. "[Then], can you turn around on a dime to make it work for you?"

I passed a group of happy beer-drinkers soaking in the sunshine outside of Philipsburg Brewing Company and wandered down Main Street. The ornate, Crayola-colored Victorian facades quickly faded into unassuming homes with leaning picket fences and wrought iron doors.

At the corner of a muddy, potholed lane, a sign read Woodland Creations and Home Store. I walked through puddles of melting snow and a jumble of trailers, cabins and rusty relics to a large warehouse. Behind the counter, surrounded by a catchall of coffee and pastries, locally made arts and crafts, lumber and general hardware supplies, was Charity Therriault-Lemke, a 36-year-old born and raised in Philipsburg, who soon proved worthy of her namesake.

"He's the biggest character you'll ever meet," she said about an old miner who went by the name "Wild Meat." "When he was younger, he lived on wild meat, like, literally that's all he ate—at least that's what they say."

She drew a map to Wild Meat's home, located in an abandoned mining camp in the hills above town. When asked if she was sure it was OK to just drop in on him, she shrugged and simulated pumping a shotgun.

Deciding it wasn't respectful—and possibly dangerous—to show up unannounced at Wild Meat's front door, I stopped at the brewery where I met a host of longtime locals who would get me closer to the old miner, and share stories of their own.

Inquiring about Wild Meat, I was directed to Sam Dennis, a 32-year-old with family roots in Philipsburg dating back to 1877, when his great-great-grandfather arrived to work in the mines.

"I could never leave because this is my home," Dennis said. "I'm proud of the heritage, the town, the resiliency of the people—people who have stayed here in Philipsburg when it would've been a lot easier to go somewhere else."

His ancestors worked in many industries over the years. His grandfather was "a sawmill man," a logger, a milkman; his uncles were miners. He said that one side of his family, the Winninghoffs, owned the first Ford dealership in Montana, and his great-grandfather opened the original Sweet Palace in 1934.

"In '92, Shirley Beck approached my grandmother about using the name, and the Sweet Palace came back to life," Dennis said.

When he was a kid, Dennis said that the lively brewery we were standing in, once a bank, was boarded up with broken windows, as were many other storefronts in town.

The logging industry had all but disappeared, as had mining; and he said that ranching—his parents' livelihood—has been the sole provider of any economic stability for the region over the long term.

"It's changed a lot," Dennis said, reflecting on Philipsburg's shift to a tourism economy, a touch of regret in his voice. "[But] it's brought a lot of life back ... when, honestly, it was dead and dying."

He said mining has attempted to make a comeback a few times, but he thinks it's over for good. "Whether we like to admit it or not, we are now a tourist town."

Wild Meat isn't ready to accept that fate, though. Dennis arranged for me to meet the old miner the next morning at a house in town where Wild Meat had rebuilt a two-story piece of mining equipment resurrected from a defunct gold mine he owned northeast of Philipsburg.

Wild Meat, whose real name is Dave Harris, was not the threatening hillbilly the townspeople had led me to imagine. Gruff, yes, but it seemed to indicate a disposition accustomed to solitude more than a dislike of prying outsiders. Warming him up with some small talk, I inquired about his unusual nickname.

"I got that when I was 21 years old," he said. "I mostly lived on elk meat and somebody just hung that name on me." When he mentioned his 74th birthday was the following month, I asked if he'd lived in Philipsburg his entire life.

"Well, not yet," he said sarcastically. Crunching across the snow to the stamp mill he rescued from ruin, a taciturn man turned into a verbal encyclopedia.

Built in 1892, the stamp mill consisted of 900-pound steel cylinders that moved up and down to smash raw ore into a pulp from which gold particles and other precious metals could be extracted.

He became animated when talking about the machine, shaking his head in awe of its massive parts, the crane it took to move it piece by piece, putting it back together, and the first time he got it to run again. Last summer, he and the six other men it took to operate it, fired up the stamp mill for a demonstration during Philipsburg's annual Miner's Union Day celebration.

"There used to be hundreds of these mills around the Western mining camps," he said. "This mill here is one of only 16 operating stamp mills in the country now."

Wild Meat had mined in the area—and anywhere else he could find work—for 30 years, searching for silver, lead, zinc, tungsten, manganese, gold—whatever was in the ground and in demand.



A former mining town, Philipsburg's charm lies in its ornate Victorian architecture, rich history and colorful local characters. PHOTO BY MIKE CHILCOAT

"It seems like the younger people don't have any interest in this. One hundred percent, it's a tourist town now," he said. "It was always a working town when I grew up but it's quite different now."

Wild Meat spent a good portion of his life underground, at depths up to 1,800 feet, but isn't able to describe the experience. "I couldn't make you understand. It's a different world."

After the tour of the stamp mill, I followed his old flatbed truck up a dirt road toward his homestead in the hills, past mining wreckage that looked like enormous piers that had slid from the hillside and splintered into disarray.

Most of the mines were still operating when Wild Meat moved up there in the spring of 1966.

His property is scattered with old mining cabins, most built between 1875 and 1890. He lives in the newest building on the homestead—a green log cabin built in the mid-1950s.

An antique, wood-fired stovetop occupies one corner of his kitchen, antlers hang on the walls, and mining photographs and memorabilia are everywhere. He rifled through yellowed papers and fuzzy black and white images, describing the history behind each one.

A bronze bell from a mine he worked in "a couple of gulches over," hangs on the wall, its hammer still capable of sending ringing vibrations through the room. The bell was used to signal to the men in the shafts when it was time to hoist materials up to the surface.

Wild Meat speaks wistfully of the past, and though eager to see a revival of mining, he isn't very hopeful.

"The shafts, the timber, they never kept it up," he said. "Now it would take many millions to get it going again. Then you've got people moved in here that are pretty hostile to mining." I asked him how he felt about environmentalists, and he said his answer wouldn't be fit for print.

After an emotional parting with Wild Meat—who seemed reluctant for me to leave—I made one last stop to fill in a missing piece.

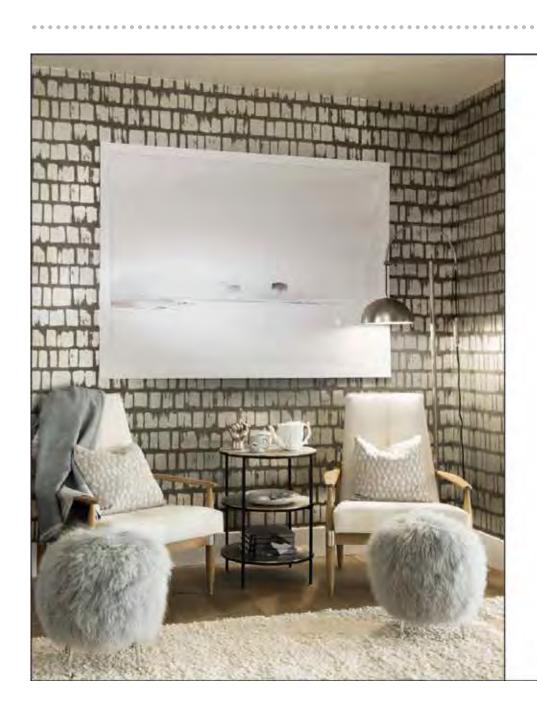
Charity Therriault-Lemke had offered to take me out to an area ranch, so I followed her to the Rock Creek Land and Cattle Ranch, a long 9 miles outside of town, where she introduced me to ranch manager Kurt Loma.

A man with an impressive build and good-natured demeanor, Loma said ranching has always been the mainstay of Granite County. He spoke of challenges that require a strong will and stronger back, the tightly woven community, and its allure for him personally.

"It's the lifestyle," he said. "Where you get to live, not having to answer to anybody. It gets in your blood and it's hard to shake it."

A working rancher, an aging miner, a young man whose blood runs 150 years deep in Philipsburg—and even recent transplants—all share an unshakeable conviction that they'll never leave.

"It's that pioneer ... that real Montana spirit that keeps people here generation after generation," Sam Dennis said during our conversation at the brewery. "It makes you tough. And it makes you stay here no matter what."





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