

# Big Sky

Jan. 15 - 28, 2021  
Volume 12 // Issue #2

## **Follow the Leader, Part 3: A look at incorporation**

*Montana inaugurates  
new leadership*

## **Artist Profile: Anna Middleton**

**New barbershop opens  
in Big Sky**

***A Guide: 2021 Big Sky Ideas  
Festival, TEDxBigSky***



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# OUTLAW PARTNERS

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## ON THE COVER:

Beth Marlinton pauses while hiking the ridge above the A-to-Z chutes in Big Sky Resort. PHOTO BY TIM CHAMBERLAIN

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## Follow the Leader, Part 3: A look at incorporation

Some have said the concept of incorporating the census-designated place of Big Sky “raises hackles.” The very word itself is enough to either launch a prophetic conversation with your neighbor or shut down an interaction altogether. Is it even possible for Big Sky, and how is it done?

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## Montana inaugurates new leadership

Republican Greg Gianforte, Montana’s former Congressman and 25th governor, was inaugurated on the morning of Jan. 4. Gianforte announced revisions to former Gov. Steve Bullock’s vaccine distribution schedule, altering Phase 1B to include a wider age range as well as to include those with specific health conditions.

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## Artist Profile: Anna Middleton

Growing up in Big Sky gave Anna Middleton the chance to admire and connect with the abundant natural beauty in the area. After the pandemic caused Big Sky Resort to shut early, Middleton turned to watercolor painting and has now turned her hobby into a business in addition to her patrolling job at Big Sky Resort.

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## New barbershop opens in Big Sky

After graduating from barber school in 2017, moving to Bozeman and traveling the country to give haircuts to the homeless, Kyle Pemberton finally realized his dream of opening Big Sky’s newest barbershop, Man of the Woods, on Jan. 5.

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## A Guide: 2021 Big Sky Ideas Festival, TEDxBigSky

In honor of the theme “Awakening,” the Big Sky Ideas Festival will focus on the awakening process that the country has gone through in 2020. From Jan. 27-30, there will be a full docket of virtual and live-streamed events.

## Opening Shot



Erika Frounfelker and Whitney Littman stand outside of Ophir Elementary school on the morning of Jan. 11 to direct traffic and welcome students back to school. After winter break, Kindergarten through fifth grade returned to one hundred percent in-person learning. The excitement was palpable with staff commenting that it felt like the first day of school all over again. For the 36 Kindergarten students, it was the first day that many of them attended school together. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

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# EDITORIAL:

## Common Ground

*Out on the edge of darkness, there rides a peace train.  
Peace train take this country, come take me home again.*  
– “Peace Train,” Yusuf Islam/Cat Stevens

Words matter. So do facts. As journalists, we rely on both. And so do you.

You’ll see it on reputable news sites all the time: “Here’s what we know.” Journalists can’t operate outside of fact for two main reasons: 1) Anything that is not a fact is therefore fiction or yet unproven. 2) Reporting anything other than substantiated fact is a disservice to our readers and it erodes trust. Responsible journalists at responsible media outlets are trained to report fact and nothing more.

Here’s the thing: Facts are critical to everyone. Journalists are people no different from anyone else—restaurant servers, or developers, bus drivers or teachers, doctors, chairlift operators, or presidents. We all have to seek truth and think critically. It is our civic and moral responsibility to see through conspiracy theories and hyperbole.

This doesn’t negate thinking for ourselves; it reinforces it. We can and will disagree on certain things, but it comes down to how we treat each other and how we disagree. After all, no government, business or organization would ever grow or improve if everyone agreed all the time. But there is one word we must all keep in the forefront of our minds: respect.

The concept of respect demands a certain degree of empathy. “Human nature,” wrote novelist Graham Greene, “is not black and white, but black and gray.” In other words, life is complicated and full of nuance. But truth is not.

The siege on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6 proved that words have consequences and consequences matter. Not since the War of 1812 has the Capitol seen such insurrection. Pro-Trump protesters stormed the building, smashing windows and beating police officers in the halls of our democracy. Five people died. Pipe bombs and guns were discovered at the scene. These are the facts. There is no such thing as an “alternative fact.” The election is over. Joe Biden is our new president.

Big Sky is a community of caring people and people are inherently good. Kindness matters. We may disagree at times, but at the end of the day we all want the same things: Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And we want peace.

Change will come and small communities like Big Sky can be examples--we can be examples--of kindness and peace and recognizing fact over fiction. Change will come and it can come from the bottom up.

*Joseph T. O’Connor*      *Eric Ladd*  
*Editor-in-Chief*      *Publisher*



**The 2021 Big Sky Ideas Festival/TEDxBigSky takes place Jan. 27-30, and its theme is awakening. What is a personal awakening you’ve experienced this past year?**



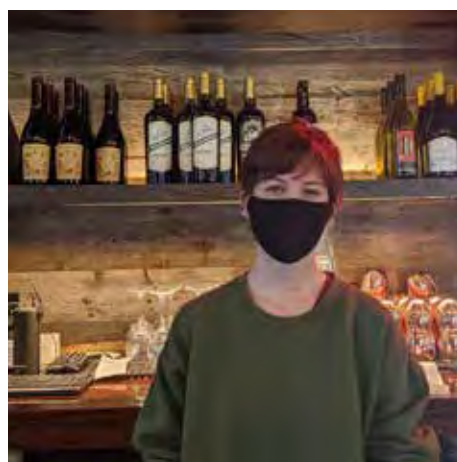
**Chris Wood**  
*Bozeman, MT*

“This was roughly around March and April, I was skiing up in Tom Miner Basin, and this is right as the pandemic started. I got back to the car and I realized I had been alone for almost ten hours that day. That started the theme of that first part of the pandemic is really, truly being alone but understanding how to be alone in your own thoughts, and how to be alone without being able to see family, friends, coworkers for quite a long time in regard to that. That was a really large awakening that is still a challenge because we’re not over with the pandemic.”



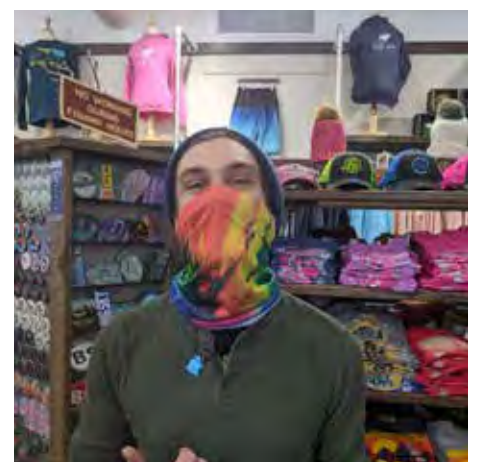
**Skylar Atencio**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“I have two personal awakening moments that happened to me in 2020 fairly recently and it all happened really fast. One, I got a rock-climbing injury, I tore my ACL and got surgery. Then also moving up here. What I’ve learned is that if you put faith in the process of a new endeavor and what you’re doing, it’s just always going to work out in your favor. I would say that’s been my big awakening moment, just doing something new, doing something that I’ve always wanted to do and trusting that, and just going for it.”



**Chambers Moline**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“My personal awakening would be...I was going to go to college this year, and then with COVID I just decided not to. I had the awakening to the idea that you really don’t need to do the whole high school, college then good job, you don’t really need to follow that line so exactly. School always says that you should immediately go to college. It was seeing that I could go travel and do whatever I wanted and not immediately go to college.”



**Ron Delhaye**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“I had a personal awakening in the form of opening to the heart. Letting judgments and biases dissolve and fall by the wayside and you can’t judge a book by the cover you have to actually get to know somebody and dive in and so that’s been my personal awakening, is coming to terms with something like that.”





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RESORT TAX A monthly District bulletin

You may recognize the friendly staff of the Big Sky Resort Area District distributing COVID-19 test kits through the Community Surveillance Testing program as part of the efforts of Big Sky Relief. We would like to take a minute to introduce ourselves and our furry sidekicks.



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Ranger | *Cat Herder*  
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Gallatin River  
**Favorite Food:**  
Danny: Sushi  
Ranger: Carrots



Sara Huger | *Administrative Assistant*  
Chevy | *Assistant to the Assistant*  
**Favorite Trail:**  
Beehive Basin  
**Favorite Food:**  
Sara: Lasagna  
Chevy: Snow



Kristin Drain | *Finance & Compliance Manager*  
Birdie | *Office Therapist*  
Trixie | *Activities Director*  
**Favorite Trail:**  
Kristin: Hummocks  
Birdie: Crail Trail  
Trixie: Ousel Falls  
**Favorite Food:**  
Kristin: Tacos  
Birdie: Anything  
Trixie: Anything Birdie doesn't eat



Jenny Muscat | *Operations Manager*  
Frankie | *Security Officer*  
**Favorite Trail:**  
Jenny: Any trail with huckleberries  
Frankie: Any trail with a lake to swim in  
**Favorite Food:**  
Jenny: Pasta  
Frankie: Popcorn

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Businesses retain 5% of their tax collections as an Administrative Fee for their time spent collecting and remitting Resort Tax.







## BSSD to return to 100 percent in-person learning

*EBS STAFF*

BIG SKY – At an emergency board meeting on Jan. 5, the Big Sky School District board and Reopening Task Force voted unanimously in favor to return K-5 students to 100 percent in-person learning after starting the school year with a hybrid model, effective Monday, Jan. 11.

At a Dec. 15 board meeting, BSSD's board approved the task force to move forward with adopting Learning Model 3, a 100 percent return of students to the classroom daily with online remote learning as an option. Since then, the Task Force finalized their plan—a comprehensive version of the plan and COVID-19 testing data can be found on the BSSD website. The return date was set for two weeks following the holidays to ensure a final round of COVID-19 testing.

As a part of the 100 percent in-person learning model, students and teachers will participate in daily temperature checks, COVID-19 tests on Tuesdays and Thursdays, remain masked on campus and have Plexiglas dividers between generously spaced desks. BSSD will also produce a video walk-through of the classrooms so parents can view the planned setting beforehand.

Regularly testing staff and students, according to board members, will be key in remaining open and if a positive test is confirmed, the superintendent or principal will notify the parent, consult with the teacher and work with Bozeman Health contact tracers at Big Sky Medical Center.

In a Jan. 12 emergency school board meeting, the Task Force recommended a week delay in the return to one hundred percent in person learning for Ophir Middle School, originally slated for Monday Jan. 18. The unanimous vote pushed the middle school's return to in-person learning back a week to align with Lone Peak High School's planned return date of Jan. 25.

## Morningstar Learning Center looking to hire for two new positions

*EBS STAFF*

BIG SKY – The COVID-19 pandemic revealed systemic problems in nationwide childcare and early learning facilities, and Morningstar Learning Center was no exception. The pandemic raised concerns at MLC about long-term programming goals and exacerbated staffing issues. Unfortunately, during a time when childcare was most needed, MLC had to limit enrollment and reduce classroom sizes.

In September 2020, MLC reached out to the Big Sky Relief Fund for help and received full support for their operations as well as the ability to hire more staff. With support from Big Sky Relief, MLC will be able to pay competitive wages and keep tuition costs affordable for working families in Big Sky.

“We’re looking for people that are really qualified and ready to have a career with us, not just come in and run the place and leave in a year,” said Maren Dunn, the president of the MLC board of directors.

The two positions are Executive Director and Center Director which were formerly one role of Executive Director. Head over to [morningstarlearningcenter.com/employment](http://morningstarlearningcenter.com/employment) for more information on all open positions.

## No injuries in Kenyon Noble propane tank explosion

*EBS STAFF*

BIG SKY – On Jan. 6 at 2:30 p.m. the Big Sky fire Department was dispatched to a vehicle fire on U.S. Highway 191 at the Kenyon Noble concrete batch plant. While en route, crews were notified of an explosion involving a propane truck at the same location.

When they arrived, the propane truck was fully engulfed, a nearby 1,000-gallon propane tank was venting flames and a second 1,000-gallon tank was compromised and exhaling a boiling liquid expanding vapor explosion or “BLEVE,” according to a Big Sky Fire Department press release.

Big Sky Fire worked with the Gallatin County Sheriff's Department to evacuate a half-mile zone around the propane tanks and close Highway 191. Using large water portable ground monitors, Big Sky Fire crews were able to extinguish the fire quickly.

An investigation concluded that the driver of the initial truck slid on some ice while maneuvering to fill the two stationary propane tanks, damaging the mainline and vaporizer and igniting the initial vehicle fire. The driver was unable to move his vehicle off the gas line and was able to run inside to alert occupants of the Kenyon Martin building before the initial explosion.

Highway 191 was closed for 45 minutes, no one was injured during the incident and the area around the tanks and building only suffered moderate damage.

“A rapid initial response and mutual aid from neighboring departments showed again how effective our county mutual aid system is,” noted the Jan. 6 press release.

Responding departments were: the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office, Hyalite Rural Fire District, Yellowstone Club Fire Department, Gallatin Gateway Fire and Bozeman Fire.

## Dan Springer named Gallatin County's interim sheriff

*EBS STAFF*

BOZEMAN – At a regularly scheduled meeting on Jan. 11, the Gallatin County Commission appointed undersheriff Dan Springer as the county's interim sheriff in a 3-1 vote. Brian Gootkin retired from the sheriff's office on Dec. 31 after serving since 2012 and is awaiting confirmation from the state Senate before transitioning to his role leading the Montana Department of Corrections for Gov. Greg Gianforte.

“Continuity of service is appropriate and good for the guys and gals that work there, so I'm happy to take that on,” said Springer to the commission after accepting the position. Springer was named undersheriff by Gootkin in June of 2012.

While Springer serves as interim sheriff, the county will be accepting applicants and public comment regarding the permanent election of the position, which is set to be up for a vote in 2022, when Gootkin's term ends.



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# ‘What it means to be a church’

## Redefining worship during a pandemic

BY BELLA BUTLER

**BIG SKY** – In the Big Sky Branch of the Church of Latter Day Saints, under a spire intended to point toward heaven, four masked men prepare to distribute the sacrament—bread and water that is consumed as a symbol of the blood and flesh of Christ.

“If you guys haven’t washed your hands, could you please do that now?” First Councilor Brandon Weir asks the men joining him in blessing and passing out the sacrament. After breaking two slices of bread into silver dishes and distributing them with individual cups of water, Weir’s daughter opens the service with a prayer.

“Please bless everyone that has COVID, that they can get better,” she said with her eyes closed and head bowed.

Though states, including Montana, have as of late tightened the reigns on COVID-induced restrictions on large gatherings, “houses of worship,” as they are generally described in health rules, are often subject to exemptions.

On Nov. 26, in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court of the United States barred restrictions formerly imposed by New York’s governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, limiting attendance at religious services. The Court majority found the restrictions to be an infringement on the constitutional freedom of religion, endowed by the First Amendment.

In Gallatin County, where gatherings are currently limited to 25 people or fewer, houses of worship also enjoy an exception. In the Phase Two health rules ordered by the health officer on May 28, it is stated that certain events such as concerts and weddings are not conducive to social distancing and therefore should be subject to the 50 or fewer people guideline (the guideline has since been amended to 25 or fewer).

There is an expressed exception, however, for events where “the inherent nature of the event allows predictable and manageable social interactions through a structured social layout, identified seating arrangements, and controls for ingress and egress,” according to the rule. Religious services are held up as an example of such an event.

Despite these allowances, congregations in the Big Sky community have all adopted different approaches to integrating pandemic reality into worship practice. On Christmas Eve in 2020, the Big Sky Chapel, which normally hosts a few hundred guests for Christmas Eve service, entertained reservation-based Catholic masses only this year.

The Big Sky LDS branch meets in the Ramshorn neighborhood off U.S. Highway 191 but requires masks, provides sanitization and has put in place measures for social distancing, like spacing out regulars with new visitors.

All Saints Big Sky, a shared ministry of Episcopal and Lutheran services, has been conducting strictly online Sunday services since the Episcopal Bishop of the Montana Diocese gave instruction in mid-November for congregations to do so for at least a few weeks. Due to uncertainty about how the holidays would play out in Big Sky and worsening COVID-19 conditions, All Saint’s joint council decided to extend virtual services through the end of the year.

Pastor Miriam Schmidt of All Saints said a challenge for her congregation throughout the pandemic has been considering how to balance the desire for connection. Schmidt said that while it’s great that online services are a possibility, there’s been something lost.

“A part of Christian self-understanding or identity is you don’t do religion on your own, you do religion with the community,” she said. “And I feel pretty strongly that even though online forums and online communal opportunities can approximate something like community, I believe in in-person bodied connection.”



Big Sky Christian Fellowship pastor, Scott Larson (far left), joins his worship team the Sunday leading up to Christmas. PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT LARSON



A sign on the door of the Big Sky Branch of the Church of Latter-day Saints expresses COVID-19 guidelines for the congregation’s Sunday meetings. The Big Sky Branch is still meeting in person like a few other congregations in town, but church looks much different with guidelines in place to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

Schmidt says that while she does not want to mimic some of the churches that are disregarding the virus at all costs, she does empathize with the longing for church community.

“It’s a hard time to figure out what it means to be a church,” she said.

Big Sky Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational Christian congregation that also meets in the Big Sky Chapel, has chosen to continue to meet in person, but they’ve also made amendments to their practice. The service, which is normally at 11 a.m. following the All Saint’s and St. Joseph’s Catholic services, is now at 4:30 p.m. The service schedule was changed at the chapel with the intention of giving the indoor space time to air out and for the interior to be cleaned between services.

The Fellowship has also put measures in place to keep attendance low like spacing out attendees every other pew—a contradiction to many church’s mission to get as many people in the door as possible. Big Sky Christian Fellowship did not host their annual well-attended Christmas Eve service this year but instead recorded it at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center and posted it online.

Pastor Scott Larson of Big Sky Christian Fellowship, who moved to Big Sky in the midst of the pandemic, said changes to communion, which is similar to the LDS sacrament, has been one of the strangest adjustments. Because the tribute requires passing items to be consumed from one’s hand to another’s mouth and eating in close proximity to others, the Fellowship prepared individually wrapped communion portions and gave them to people as they left the church.

It’s ironic, Larson said, that the bread and drink that so many churches share is a symbol of unity that has been pared down to an isolated individual experience. The pastor said this image of people walking out the chapel doors and collecting their wrapped blessed bite is a demonstration of what strange times these are, but nonetheless he says people are just happy to find ways, albeit ironic, that they can continue their worship.

Brad Lartigue, a minister with Big Sky Resort Ministries, has been holding Sunday services in perhaps one of the most spacious churches that exist—at an outdoor cross positioned beneath The Bowl ski run at Big Sky Resort. The resort asked that Lartigue require his attendees to wear masks at the service and the minister feels fortunate to be able to hold a service so apt for distancing measures.

In a piece published in the *New Yorker* days before Christmas, “An Advent Lament in the Pandemic,” author Michael Luo wrote that while many churches in the U.S. have seized the opportunity to selflessly serve their communities during the pandemic, others have subscribed to a devout opposition to public health warnings and rules, flouting mask mandates and social distancing guidelines.

“In the end, the lasting image of the Church in the pandemic may very well be that of an unmasked choir at First Baptist Church, in Dallas, led by the pastor Robert Jeffress...” Luo wrote.

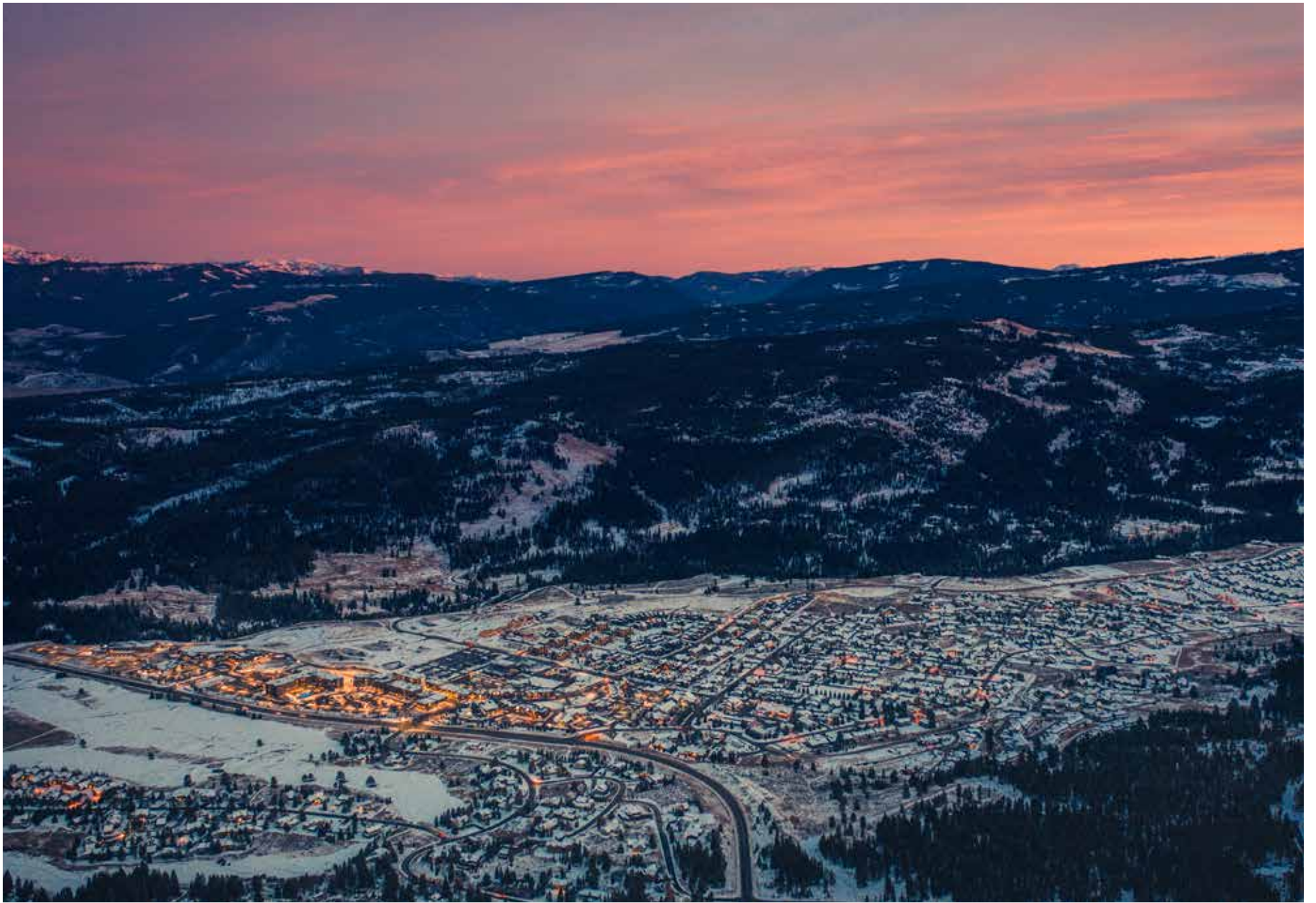
In Gallatin County, though, the paradigm of religion’s interaction with the pandemic takes a different tone, according to a health expert.

“[Houses of worship] haven’t been a major source of disease transmission that we’ve detected,” said Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley.

Larson said giving up certain traditions and normality has been a sacrifice, but one that churches should see as a means of service.

“It really is a huge irony, because traditionally in a hard time churches can serve their community,” Larson said. “But probably the best way that a church could serve their community, over the course of the last six months, has just been by being respectfully compliant to all the rules that have come down.”





The communities of Town Center and Meadow Village at dusk. PHOTO BY CHRIS KAMMAN

## Follow the leader, Pt. 3: The road to incorporation

BY BELLA BUTLER AND MIRA BRODY

*This article is the third installment in an ongoing examination of leadership and governance in Big Sky. Visit [explorebigsky.com](http://explorebigsky.com) to read the first two installments.*

BIG SKY – Some have said that the concept of incorporating the census-designated place of Big Sky “raises hackles.” The very word itself is enough to either launch a prophetic conversation with your neighbor or shut down an interaction altogether.

The idea of limited government in Big Sky dates back decades and, for many, part of the resort town’s draw is its libertarian ethos while others are hungry for change.

Government philosophies aside, however, when the concept of incorporation is boiled down to its logistics, the water remains murky. A number of factors make Big Sky a difficult contender for a municipal makeover, including requirements laid out by Montana law that prove challenging for Big Sky. No matter your philosophies, heavy questions hang in the air: How is it done, and is it even possible?

According to Montana law, it all begins with a petition.

In order to begin the incorporation process, a petition requesting the incorporation of a potential city or town must be filed with the county commission. The petition must include a map of the proposed city limits and must be signed by 300 registered electors—or two-thirds, whichever is less—who reside within the area of proposed incorporation.

The petition must meet a few requirements. The proposed town must have 300 or more inhabitants, be three or more miles from a presently incorporated municipality, have a post office, get permission to include large tracts of land used for certain types of purposes such as agriculture and smelting, and each proposed ward must contain 50 or more registered electors and have 200 inhabitants for each square mile of land area.

A petition for Big Sky to incorporate as a municipality, likely to be classified as a town rather than a city, would require the identification of at least two proposed wards, which are essentially neighborhoods that elect councilmembers.

That an area must qualify for incorporation based on density is cause for concern in places like Big Sky, where a landscape of peaks and valleys and community design have

forced it into a sprawling layout. From where Big Sky’s main road, Montana Highway 64, intersects with U.S. Highway 191, populated areas are spaced out from one another, creating several villages that make up the entirety of Big Sky.

This is a woe that Robin Hamilton, a former state representative from House District 92, is quite familiar with.

“If you take a nice little town in eastern Montana and plot it on a map, it’s really easy to place a grid over that and say, ‘aha, here’s a city,’” he told EBS in a Jan. 8 interview. One such town, Colstrip, is located in southeastern Montana where the Northern Rockies descend into the vast flats of the Great Plains.

Colstrip was the most recent municipality to incorporate in Montana, and Mayor John Williams said that in 1999 when the roughly 3-square-mile town incorporated, “density was not an issue.” But for places with beautiful yet uneven mountainous topography such as Big Sky or Seeley Lake northeast of Missoula, Hamilton says, such simplicity is absent.

In the 60th Montana Legislature in 2007, Hamilton worked to amend legislation to be more amenable to mountainous, spread-out areas like Seeley Lake that were interested in pursuing incorporation but would struggle to qualify based on density. Prior to 2007, the law stated that proposed towns had to have 500 residents—not inhabitants—per square mile. Hamilton successfully turned a bill into law that session, changing the requirement so it read 200 inhabitants.

Hamilton said Seeley Lake, much like Big Sky, is well known for its second homeowners, who would not be considered residents but rather part-time inhabitants of the incorporated area. Changing the term “residents” to the broader “inhabitants” and lowering the number made it easier for places like Seeley Lake, Big Sky, or other comparable areas in the state to qualify for incorporation.

“Seeley Lake had terrible water problems and was a sprawling town,” Hamilton said. “They had no hope of incorporation and the advantages that come with incorporation ... A couple others like Big Sky said ‘Oh, that will work for us too.’”

Seeley Lake is still an unincorporated CDP.

In the early 2000s, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce convened the Big Sky Community and Infrastructure Group, a subcommittee that explored incorporation, among other local government topics, for at least four years. According to one former



member, Kay Reeves, it was apparent early on in the group's work that the density qualifier—at the time 500 inhabitants per square mile—would be a dominant hurdle for Big Sky.

“The first thing we had to tackle was [whether we were] even dense enough to incorporate,” Reeves said in a Jan. 8 interview with EBS.

Since 2007, the density qualifier has been adjusted to better accommodate sprawling destination areas like Big Sky, but it will still be left up to census data to determine if a proposed municipal boundary in Big Sky would qualify.

Reeves and Dick Fast were two of the group's three members who stuck with the Chamber subcommittee through its end in 2009. Both say that given the density standard, among others, incorporating Big Sky would be challenging, but feasible. The irony—and challenge—in trying to approach the incorporation process is that while the goal is to create a government, there is no such centralized organization to help propel the effort until it's successful.

“I think [incorporation is] certainly doable,” Fast said in a Jan. 10 interview. “It's just going to take a few people, or a group of people, working on some of those details.” He added that the group, likely a dedicated volunteer citizen initiative, would need to be “willing to do the work, want to see it happen, and are patient enough to take a few arrows to the body.”

As Fast, a 20-year Big Sky resident understands it, once the boundary's density qualifies, the process becomes less turbulent.

After a valid, qualifying petition is submitted, county commissioners order a census within the proposed boundary then call for an election and the people choose to either incorporate or not. If the ayes have it and Big Sky voted to incorporate as a municipality, the town would then move forward with electing officials and going through what Fast calls the “intellectual” work: choosing what kind of government to adopt from options provided by law, such as a council with a mayor or manager, or a host of other options.

These steps are hypothetical of course, since a petition has never been filed nor has a vote been conducted.

“The way the process has it set up, you go through all of those logistical things and then it goes to a vote,” Fast said. “And I think you then either accept the outcome of that vote or you don't. The problem is we've never gotten to that vote.”

## MONTANA INCORPORATED

Virginia City was the first city in Montana to incorporate in 1864

• • •

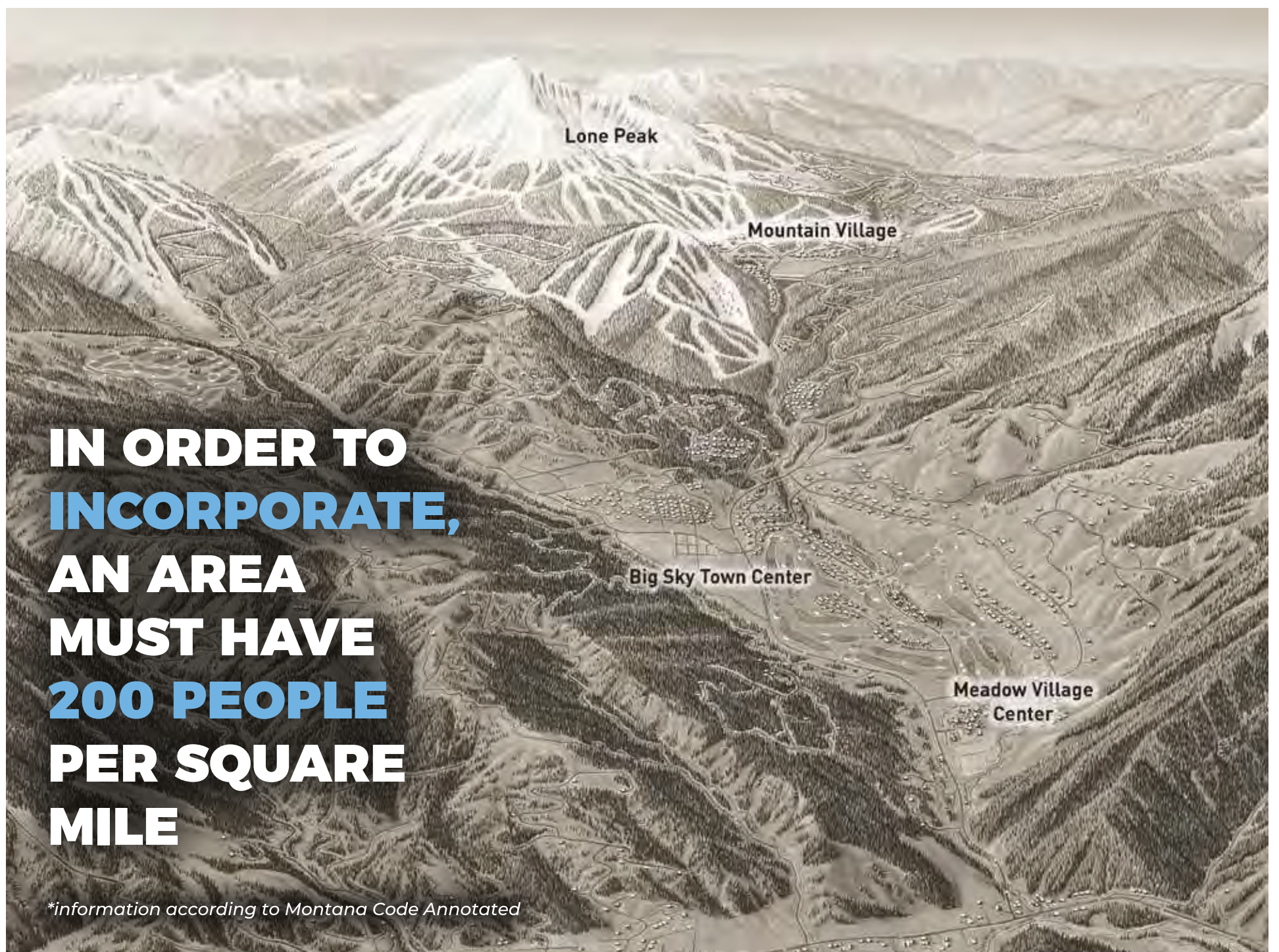
Colstrip was the last in 1999

• • •

There are 127 incorporated municipalities in Montana

• • •

There are 184 unincorporated communities in Montana





# Big Sky surveillance testing moves locations, reaches capacity

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

**BIG SKY** – For the first time in its six weeks of operating, the Big Sky Surveillance Testing Program ran out of tests on Jan. 13. Don't worry, that is actually a good thing, according to the Big Sky Resort Area District, it means that participation in the program is up and the entire supply of 450 tests for the week of Jan. 11-15 was distributed.

Each week, there are 450 free tests available on a first-come-first-served basis for Big Sky community members, Big Sky School District, small businesses, and healthcare and public safety employees. Another aspect of the testing program is the opportunity for larger businesses to pay extra, beyond the capacity of public funds, to test their employees.

The \$4.5 million surveillance testing program is made possible through the efforts of Big Sky Relief partners including the Big Sky philanthropic community, and Big Sky Resort Area District, as well as community employers, and Visit Big Sky.

The testing program is intended to test asymptomatic individuals frequently through the winter in an effort to keep the Big Sky community open and safe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 50 percent of COVID-19 transmission is through people who are not experiencing symptoms.

“Surveillance testing is the systematic testing of a community to identify asymptomatic individuals, isolate and quarantine positive contacts, and

then contact trace those positive individuals,” said Daniel Bierschwale, executive director of BSRAD in a Dec. 17 interview. “It’s about frequency of testing and ensuring that as many people as possible are participating which gives us a good understanding of what the spread is.”

In its fifth week of operation, the Big Sky Surveillance Testing Program moved locations and is now housed in the old American Bank Building located at 1700 Lone Mountain Trail.

Moving forward, all tests can be picked up at the drive through window during the hours listed on bigskyrelief.org and they can be dropped off 24/7 at the drive through box or in the foyer of the Big Sky Chamber/ Visit Big Sky Office.

Tests are picked up from both locations and delivered to the lab twice a day at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you drop your test off on the weekend, it will not be received by the lab until Monday morning. The current turnaround time for results from the lab is estimated to be 24 hours from receipt of an individual’s sample.

When dropping off a test, all that is necessary to return is the biohazard bag containing your sample. The box and shipping bag are not needed.

It is important that individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 do not visit the drive-through and instead contact the Bozeman Health COVID-19 hotline at 406-414-2619.

**TEDx Big Sky**  
x = independently organized TED event

**AWAKENING**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 30**

LOUISE JOHNS    BLU    JAMES SALESTROM    MAX LOWE    ROB BALUCAS

CATHY WHITLOCK    JOSH MCCAIN    DAVID LEUSCHEN    LANE LAMEROUX

**View livestream details at TEDxBigSky.com**  
*Live Streamed using the GoPro Hero9*

GoPro | LMNT ELEMENTAL LABS | Mountain House | OUTLAW | JERICO | WILSON | FANTASY | MIR | CLB | BE- | MOUNTAIN OUTLAW | LK | Big Sky



As of press time on Jan. 13, 17,574 cumulative tests have been administered through Jan. 8, resulting in a 2.2 percent positivity rate for the Big Sky community. According to the World Health Organization, a test positivity rate below 5 percent is criteria for re-opening businesses while a rate above 10 percent is cause for concern and may mean more testing is necessary.

The surveillance testing program is an important resource to help keep Big Sky open through the winter season. Small businesses are welcome to pick up ten free tests a week to test their employees and are highly encouraged to do so by Big Sky Relief and its partners.

“It’s an absolutely amazing resource we have access to, I encourage anyone and everyone that’s interested to participate,” said Ciara Wolf, committee chair of Big Sky Relief and V.P. of philanthropy for the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation. “It’s really allowing our community to capture any of the cases from asymptomatic individuals that have tested and allow them to isolate and prevent that spread. [The testing program] is in turn, allowing businesses to stay open, and kids get to go back to school, and a lot of the things that are still moving forward.”

Thus far, over 70 small businesses in Big Sky have participated in the testing program.

One of these businesses, Blue Buddha Sushi, has firsthand experience with how helpful the surveillance testing program can be to aid in making the hard decisions.

Troy “Twist” Thompson made the call to close Blue Buddha Sushi on Tuesday, Jan. 5 after he, and a few of his staff members tested positive for COVID-19. Thompson was able to take advantage of the free testing program to test his staff and ultimately make the informed choice to close the restaurant and quarantine.

Thompson said that it’s been a hard time for his staff with housing issues and concerns over COVID-19. He expressed the hope that he will be able to tap into tax incentives that will allow him to pay those on his staff who tested positive during their quarantine periods.

After being closed for ten days, the plan, according to Thompson, is to reopen the restaurant on Jan. 15.

When asked about how he made the hard decision to close, Thompson explained that “it is not really a decision of finances, it’s a decision of public safety and health. In the long run, it’s just the right move to make.”



The Big Sky Surveillance Testing Program has moved locations to 1700 Lone Mountain Trail in the old American Bank building. Tests can be picked up and dropped off using the drive through. PHOTO BY DANIEL BIRSCHWALE

# BIG SKY IDEAS FESTIVAL

**JANUARY 27-30  
BIG SKY, MT**

## LINEUP:

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 27, 4 P.M.

Virtual Podcast with Josh McCain and Jeremy Keller of Big Sky Bravery, sponsored by Miller Roodell Architects.

**Available on Outlaw Partners Facebook.**

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 27, 6 P.M.

"The Arctic to Yellowstone: A Conversation on Climate" with Cathy Whitlock, Max Lowe, Twila Moon, and Kristin Gardner; moderated by Todd Wilkinson. **Screening of Max Lowe's film, "Bare Existence" on YouTube.**

### THURSDAY, JAN. 28, 6 P.M.

"Lessons Learned from my Disability during the COVID World" virtual discussion with Rob Balucas, Lane Lamoreaux, and Seth Dahl.

**Screening of Seth Dahl's trailer to his film, "Flowing Air" on YouTube.**

### FRIDAY, JAN. 29, 5 P.M.

Friday Afternoon Club streaming live music with Jim Salestrom from Acre Kitchen.

**Live stream on Explore Big Sky Facebook Live.**

### SATURDAY, JAN. 30, 6 P.M.

TEDxBigSky Virtual Event

**Streamed live on TEDxBigSky.com and YouTube.**

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# F.A.C.

(FRIDAY AFTERNOON CLUB)

Tune into Explore Big Sky's Facebook Live for a show with

**JAMES SALESTROM -**

**FRIDAY, JAN. 29, 5-7 PM MST**

[www.facebook.com/explorebigsky](http://www.facebook.com/explorebigsky)

Jim is also closing out TEDxBigSky with a TEDx Talk on Saturday, Jan. 30th

**Visit [TEDxBigSky.com](http://TEDxBigSky.com) to register!**



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Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport has seen a stark decrease in passengers since the pandemic. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BOZEMAN YELLOWSTONE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

# Passenger traffic at Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport down 43.5 percent

## BOZEMAN YELLOWSTONE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

BOZEMAN – The COVID-19 global pandemic had a dramatic negative effect on passenger traffic at Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport during 2020 with the airport handling 889,775 passengers. This was a decrease of 684,085 passengers—43.5 percent—compared to 2019 record passenger traffic. On a national basis, the Transportation Security Administration reported a 60.7 percent decline in passenger throughput across 440 U.S. airports.

“While the impact on passenger traffic was significant at BZN, we are pleased to see traffic recovery has outpaced the nation as a whole and what this improvement means for the local economy,” said Brian Sprenger, Airport Director. “We continue to work with our airline partners in minimizing potential transmission and are looking forward to a successful vaccination program to return traffic to more traditional levels.”

Despite COVID-19, during 2020, the airport added an eighth airline, Sun Country with new seasonal service to Minneapolis/St. Paul. Additionally, Alaska added daily service to Los Angeles and Allegiant added non-stop service to Nashville. Also, JetBlue added new seasonal service to Boston, New York and Fort Lauderdale and relocated their Long Beach service to Los Angeles. Finally, American added seasonal service to Charlotte, NC. In 2021, several planned but delayed 2020 service improvements will be added with Alaska Airlines up-gauging one daily non-stop to Seattle/Tacoma with mainline A320 aircraft in February and American launching summer Saturday service to both Philadelphia and New York’s LaGuardia airport.

The Air Traffic Control Tower handled an all-time record 104,091 aircraft operations during the year, up 6.4 percent. Business aviation operations increased 1.1 percent to 12,000. General aviation accounts for 72 percent of aircraft operations, scheduled passenger and cargo airline service accounts for approximately 16 percent with business aviation accounting for the remaining 12 percent. There were 98 general aviation international arrivals handled at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office at BZN during the year compared to 126 during 2019.

BZN completed several construction projects in 2020. In November, the Concourse B expansion opened with four more gates, an additional restaurant/bar, mother’s room, and pet relief area. BZN also constructed over 3,000 linear feet of taxiway and infrastructure to serve additional new private hangars. Eighteen new private hangars were constructed during 2020. BZN is the seventh busiest airport in the 7-state Northwest Region of the country (region including Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington) and the 100th busiest airport in the nation in terms of passengers.





# JOIN US FOR **BIG SKY'S BIGGEST WEEK!**

## SUMMER 2021 LINEUP



### FRIDAY, JULY 16

3-5pm - Big Sky Art Auction Preview / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
6pm - Big Sky Community Rodeo / Big Sky Events Arena  
9pm - Street Dance / Town Center Plaza

### SATURDAY, JULY 17

4-7pm - Big Sky Art Auction / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

### SUNDAY, JULY 18

TBA - Mutton Bustin Pre-Ride Competition / Big Sky Events Arena  
6pm - Big Sky Bingo Night / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

11am-5pm - Big Sky PBR / Western Sports Foundation Golf Tournament  
5pm - Farmers Market  
6pm - Golf Tourney Reception  
7pm - Big Sky PBR Kickoff / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
8pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

### THURSDAY, JULY 22

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza  
2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 1 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena  
TBA - Music in the Mountains Concert

### FRIDAY, JULY 23

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza  
2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 2 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena  
Following Bull Riding - Jason Boland & The Stragglers

### SATURDAY, JULY 24

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza  
2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza  
7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Championship Night 3 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena  
Following Bull Riding - Robert Earl Keen

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\*events and timing subject to change; stay tuned to bigskypbr.com for the most current events schedule



## SECTION 2:

MONTANA, ENVIRO,  
SPORTS, HEALTH

A new day at DEQ and DNRC pg. 18

Ski Tips:  
Deceleration lives in the future pg. 26LPHS falls in opener to  
Harrison-Willow Creek pg. 28

## Montana inaugurates new leadership amid national political drama

BY BELLA BUTLER

HELENA – The state of Montana ushered in new leadership into its Congressional delegation and state executive office at the start of 2021, preceding the inauguration of Joe Biden as President of the United States and the political drama that has surrounded it.

Republican Greg Gianforte, Montana's former Congressman and 25th governor, was inaugurated before the start of the Legislature on the morning of Jan. 4. The new governor enters office after a 12-point victory over Democratic opponent and former lieutenant governor, Mike Cooney.

Gianforte made his first political debut with an unsuccessful run for governor in 2016, which he followed with a win in Montana's 2017 special election for Congress. Before his entrance into Montana government, Gianforte made a name for himself in business, first selling his cloud-based computing business, RightNow Technologies, to Oracle for \$1.8 billion in 2011.

After the 2020 election, which resulted in sweeping wins for GOP candidates across the state, the Montana Senate, House of Representatives and governorship are all controlled by Republicans, a state government trifecta not seen in Montana since 2004. Joining Gianforte on Montana's state leadership platform are Republicans Secretary of State Christi Jacobsen, Attorney General Austin Knudsen, Auditor Troy Downing and Superintendent of Public Instruction Elsie Arntzen.

After campaigning on a promise to focus his COVID-19 efforts on protecting the most vulnerable and relying on personal responsibility rather than government mandates, Gianforte held a press conference on Jan. 5 announcing a shift in the state's approach to COVID-19.

"We will issue new directives and guidance to replace the existing ones," he said. "There will be changes. Some guidance and directives will be revised."

Gianforte announced revisions to former Gov. Steve Bullock's vaccine distribution schedule, altering Phase 1B to include those 70 years old and up, as well as those between 16 and 69 who have specific health conditions. The former Phase 1B included people 75 years old or older, frontline essential workers, those residing in congregate care and correctional facilities, along with American Indians and other people of color who may be at elevated risk for COVID-19—roughly covering 90,000 Montanans according to the Montana Department of Health and Human Services.

Gianforte estimated that the revisions to Phase 1B would cover between 250,000 and 300,000 people from Montana's population, but noted that the uptake of the vaccine varies place to place and not everyone eligible will opt to receive it.

Gianforte also confirmed that he intends to lift the statewide mask mandate, which has been in effect since July, once certain conditions have been met. "After we have increased vaccine distribution and after I have legislation on my desk that protects businesses, schools, places of worship and nonprofit organizations that follow guidelines from lawsuits, then we will rescind the current statewide mask mandate," the governor said. Gianforte said that incentives like such liability protections for Montana entities will be more effective than mandates.

On Jan. 8, such legislation underwent its first hearing in the Legislature. The legislation—Senate Bill 65—is sponsored by Sen. Steve Fitzpatrick of Montana's 10th Senate District and if passed would revise civil liability to laws, adding limited liability for premises owners, healthcare providers and others who comply with "certain types of regulations," according to the bill. Gianforte has voiced support for SB 65.

Gianforte added that the state of emergency order, issued on March 12 by Bullock, gives broad discretion to local authorities, and that will remain the same.

Montana voters also decided to send Republican Sen. Steve Daines back to Washington, D.C. for another term to join Democratic Sen. Jon Tester. Montana's sole Representative seat was won by Republican Rep. Matt Rosendale.

Following President Donald Trump's accusations of an unfair election, Sen. Steve Daines announced on Jan. 2 that if an election commission did not audit the Nov. 3, 2020 election that he would join 12 other Republican senators in opposing Electoral College votes from some states. Rosendale also announced his support for opposition to some state's votes.

In the middle of the U.S. Senate's confirmation process of the Electoral College votes on Jan. 6, "stop the steal" protesters stormed and sieged the Capitol building in D.C., effectively stalling the proceeding until later that night. Following the violence, Daines released a statement at 5:30 p.m. saying he would not oppose any votes.

"Today is a sad day for our country," Daines wrote. "The destruction and violence we saw at our Capitol today is an assault on our democracy, our Constitution and the rule of law, and must not be tolerated... We will not let today's violence deter Congress from certifying the election. We must restore confidence in our electoral process. We must, and we will, have a peaceful and orderly transition of power."

A spokesperson later released another statement saying that Daines' goal in opposing votes was never to overturn the election but rather to raise concerns for Americans lacking confidence in elections.

Sen. Tester also released a statement following the disruption at the Capitol.

"I join my Republican and Democratic colleagues in condemning this despicable and dangerous attack on our democracy.

The election is over—and the time for the baseless objections that do nothing but undermine our Constitution is over too. Now is the time for both sides to come together to solve the pressing problems facing our nation, not rip it apart."

In an interview with NBC Montana's Maritsa Georgiou, Tester said that the siege on the Capitol makes the U.S. weaker, both domestically and in the eyes of foreign adversaries.

"What has happened is there are folks in elected position in both the legislative branch and the executive branch that enabled violence to enter the front doors of the U.S. Capitol, and I think moving forward folks need to be held accountable," he told Georgiou.

Rosendale condemned the actions of protestors who stormed the Capitol but remained firm in his opposition to Electoral votes from certain states.

On Jan. 6, the U.S. Senate approved Biden's victory. The President-elect will be inaugurated on Jan. 20, ending Trump's single term.

Some members of government have expressed interest in removing Trump from office earlier than the end of his term either by way of impeachment or the 25th amendment. On Jan. 11, both Daines and Rosendale issued statements rejecting the calls for impeachment.



## A new day at DEQ and DNRC



Before he was elected, Gov. Greg Gianforte drew attention to state departments like the departments of Environmental Quality and Natural Resources and Conservation, which he called “project prevention departments.” Now in the beginning of his term, he’s made new hires for heads of both departments. PHOTO BY HAZEL CRAMER

*Candidate Greg Gianforte promised regulatory rollbacks and streamlined environmental permits. With two new director appointments at the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the ball is set to start rolling.*

BY PETE ZIMMERMAN  
MONTANA FREE PRESS

At a campaign event in July, candidate Greg Gianforte stood in the offices of Hecla Mining in Libby to rail against Montana’s state environmental regulatory agencies.

He labeled the departments of Environmental Quality and Natural Resources Conservation the “project prevention departments” and blamed the agencies for slowing economic growth. He pointed to the Montanore and Rock Creek mines, both of which have been in the permitting process for decades, as proof of a government out of touch with the business sector.

“I don’t think we should approve every permit, but we ought to be able to get a yes or no in less than 35 years,” Gianforte said.

Now, having cruised to a 12-point victory in November’s election, Gov. Gianforte has taken the first steps to reduce permitting times and state environmental regulations, naming new directors of the DEQ and DNRC. But former officials and environmental advocates caution that going too far in streamlining regulations and speeding permitting processes could have the opposite effect, exposing both industry and the state to lawsuits.

Amanda Kaster, a 31-year-old Pennsylvania native who was formerly the acting deputy assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the U.S. Department of the Interior will head the DNRC. Prior to her stint at the Interior Department she was acting chief of staff and senior adviser at the Bureau of Land Management, and has worked in the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. She also worked as a legislative aide for former Montana U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke, and as an adviser for Zinke after his appointment as Secretary of the Interior.

Gianforte hired the new DEQ head from within the department, choosing Chris Dorrington, originally of Helena, who had been the administrator of the agency’s Air, Energy and Mining Division for almost five years. Before coming to work for DEQ, Dorrington spent 10 years at the Montana Department of Transportation.

Conservation groups have expressed both concern and surprise over the hirings—concern about Kaster’s inexperience in the state and history at the Interior Department under then-acting BLM Director William Perry Pendley, and surprise that Gianforte, after repeatedly attacking DEQ during his campaign, chose an agency insider to lead the department.

“It doesn’t make any sense,” said Anne Hedges, deputy director of the Montana Environmental Information Center, of Kaster’s hiring. “DNRC deals with unique issues, and to bring in someone who is really quite young and certainly inexperienced on anything related to Montana seems like folly.”

Kaster did not respond to requests for an interview.

The DNRC was created in 1971 to ensure responsible use of the state’s natural resources including coal, natural gas and timber. The agency is also responsible for overseeing the state’s water resources and water rights.

Whitney Tawney, the executive director of the nonprofit Montana Conservation Voters, expressed concern about Kaster’s record at the Interior Department. “As with any nominee, we’re going to give them a fair shake,” Tawney said. “Amanda Kaster’s most recent work at the U.S. Department of Interior is pretty troubling. She was deputy assistant secretary of land and minerals, and we watched hundreds of thousands of acres get opened up in Montana for oil and gas.”

In a press release announcing her hiring, Kaster said, “I can’t wait to get to work ensuring the Treasure State achieves its full potential by responsibly managing and developing its land and water resources and continuing efforts to make the Department responsive for all Montanans.”

“Gov. Gianforte has set clear expectations, and my first step as director is to fully absorb his direction and set our own agency objectives, goals, strategies and measures in line with that direction.”

Though the DNRC does influence the management of state lands and natural resources, and issues some permits, the burden of enacting Gianforte’s promise to streamline permitting and cut regulations falls mainly on the DEQ. And while some are expressing concern about Kaster, the hiring of Dorrington to direct the DEQ has generated surprise and praise from conservation groups and industry representatives.

“I was pleasantly surprised,” Hedges told Montana Free Press. “He is exactly the kind of person I would hope for in one of these positions.” Hedges said Dorrington’s familiarity with the agency and the law make him a good choice for the position.

“I think Chris Dorrington is a great choice. I don’t always agree with him by any means, but I do find him to be thoughtful, and he tries to figure out solutions to the problems presented to him,” she said.

Alan Olson, executive director of the Montana Petroleum Association and a member of the advisory team that helped Gianforte choose both departments’ directors, told MTFP, “I’ve worked with Chris for almost five years. He is accessible and willing to sit down and discuss the issues.”



It's DEQ's job to uphold the standards set by the state Constitution, which guarantees a clean and healthful environment for future generations, a job it achieves primarily through permitting.

The agency requires industries including logging and mining to apply for permits if the work is likely to affect the environment. The permits outline what can be done within the parameters of the law—how many trees can be cut, how much pollution is allowed in rivers—to ensure that all actions are within the rule of environmental laws such as Montana's Clean Air and Water Quality acts, mining and mine reclamation Laws and the Hazardous Waste Act. Local governments and municipalities must also get DEQ permits for things like stormwater runoff and wastewater.

It's not only state laws that the DEQ has to take into account when issuing permits. The department is also the primary agency that implements federal environmental laws within the state.

Former state officials noted that efforts to streamline permitting do not change the requirements of the underlying laws. Streamlining that skirts those laws could leave state agencies, industries and communities open to litigation.

"If someone is seen as too cozy with industry in his or her interpretation of the law, conservationists are going to sue," said Tracy Stone-Manning, vice president of the National Wildlife Federation and a former director of the Montana DEQ under Gov. Steve Bullock. Stone-Manning also served as Bullock's chief of staff and directed the environmental nonprofit Clark Fork Coalition in the early 2000s.

Stone-Manning, who also expressed surprise over the Dorrington hire, said that Dorrington's familiarity with the agency and the law put him in a good position to speed up processes while keeping remaining within the confines of the law.

"Director Dorrington will be able to be clear with the governor about why timelines are the way that they are, and what impediments there are to speeding them up, and some of those impediments are in statute," she said.

Dorrington told MTFP he plans to align the agency with the expectations set by Gianforte, including streamlining permitting and improving the state's interactions with businesses affected by agency actions.

"I think the governor uses our agency as an example of where streamlining is necessary and can be improved. I believe streamlining permitting will include clarity for the industry, and consistency that they can make economic decisions based off of," he said.

Department of Environmental Quality Director Chris Dorrington. Dorrington said he's not worried about the process of streamlining permits or reducing regulations exposing the agency to lawsuits.

"We're a part of lawsuits now. The bar for our agency is not simply set to not be sued," he said.

Gianforte has made clear his intent to dramatically reduce state-level regulatory oversight. At the campaign stop in Libby, he pledged that for every regulation enacted while he is governor, he will repeal two others.

The Republican-led Legislature seems ready to help. In October, a memo reported by MTN News outlined proposed Republican goals for the upcoming legislative session. "Remove regulations from DEQ and DNRC" was listed as the No. 2 goal under the rubric of "Natural Resources." The wish list doesn't identify specific regulations to be cut.

Since the "draft blueprint" memo, attributed to state Rep. Derek Skees, R-Kalispell, and other unnamed Republican lawmakers, went public, eight bills have been requested by state legislators that would revise or change the Department of Environmental Quality, though none have yet been introduced.

One of Gianforte's oft-cited examples of a DEQ permitting delay has in fact been hung up not at the agency, but in the courts.

The Montanore mine, a copper and silver mine in the Cabinet Mountains near Libby, recently suffered a major setback when the Montana Supreme Court sent its DEQ-approved permit back to the agency to reconsider.

The mine, originally owned by Canadian mining company Noranda Minerals, was first authorized to begin operations in 1989. Noranda dug a primary tunnel completed in 1991, but ceased operations that same year because of low mineral prices. While mining was discontinued, Noranda was granted a permit allowing pollutants in the water table in 1992, and a second permit for the mine was issued in 1997.

Permits for the dormant project continued to be reissued by DEQ after a new company bought the mine in 2004. Finally, in 2018, the Montana Environmental Information Center sued the DEQ and the new mining company, Montanore Minerals Corporations, a subsidiary of Washington-based Mines Management Inc., arguing that the latest permit, issued in 2017, was still applying outdated standards from the 25-year-old original permit. The court agreed, sending the permit back to DEQ for a re-do.

"Should the mine continue to seek the ability to discharge from its proposed mining operations, those discharges would need [to] be assessed under the state's current nondegradation policy. At this time, DEQ has not been informed of how the mine wishes to proceed," said Shaun McGrath, DEQ's most recent director, who led the department when the permit was remanded.

Similarly, a Montana District Court in 2019 remanded a permit issued to the Rock Creek Mine back to the DNRC.

The Montanore project highlights another issue that plays out adjacent to the permitting process. Market demand for minerals and timber often change, sometimes delaying or shuttering mining and timber operations for lack of profitability, not lack of permitting. Still other times, as with Montanore, companies sell their assets or go belly-up before commencing operations.

"You can look at some of these 20-year processes and say, 'the government failed there,' but when you look under the hood you see companies coming and going, companies going bankrupt, companies putting projects on hold because they don't have the capital to continue," said Stone-Manning, the former DEQ director.

Permits issued to companies that may not be able to see projects through can have catastrophic and costly consequences, a result Montanans have seen before. When Pegasus Gold went bankrupt at the end of the 1990s, the company left behind mines leaching toxic chemicals into the environment, and left it to the state and federal governments to clean up the mess with taxpayer dollars. Just one of those mines, the open-pit Zortman-Landusky gold mine in the Little Rockies in north-central Montana, has generated more than \$65 million in cleanup costs, a third of which is funded with public dollars.

In the lead-up to the election, and in his Montana Comeback Plan, Gianforte promised to "change the tone at the top" of the state's environmental regulatory agencies, saying new leadership was needed for the benefit of the state's economy. Now that Kaster and Dorrington have been installed to lead those agencies, those changes are in the works.

"Gov. Gianforte has set clear expectations, and my first step as director is to fully absorb his direction and set our own agency objectives, goals, strategies and measures in line with that direction," Dorrington said.



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## THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON  
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

The first time I gawked upward from the floor of the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, toward beams of light pouring in through its dome, experiencing sensations of awe that were also present upon visits to the Sistine Chapel, Cathedral of Notre Dame and Westminster Abbey, I had the fortune of being led around by a personal tour guide.

That chaperon spoke quietly out of reverence. He gestured with long arms, describing in detail the history of Americans memorialized in statuary and narratives of priceless paintings chronicling the birth of a country. He ticked off a list of those who had walked the cavernous hallowed halls connecting both houses of Congress.

Steeped in knowledge, he held forth with giddy delight.

For him it was an honor and a sacred privilege to not only be learned about the place where he worked and carried out the nation's business. He carried the spirit of the Capitol in his heart as a place that he believed was inviolate—that no American in his or her right mind would ever dare to dishonor by acting like drunken hooligans driven to atrocity.

The guide on that day exactly 30 years ago this winter was U.S. Sen. Alan K. Simpson of Wyoming, who then was Minority Whip of the Republican Party serving in the most powerful legislative body in the world. Up Pennsylvania Avenue in the White House was a president and first lady who considered Al and Ann Simpson dearest of friends. So close were the senator and George H. W. Bush that the former was asked by the latter to deliver his eulogy.

It was at President Bush's funeral in December 2018 that Simpson shared a kind of proverb once told to him by his mother and seemingly perfectly suited for these times. "Hate," Simpson said, speaking of toxic partisanship and cultural tribalism, "corrodes the container it is carried in."

I didn't know what Sen. Simpson was thinking while, at home in Cody, Wyoming last week, he saw the same images on television we did—of the Capitol being overrun by a mob of invaders abusing the term "patriots."

The sackers brutally beat a Capitol police officer to death with a fire extinguisher, broke down doors and invaded the House and Senate chambers carrying zip ties ostensibly to take members of Congress hostage, or worse. Some had Molotov cocktails, others pulled down their pants and squatted, smearing the walls of the citadel of American democracy with feces while others chanted en masse: "Hang Mike Pence."

None of this would have ever happened were it not for a person who served as a direct or indirect catalyst.

As I said, I wondered what Simpson had made of the unprecedented act of extremism.

"What did I feel?" he asked after I called him. "Sadness, deep innate sadness."

Simpson's Senate Whip Office was located right off the Rotunda. Over the years, he had become friends with Capitol cops who guarded

the safety of elected officials and the chefs who cooked meals, and the waiters and the cleaning staff. "It's as it is in Wyoming. Nobody is above anybody else. You meet people. You get to know them. You learn about their lives."

## Former senator's words still ring true after Capitol sacked

At 89, having served three terms in the U.S. Senate and 12 years in the Wyoming House of Representatives, having made deep friendship with colleagues on both sides of the political aisle, including the late Ted Kennedy and president-elect Joe Biden with whom he served together on the Senate Judiciary Committee, he describes the events of Jan. 6, 2021.

"My response is not so much revulsion but thinking of it as terrible, just terrible," Simpson said. "There was clammy sadness that something like this could even happen. Members [of Congress] and their staffs hunkered down worried that someone might do them violent harm."

After he came to Washington, D.C. in the late 1970s, Simpson was given advice by Sen. Jacob Javits, a Republican from New York. "He said coming from Wyoming you're somewhat of an insular person, but you're a bright guy with an interesting background so get to know your colleagues and their spouses; travel with them." Simpson cultivated lasting friendships and if disagreements arose, they didn't have to become personal.

People, he said, don't want to hurt other people they get to know.

Yes, Simpson is a fiscal conservative who obviously often disagrees with the tactics and rhetoric of the left.

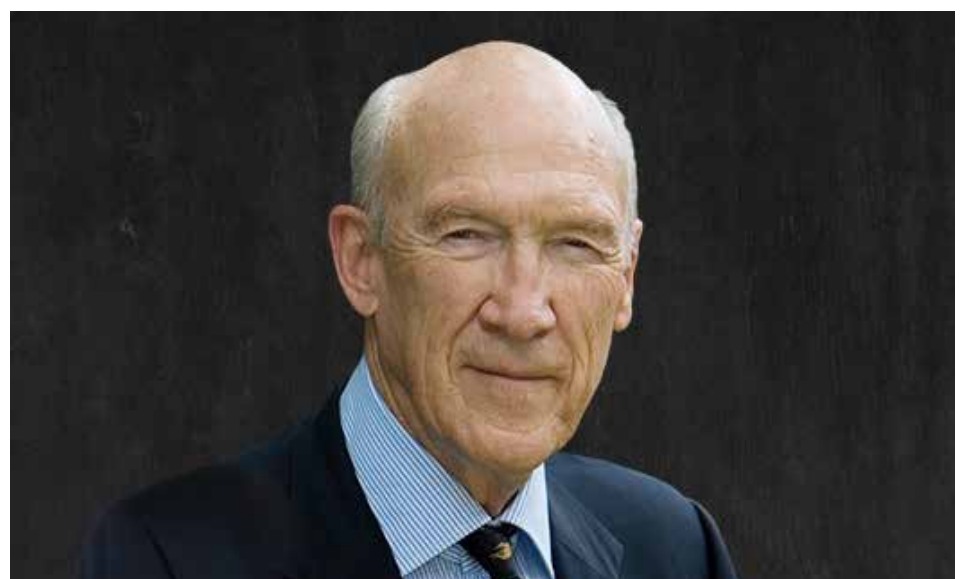
But he's equally dismayed by the disintegration of what the GOP used to be. "Part of the Republican Party is heading toward cultism and there are various kinds," he said. "There's the homophobe cult, the abortion cult, the conspiracy cult and the no-mask cult. There's the follow-law-and-order cult and the get-government-out-of-your-life-and-leave-me-alone cult. The madness of the event [at the Capitol] should pull anyone out of their quandary."

Simpson has no tolerance for "insurrectionist" politicians or citizens.

"You have to remember that these people were lied to, over and over again," he said. He lauds Sen. Mitt Romney for saying, "The best way we could show respect for the voters who were upset is by telling them the truth. That's the burden. That's the duty of leadership."

Despite hurt feelings that have festered across the aisle for years, societal change starts with individual decisions. Politicians need to halt the continuous cycle of recrimination. They need to have the courage, he said, to stand before their constituents and beseech them to let their hostilities go.

*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.*



Former Sen. Alan K. Simpson. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SIMPSON FAMILY



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# Gallatin Canyon Gets a Lifeline

BY DAVID TUCKER  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

On December 29th, to little fanfare and taking no credit, the Gallatin River scored a major victory when commissioners from Gallatin County voted unanimously to approve a petition for the formation of a new Gallatin Canyon Water and Sewer District.

Now, you might be thinking, why should we care about a water and sewer district? What is so important about that? The short answer: a healthy Gallatin River.

In the Canyon—roughly the area from the Conoco to Rainbow Ranch—all lodges, homes, restaurants and small businesses are currently on either individual septic systems or small, inadequate community systems. While some of these systems are newly installed and at or above state standards for treatment of wastewater, they still pale in comparison to treatment at the soon-to-be-constructed plant in Big Sky, which will serve customers within the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District. With a district formed in the canyon, proactive resource management decisions can be made that will have drastic positive impacts on the surface water quality of the Gallatin and the groundwater quality of the domestic water supply in the canyon.

First and foremost, a Gallatin Canyon district allows for the potential centralized collection of wastewater. Currently, wastewater is treated by septic systems, and these systems cannot treat wastewater to the level Big Sky's new plant will. A feasibility study commissioned by the Gallatin River Task Force and undertaken by the WGM Group identified individual septic systems in the Canyon as the major contributor of nutrients to the watershed, second only to treated wastewater used for irrigation in the West Fork of the Gallatin River. Both these nutrient sources will be mitigated by the new treatment plant.

Secondly, a Canyon water and sewer district paves the way for wastewater reuse options in the canyon. This could help bolster our fragile water supply and in-stream flows for the Gallatin, conditions that become all the more tenuous as climate change and drought decrease water amounts, a trend that is predicted to continue.

Thirdly, the Canyon district can take advantage of \$12 million made available by voters through the 1 percent for Infrastructure tax that was approved in May 2020. This will

drastically reduce the upfront cost of connecting to the new plant while also reducing nutrient loading to the river, a win-win.

Finally, while this may sound like news to you, the creation of a water and sewer district in Gallatin Canyon has been decades in the making. Concerned businesses, nonprofits and individuals started tackling the issue years ago, recognizing future development in this area without adequate infrastructure as a major—possibly the single largest—threat to river health.

By taking a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to solving this problem, these groups were able to put differences aside and do right by the river. After all, everyone who lives, works and plays in the upper Gallatin River watershed knows that there is no future without a clean river. With the newly established Gallatin Canyon Water and Sewer District, that dream is one step closer to becoming a reality.

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



The Gallatin River as it flows through Gallatin Canyon south of Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE.

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# Like it or not, we learned a few things



BY ASTA BOWEN  
WRITERS ON THE RANGE

I have to admit, I almost feel sorry for old 2020. It's been catching a lot of hate these days, and not without cause. Of course, the year we call 2020—with the obligatory eye-roll—isn't an actual force unto itself, just a measure of time, one of the handy concepts we use to create a sense of order in the universe.

And there's the rub. What this year took from us, along with far too many loved ones, is order itself, our sense of control over how life should go, our "normal." 2020 put the lie to the notion that we are in charge.

Plans went out the window without a glimmer of warning. Not just specific plans, like someone's birthday party or paying the rent, but the very ability to plan—to predict, to calculate, to organize.

The future went blank as the biggest jolts came seemingly out of the blue: the coronavirus itself, the rise of one movement for social justice and another against established authority. Even immutable objects like the U.S. elections were battered by controversy and defied predictions, all as the stock market plummeted, then roared to historic highs. The mail did go through, but for a time even that was thrown in doubt.

With vaccinations barely under way, it's still too early for much planning, but there are powerful choices we can make right now, especially in how we view what's happened and what we intend to do about it. Like it or not, we learned a few things:

- We discovered that kids actually want to go to school—just not necessarily for the teaching and learning part.
- We must never forget the compassion, courage and sacrifice of our doctors, nurses and unsung helpers.
- For those who thought leadership doesn't matter that much in a land of the free and home of the brave, guess what: leadership matters—everywhere.
- Some kinds of work can be done better without all the commuting and water cooler time.
- As donations poured into food banks and other charities, many of us learned that where government wouldn't or couldn't help, we could still make a difference.

- Some of us found we could get by with considerably less toilet paper than we thought.
- We don't actually need showy conventions and predictable speeches to nominate a candidate for public office.
- We can name racism, face it, and do something about it. Justice is a work in progress.
- Screen life, especially social media, can't substitute for real life, but what we read and say online can have real consequences.
- Flu seasons of the future might get a lot less deadly if we hang onto these masks and remember what we've learned about viral transmission.
- Elections matter. They can be free and fair and without a lot of hype, thanks to legions of principled poll workers. Having different ways to vote will make an election harder, not easier, to steal.
- Not everyone made it through lockdown on quarantines by streaming and sourdough bread. A lot of people made it by a hair's breadth, in debt or despair, putting their lives on the line for everyone else. Others didn't make it at all.
- The power of human touch and the joy of being together should never be taken for granted. Never.

As for that "normal" we're in such an all-fired rush to get back to? Not so fast, pardner. There's some normal we should have shed a long time ago, and this pandemic we can't wait to leave behind is giving us a chance to see the world anew and make real changes in it.

As 2021 begins, it's as if we're pausing atop a great historic pivot, the likes of which we may never see again. We may not control the outcome, but we can step up and own our part in it.

No matter who won the 2020 elections, we all win when we choose hope over hate; when culture and community flourish with or without Twitter and TikTok; when George Floyd's grandkids go about their lives without fear; when we help each other find jobs, food, shelter, promise and meaning in life. When we help each other, period.

*Asta Bowen is a contributor to Writers on the Range, [writersontherange.org](http://writersontherange.org), a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She writes in Montana.*

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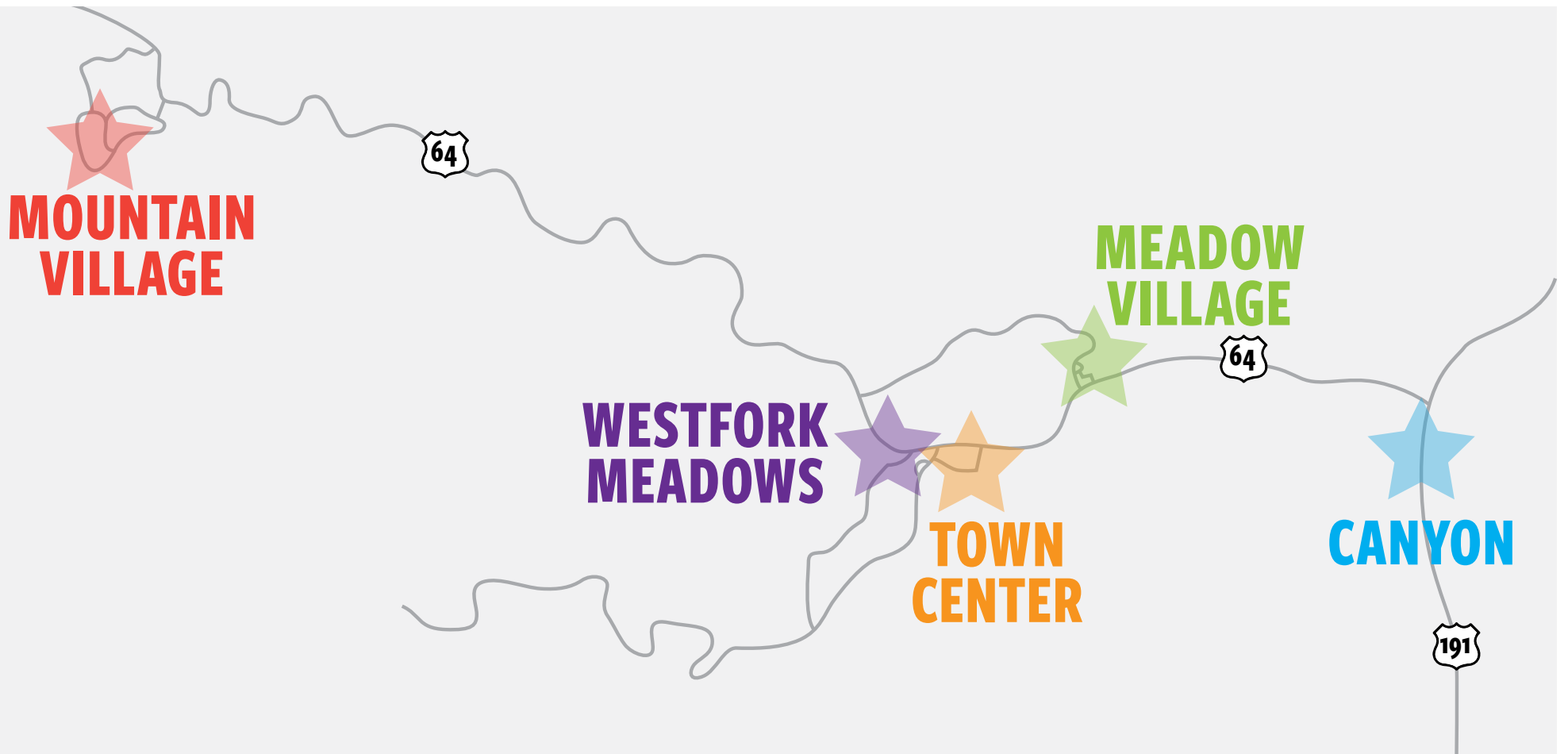
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# Ski Tips: Deceleration lives in the future

BY DAN EGAN  
EBS SKI COLUMNIST

Many skiers try to slow down each turn they make because they are living under the delusion that the purpose of turning is to slow down. Skis are not designed to slow down. I've never met a ski engineer that has designed a ski to go slow. Skis are designed to make a predetermined radius of a turn, and to accelerate. Each company has its theory of what materials make up the best flexing ski both tip to tail and torsional. Some are softer to absorb the energy created—they flex and dampen, which allows them to slow down easier. Others, like race skis, are stiff for pure acceleration. The wider skis these days are really fast because of the increased surface area—the ski floats and glides forward free of the friction of being down in the snow.

If you turn with the purpose of slowing down every turn, my guess is your legs feel tired by mid-morning or midday, and because you are skiing slow and making short turns, you are overturning during your descent. Not only is this not efficient, but it is also exhausting.

Deceleration lives in the future. It is too late to slow down in the turn you are making, and here's why: when a skier attempts to slow down at the end of their turn by pushing or bracing against the downhill ski, this action stiffens the ankle, knee and hip causing the ski to skid and puts the skier out of balance. If you do this every turn, you'll never gain balance, flow or efficiency.

So how do we slow down the technology we have invested in? I spend a lot of time in my camps and clinics convincing skiers that with a slight increase in speed and a mapped-out route, you can ski efficiently, save energy and have more control. The end result will be a longer more enjoyable ski day and eventually you will expand your mastery of the mountain.

Slowing down is an intentional strategic move while skiing, and the how, where and when is an important decision made in advance of a run. I start each run with an intentional plan and break it down into sections. That way I know where I am starting, where I am going and where I will stop. Once I determine the different sections of the



Riding the bumps in Big Sky. PHOTO BY JEN BENNETT

route, I then look for deceleration points along the way of each section. Sometimes it can be pillows of fresh snow, or in moguls, the top and downhill side of bumps, or I search for plateaus that make a good target to aim at and longer slower arcs.

The key is to not slow down every turn, rather, I'll ski three or four turns, letting the skis flow down the fall line and then slow down over a series of turns. I call these turns my "slowing turns." In other words, I'll ski three or four turns, then make three "slowing turns", that are slow, slower and slowest. At that point I'll either stop, regroup and go again, or I'll carry one with another sequence of three to four turns in the fall line and then make my "slowing turns"—slow, slower and slowest and stop.

This is what I mean when I say deceleration lives in the future, if you want to slow down, turn. When you release the built-up energy of a turning ski and enter into the new turn, you are gaining control and can slow down while remaining in balance.

You can experiment with this on different slope angles. Start on your favorite blue groomer run and then once you feel comfortable venture out onto a steep pitch, or off in the trees and or powder.

It is important to remember when I make my series of "slowing turns" I compress and extend more—I'm not static. The more I move up and down the more I am able to control the pacing of my skis and control the speed.

The "slowing turns" commit skiers to slowing down in the future, because they release the turn they are in, enter into the new turn with more motion, which absorbs energy, and as control is gained speed is dissipated over a series of turns.

So as a review, map out your run, ski it in sections. Tell yourself, deceleration lives in the future and that it is too late to slow down in the turn you are making. Then head off down the slope, turn in the fall line and as you enter into one of your planned areas to slow down, make your three "slowing turns"—slow, slower, slowest. Stop, smile and continue.



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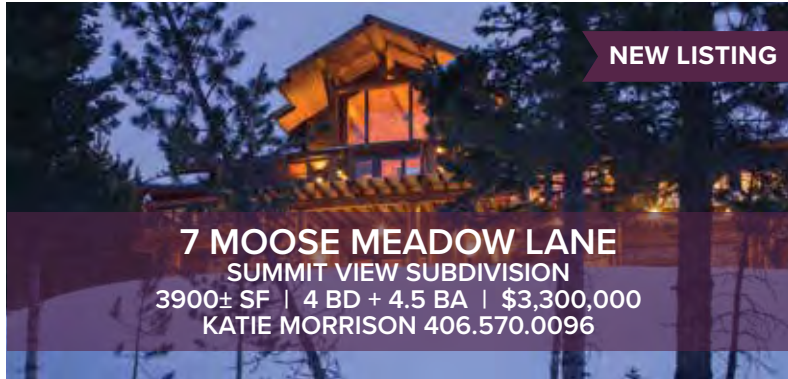
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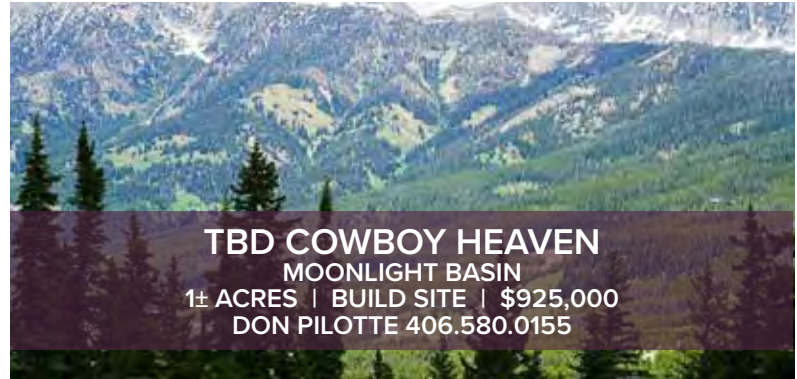


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# LPHS falls in opener to Harrison-Willow Creek

## Wildcats seize early lead, never look back

BY BRANDON WALKER

HARRISON – The Lone Peak High School varsity boys basketball team kicked off their 2020-2021 season on Jan. 5 when they traveled to face the Harrison-Willow Creek Wildcats. After a delayed but extended preseason, LPHS fell to the Wildcats in their season opener, 68-44.

Harrison-Willow Creek sprinted out to an early 8-0 lead, including two dunks by Wildcat big man Luke Cima. After a timeout by Big Horns head coach John Hannahs, Lone Peak scored their first points of the season when senior guard Michael Romney converted an offensive rebound to an assist with the help of cutting forward Nolan Schumacher, who used a shot fake to get his defender off his feet before laying the ball in, closing the deficit to six points with Harrison-Willow Creek still leading.

A hounding man-to-man Wildcat defense forced the Big Horns into turnovers and contested shots, ultimately leading to a 16-4 advantage after one quarter of play. Harrison-Willow Creek kept the pressure up into the second, extending their lead to as many as 26 points thanks in part to Cima, who scored 19 of his game-high 21 points in the first half.

LPHS closed out the half on a high note though, when Romney penetrated the lane against the Wildcat defense before kicking the ball out to wide open sophomore Pierce Farr. Farr calmly knocked down the mid-range jumper just before time expired, resulting in a 38-14 score at halftime.

Two other Wildcats reached double figure scoring totals throughout the night, with Kyle Homner contributing 12 points and Sage Buus adding 10 of his own. Hannahs and the Big Horns primarily deployed a 2-3 zone defensive scheme against Harrison-Willow Creek and the coach said that he hopes to improve LPHS's discipline on the defensive side of the ball for future contests.

Harrison-Willow Creek led 51-22 after three quarters of play, but LPHS continued to fight, scoring 22 points as a team in the fourth quarter alone.

“Yeah I know these guys can put the ball in the basket, and it was nice to see it happen in the fourth quarter,” Hannahs said.

A trio of seniors—Romney, Schumacher and Jackson Lang—topped a balanced scoring spread from the Big Horn offense, accounting for nine, nine and seven points respectively on the road. Sophomore Max Romney added seven points, all coming in the fourth quarter, for Lone Peak as well.

“Yes, I never have to worry about this team giving up, they fight to the end,” Hannahs said. “The seniors played great, and kept the energy up, and my young guys did a great job of maintaining it when they went into the game.”

Another positive aspect of the game for Lone Peak came at the charity stripe. The Big Horns had a strong showing at the free throw line, converting better than 61 percent, or 11 of their 18 attempts, and besting the Wildcats in that regard.

Both the Big Horns and Lady Big Horns basketball teams were originally scheduled to play on the road at Lima the evening of Jan. 8, before hosting Ennis for their respective home openers on Jan. 9, but both teams have paused activities due to COVID-19 precautions. The Lady Big Horns previously scheduled matchup versus Harrison-Willow Creek was also canceled.

Box Score	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Lone Peak	4	10	8	22	44
Harrison-Willow Creek	16	22	13	17	68

Lone Peak: Michael Romney 9, Nolan Schumacher 9, Jackson Lang 7, Max Romney 7, Isaiah Holst 4, Ben Saad 4, Pierce Farr 2, Gus Hammond 2

Harrison-Willow Creek: Luke Cima 21, Kyle Homner 12, Sage Buus 10, Andrew Bacon 7, Joe Cima 6, Thomas Cromwell 6, Tyler Bacon 4, Jackson Nye 2



Lone Peak senior Michael Romney attempts a free throw against Harrison-Willow Creek on Jan. 5. The Wildcats beat the Big Horns 68-44. PHOTO BY KRISY HAMMOND



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# The great escape

BY AL MALINOWSKI  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Stories are often written about the outstanding athlete from a humble upbringing who capitalized on his or her athletic ability to obtain a scholarship to play their sport of choice at the collegiate level. Some of the most fortunate athletes are able to continue their careers all the way to the professional ranks. At one point in time, every young athlete has likely fantasized about becoming a professional athlete, regardless of whether the statistics support the dream or not.

There are far more examples of the athlete who had the talent, but whose college career never materialized. In some cases, the athlete's own choices created their roadblocks, while others find that injuries and various unfortunate circumstances limit their ability to compete at the next level. Today, with the increase of specialization in a specific sport beginning as early as the youth ranks, many athletes experience burnout and lose interest in a sport they once loved.

However, most young athletes will not have the opportunity to play sports at the collegiate or professional level. The careers of these athletes should not be considered failures, since many of these individuals will reflect on their elementary and high school athletics experiences, cherishing them as critical learning experiences in their lives. Handling adversity, learning to fail and accepting the responsibilities of being a reliable teammate can be fundamental lessons learned from participating in sports. Even experiencing success is something that many people first learn from their early days on the field or court.

Athletics provide another important life benefit: an escape. Life can be challenging and at times, overwhelming. Everybody has never ending to-do lists and rarely enough time in the day to attempt to complete them.

The weight of all that needs to be done too often provides the excuse for the inability to commit to an athletic team or league.

Even at a young age, sports provide that necessary escape from a difficult day in school or a break from challenges in family or personal relationships. Aside from the physical benefits, the mental reset can be even more valuable. Most kids are resilient and the distraction that practice provides can often put an end to an otherwise bad day.

Many who played sports in their younger years continue their amateur careers as adults. They can be found on a softball field at the Big Sky Community Park in July, or playing hockey on a frigid night in Town Center in January. Some might be attempting to relive (or remake) the athletic careers of their youth, but most are seeking a welcome social outing and a warranted mental break from their busy lives.

The new community center will soon open its doors and the residents and visitors of Big Sky will have more athletic opportunities available to them. With the growth of the Big Sky School District, consistent gym access has become more difficult to obtain. BASE will provide more healthy opportunities for participation in athletic leagues, and hopefully, provide that periodic and necessary escape.

Big Sky should be proud of the collaborative endeavor that occurred to bring the wish of a community center to fruition. BASE will prove to be another example of how fortunate we all are to live where we do. I hope to see many familiar faces taking a well-deserved mental escape of their own on the athletic courts in the future.

*Al Malinowski has lived in Big Sky for over 25 years. He has coached middle school and high school basketball at the Big Sky School District for 22 of those years. He believes participation in competitive athletics has been critical in establishing his core values.*

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# Yours in Health

## The power of the mind

BY DR. ANDREA WICK  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

I have always been a big believer of “our thoughts create things.” I often treat people in my practice who display symptoms where no one can seem to find a clear diagnosis. However, once patients start working on their emotions and eliminating stress, their symptoms clear. Why is this?

Since COVID began, many people are suffering from a cluttered headspace. Ruminating fear of getting sick, fear of their businesses going under, fear of their loved ones becoming ill, and feeling a lack of control over everyday things. This crippling instability is making our country very sick.

If you change your thoughts, you can literally change your life. Bruce Lipton, Ph.D., a molecular biologist, is one of the first scientists embracing epigenetics and the power of the subconscious mind. He states that “Epigenetics is the study of cellular and physiological traits, or the external and environmental factors, that turn our genes on and off, and in turn, define how our cells actually read those genes. It works to see the true potential of the human mind, and the cells in our body.”

You can control your environment, which in turn controls your genes. Chiropractic physician and spiritual guru Dr. Joe Dispenza says, “You can re-wire your brain for success. You are not hardwired to be a certain way, or doomed by your genes.”

To help put this thought process into action, challenge yourself to see the light and positivity in your every-day interactions with others. Cherish and enjoy your day-to-day life. Changing your outlook, perception and experiences with others will literally change your cells and DNA. You will

have a happier, more fulfilling life if you can stay positive while working through the daily grind. We are constantly bombarded by social media, the news and public opinion which teaches us to be fearful. How do we transform this if it’s almost impossible to live each day free of anxiety?

Choose to tell yourself every day that you are healthy, and your immune system has an innate power. Trust your immune system. Feed yourself healthy, nourishing foods. Drink less alcohol and caffeine—these can become unhealthy crutches when we are under large amounts of stress. When used in excess these substances can also deplete the immune system.

Go outside and exercise, breathe in fresh air! Our brains need to receive a substantial amount of oxygen every day to function optimally. Start your morning with journaling about 10 things that you are grateful for. Honor yourself, set goals and rewards. Don’t go on social media for a few days if you realize that it is a trigger for you. Reach out to friends and loved ones who you can talk to. It’s important to be part of a supportive community. Above all, have faith and trust that you will always be taken care of.

Our thoughts, self-talk and actions become our reality. Take Bill Murray from the movie Groundhog Day for example. A man wakes up day after day, living a redundant lifestyle, slowly becoming a tortured soul. Make the shift out of Groundhog Day. Try something new, energize your soul and find more fulfillment in life.

*Dr. Andrea Wick is a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist. She graduated from Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and now practices in Big Sky. She has a passion for holistic health care and being active in the outdoors. Her practice, Healing Hands Chiropractic, is located in the Meadow Village Center. Visit [drandreawick.com](http://drandreawick.com) to learn more.*

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BUSINESS, ARTS &  
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## Making it in Big Sky: The Corral Bar, Steakhouse & Motel

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Drinking, pool and swing dancing are all part of the Corral Bar, Steakhouse & Motel's storied past. Since 1947, the Corral has been a gathering place for locals and tourists alike to take a load off and experience a taste of some Old West hospitality.

Over the years, the Corral has grown and changed along with the town of Big Sky, carving out a niche for itself as a local's watering hole.

For the first half of its existence, the Corral didn't offer food, instead serving as a dance hall, and later a bar. In 1974 the motel was added to the property and in 1988, Dave House and his now deceased business partner Devon White, took over the Corral and recognized the need for some grub. They built the large kitchen in 1994 and since then the Corral has been serving up hearty staples such as burgers and steaks to ravenous patrons.

As a long-time fixture in the Big Sky community, the Corral has character, evident in the eclectic décor as well as the stories that are told about its lively past.

Explore Big Sky spoke with the current owner, Dave House, who has been running the Corral for over 30 years, to learn more about the Corral and what the future holds for this Big Sky staple.

**Explore Big Sky:** *When is your busiest time?*

**Dave House:** "The summers are, July and August are our two busiest months. Because of Yellowstone National Park and the traffic that goes through, the Canyon is the happening place to be in the summertime for sure. This past year, September was close to being just as busy. This past summer we were down, mainly because we could only operate five days a week all summer long when we opened in June."

**EBS:** *How has it been adapting to CDC guidelines during COVID?*

**DH:** "We are a bar as well and the rules that were put down, made it real hard for us to do business. There was no bar seating at all. We didn't reopen until they allowed bar seating in the county, and that was the middle of June sometime. We've provided carry out but we're a sit-down dining establishment with real feel to it. To try and retool it as carry out was impossible.

We cut down on the seating in here and we still offered carry out going into the summertime. Our decks were full in summer, we had people wanting to sit outside."

**EBS:** *How has your business changed and grown over the years?*

**DH:** "All the competition started in the late 90s when things started slowly growing. It used to be the competition was hurting us, but we are more or less one of a kind. We are old Montana, we believe in old Montana hospitality, and service, meat and potatoes, comfort food, things like that. All the new businesses in food and beverage are geared toward a more popular type of audience so, it's not hard for us to be ourselves. We are an old Montana Roadhouse, steakhouse, with a motel."

**EBS:** *Do you have any notable regulars?*

**DH:** "We have a box full of regulars that come around. Of course, there's fewer and fewer that stay around. You have to be determined and really love Big Sky to live here."

**EBS:** *What is your favorite memory from the Corral?*

**DH:** "I've made so many friends, I have so many people that love me. One would be hard to pick out. There are so many memories, there are a couple of books. If we'd have had cell phones from the 80s on, the pictures we would have, it would be incredible. There's just so many that it is really hard to pinpoint one. It's the whole experience, the people you meet and the things you do."



Longtime local Dave House has been running the Corral, a popular locals watering hole, for over 30 years. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

**EBS:** *What is your plan for the corral moving forward?*

**DH:** "The Corral is for sale; I've been at this for over 30 years. I'm hoping someone wants to continue on the same direction that we have brought it and take it over. I'm not here to sell it to just anybody, even though they're nice to me or pay a good price for it. I don't want someone to implode it or make it something that it is not, it still has a lot of life to it. I get people year-round that come in and say, 'I remember that 20, 30 years ago,' and just once a week I get a story like that. It's pretty cool. It really is. It created a lot of characters, mostly good."

**EBS:** *What is the best piece of business advice you have received?*

**DH:** "Whether it's your personality or your business, don't try and portray something you're not. Always do what you think is right or what you believe is right and unless you're proven wrong, stick to it, stick to your guns. Support the people that support you."

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# New Barbershop opens in Big Sky

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

**BIG SKY** – What do Justin Timberlake and a great haircut have in common? A name.

“Man of the Woods” is the fifth studio album by Justin Timberlake, and it is the name of the new Barber Shop that opened Jan. 5 in Big Sky preceded by a ribbon cutting, grand opening and cocktail hour at 4 p.m. on Jan. 4. True to its intended ambiance, the shop offered libations and live music by Mercedes Carroll.

Kyle Pemberton is the owner and sole proprietor of Man of the Woods, an idea that has been in the works since 2017 when Pemberton graduated from barber school. He was able to lock down the location for the shop in September of 2020 and celebrated the longtime dream at his grand opening this week.

The newest barbershop in Big Sky is a traditional style shop that offers services specifically tailored to each individual. Man of the Woods specializes in short to medium length cuts, straight razor shaves, facial hair care and grooming products.

Pemberton has lived in Bozeman for six years now and has cut hair there for the entirety of his barbering career. Before Bozeman, Pemberton lived in Harbor Springs, Michigan and worked as a lead line cook and a sous chef for Boyne Resorts. His love of people and stories led him west to a career in hair cutting.

“I really love people and I love storytelling and the art of capturing stories,” Pemberton said. “As a chef, you know, you get to tell stories through food, and that’s really cool, but I’m a people person, I like to talk too much, and I would always get in trouble for gabbin’ on the line. I found an outlet for me to be able to be artistically creative, but also to be able to connect with people and share my stories and to capture their stories.”

So, he headed to Boise, Idaho for Barber School and gained experience in a larger city cutting a wide variety of hair. However, Pemberton and his wife missed Montana, so they came back to Bozeman to raise their now three-year-old son.

Pemberton got his first taste of opening a barber shop when he helped a good friend and mentor open Sellsword Barber Co. in 2018. He explained that he, “had intentions of opening my own barber shop in the future, I just wasn’t sure when.”

Before Pemberton turned his talents to opening his own shop, he and his wife decided to start a traveling nonprofit called the Art of Now.

In late 2019, they converted an old school bus into a living space and hit the road with their son to travel the U.S. and give free haircuts to the homeless and veterans—really anyone in need. They made it to 23 different states and gave about 300 free haircuts along the way and handed out hygiene supplies and necessities to the homeless as part of their hygiene bag program.

“It created a way to give back but also a way for me as an artist to be able to still go out and do what I love to do, but without any expectations,” Pemberton said. “People don’t feel like they have to give me anything in return for a haircut whenever we’re on the road traveling and doing it, because it’s just something that we do. It’s who we are.”

And then came the coronavirus pandemic which necessitated a change of plans.

Pemberton and his family cut their travels short, returned to Bozeman, sold their bus and bought an apartment. And now, Pemberton’s dream of opening his own barbershop has come to fruition.

The name of the shop, Man of the Woods, was the result of a casual brainstorming session with friends. Pemberton explained that they were spit balling, trying to think of something that fit in with the Big Sky community, and that phrase was offered. After some research and a meeting with his attorney, Pemberton confirmed that he was able to use the name for his store.

“I think Justin hit the nail on the head with the name of his album to wrap Big Sky into one because I know that’s what he wrote the album about, was his experiences in Big Sky,” he said. “I went for it. It’s a great name, and it’s not an all-original name, even though we kind of originally came up with it.”

The name is meant to reflect the Big Sky community as well as the potential clientele. Although, don’t let the designation of barbershop scare you, Pemberton said they will also cut women’s hair as long as it is shoulder length or shorter—due to the way scheduling at the shop is run, quicker turnarounds are required, and longer hair simply takes too long to cut.

Currently, Pemberton is the only barber working in the shop but he does have a barber in school in Boise who will join the team after graduating this coming summer. He also said that he will have a full-time shoe shiner join the team this summer.

For a 30-minute cut, the price point at Man of the Woods is \$45, which Pemberton said is equivalent to what is charged in Bozeman. He explained that they wanted to offer a fair price point for the convenience of having a barber in Big Sky.



Kyle Pemberton along with his wife Jasmine and three-year-old son Kayson pose in the new Man of the Woods Barbershop which opened on Jan. 5. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



# Behind the scenes of a Broadway musical

## WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BIG SKY – It’s been an unusual season within a deeply unusual year, but the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is still committed to bringing artists and performers together. “We’ve had to get really creative with how we present, but we certainly weren’t willing to give up in the face of this challenge,” said John Zirkle, WMPAC’s executive director.

The next show in the center’s annual winter season, its eighth, explores the life and legacy of one of Montana’s most celebrated historical figures. The show will be a sneak peek in the form of songs and scenes of a Broadway-bound musical titled “Jeannette,” which unpacks the story of Jeannette Rankin, America’s first Congresswoman. Elected to Congress in 1916—three years before women were granted the right to vote—Rankin found herself as the only female voice within the halls of power to vote on women’s suffrage.

The musical was written by Lauren M. Gunderson, who holds the distinction of being America’s most produced playwright, in spite of the fact that three-quarters of the plays produced in the U.S. today are written by men. In a 2017 bio on Gunderson in *The New Yorker*, Daniel Pollack-Pelzner observed that “A typical Gunderson protagonist resembles her author: smart, funny, collaborative, optimistic—a woman striving to expand the ranks of a male-dominated profession.”

Ari Afsar both wrote and performs the musical’s songs. Afsar is a writer and singer best known for originating the role of Eliza Hamilton in the Chicago adaptation of “Hamilton.”

The show will take a look at how a Broadway musical comes together, and will feature excerpts from the show, new orchestrations by Grammy and Tony-winning orchestrator

and music producer Todd Sickafoose, and live performances from the creators and local Montana-based performing artists. *Jeannette* is directed by Erin Ortman, a New York-based director who grew up in Helena, Montana.

As with all of the remaining shows this season, audience members have the option of attending the event in-person, or of streaming the performance at home. This summer, WMPAC launched its own streaming platform called *wmpac.live*, through which audiences can watch a high-quality livestream of the show in case they don’t feel comfortable socializing in public spaces.

“A silver lining of this strange year is that we’re now able to share these performances with people all over the country and the world, instead of having the audience limited to just people in Big Sky,” Zirkle said.

*Tickets and more information available at [warrenmillerpac.org](http://warrenmillerpac.org)*



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# BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Jan. 15 – Thursday, Jan. 28

*If your event falls between Jan. 29 and Feb. 11, please submit it by Jan. 27 by mailing [media@outlaw.partners](mailto:media@outlaw.partners)*

## Friday, Jan. 15

### Live Music

Rainbow Ranch, 6 p.m.

### Donnie's Inferno

Kountry Korner Kafe, Bozeman, 5:30 p.m.

## Saturday, Jan. 16

### Saturday Sweat Free Community Workout

Moving Mountains, 8:00 a.m.

### Caturday

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

## Sunday, Jan. 17

### Saxy Sundays

The Standard, 5 p.m.

### BANFF Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour

Access Here: [bridgerskifoundation.org/events/banff-mountain-film-festival](http://bridgerskifoundation.org/events/banff-mountain-film-festival)

## Monday, Jan. 18

### Trivia Night

Pinky G's, 7 p.m.

### Local's Night

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Tuesday, Jan. 19

### Open Mic Comedy

American Legion, Bozeman, 9 p.m.

### Bingo Night

Molly Brown, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, Jan. 20

### Glide Big Sky: Trails to Tavern

Historic Crail Ranch, 2:00 p.m.

### Live music by Daniel Kosel

Nordic Brew Works, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

## Thursday, Jan. 21

### Thursday Night Ice Climbers

Hyalite Canyon, 5 p.m.

### Northern AZ @ MSU Bobcat Women's Basketball

Brick Breeden Fieldhouse, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

## Friday, Jan. 22

### Behind the Curtain: Jeanette the Musical

WMPAC or online, 5:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.

### Live Music

Rainbow Ranch, 6 p.m.

## Saturday, Jan. 23

### Behind the Curtain: Jeanette the Musical

WMPAC or online, 5:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.

### Saturday Sweat Free Community Workout

Moving Mountains, 8:00 a.m.

## Sunday, Jan. 24

### Saxy Sundays

The Standard, 5 p.m.

### Live Poker

Cat's Paw, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

## Monday, Jan. 25

### Trivia Night

Pinky G's, 7 p.m.

### Local's Night

Bunkhouse Brewery, Bozeman, 2 p.m.

## Tuesday, Jan. 26

### Realistic Pet Portrait Virtual Drawing Class

6 p.m., Register Here: [bigskyarts.org](http://bigskyarts.org)

### Sunrise Karaoke

Bar IX, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

## Wednesday, Jan. 27

### The Arctic Circle to Yellowstone: A Conversation on Climate

Online, 6 p.m.

### Game Night

El Camino Bar, Bozeman, 6:30 p.m.

## Thursday, Jan. 28

### Virtual Discussion with Paralympic Athletes

Online, 6 p.m.

### Thursday Night Ice Climbers

Hyalite Canyon, 5 p.m.

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MILES GLYNN "LOVERS & FIGHTERS"  
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Lovers and Fighters No. 19  
96 x 60 | mixed media diptych on wood panel

DAVID HOOPER "CONSTELLATION"  
MARCH 4, 4-8 PM



Great Chief Going Away  
Photograph | 60 X 40

KENE SPERRY "SIGNIFICANT OTHERS"  
MARCH 18, 4-8 PM



Pairs in Nature | Photograph | 60 X 40

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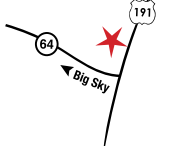
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**BIG SKY**



3735 Pinewood Drive  
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360 Rainbow Ranch  
6,105 +/- SQ FT / \$3.3M



8 Little Thunder  
4,321 +/- SQ FT / \$2.975M



2019 Riverview Lane  
5,000 +/- SQ FT Home  
1,900 +/- SQ FT Barn / \$2.5M

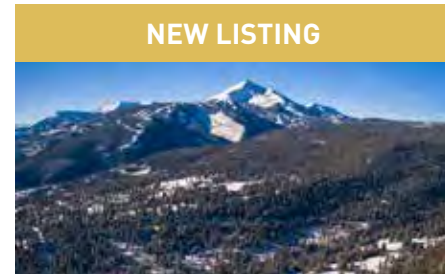
**BIG SKY - LAND**



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - 2A-1B  
526 +/- ACRES / \$2,390,000



Moosewood Lots 3 & 4  
Lot 3 / 6.9 +/- ACRES / \$1.4M  
Lot 4 / 5 +/- ACRES / \$1.1M

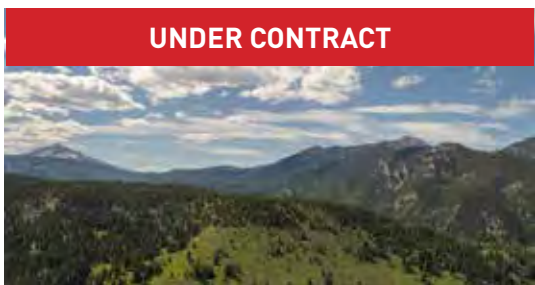


Lot 8G-1 North Fork Road  
20.01 +/- ACRES  
\$1.3M



The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 2A-1A  
246.9 +/- ACRES / \$2,390,000

**BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA**



Gallatin Foothills Lot 4  
1.519 +/- ACRES / \$395K  
*Call for more information*

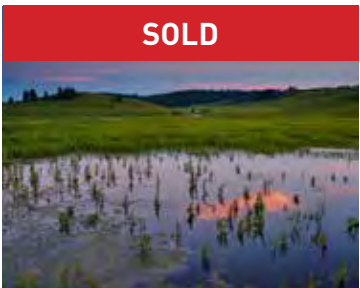


177 Silver Run Drive  
0.402 +/- ACRES / \$329K

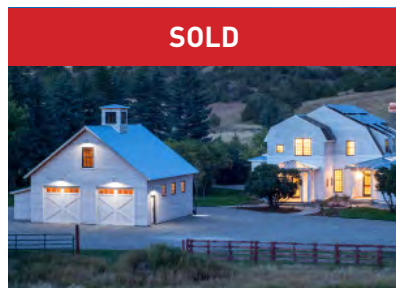


Homestead at the Beacon Butte, MT  
640 +/- ACRES / \$1.65M

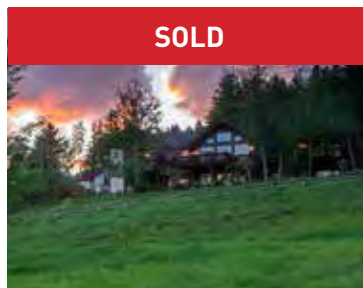
**RECENTLY SOLD**



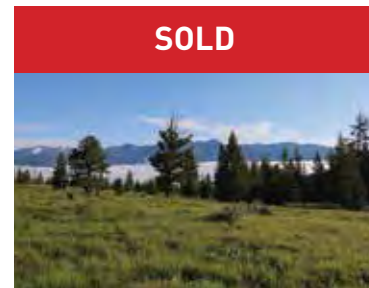
Yellowstone Ranch Preserve  
List Price: \$19M



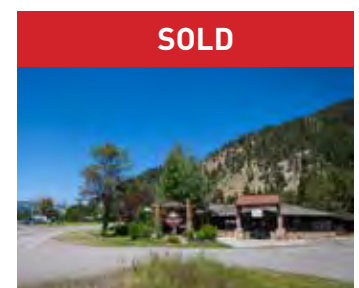
13285 Dry Creek Road  
Bozeman, MT  
7448 +/- SQ FT / \$5.95M



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

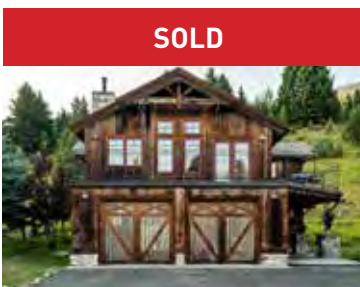


Mountain Meadows  
120 +/- ACRES / \$3.495M



Big Sky Corner Property  
List Price: \$3.24M

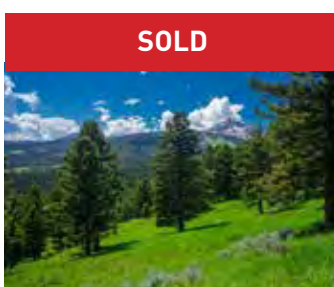
**RECENTLY SOLD**



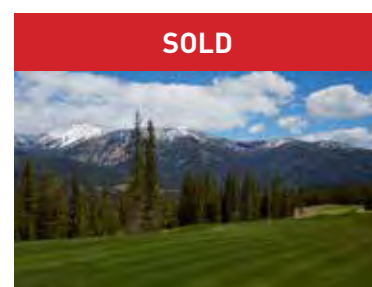
1955 Little Coyote Drive  
3,100 +/- SQ FT / \$1.25M



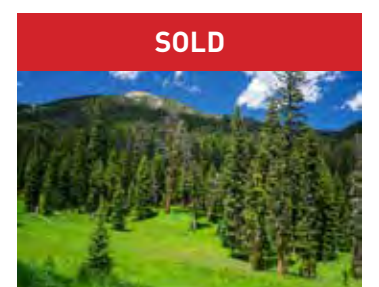
2078 Little Coyote  
List Price: \$1.079M



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



Lot 38 Bitterbrush Trail  
1.270 +/- ACRES / \$800K



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

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**MOONLIGHT BASIN**

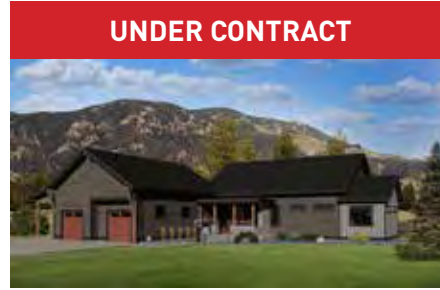


**UNDER CONTRACT**

49825 Gallatin Road  
2,568 +/- SQ FT / \$1.3M  
Parcel 1 - 5.0+/- ACRES



Lodges at Elkhorn Creek  
2,060 - 2,203 +/- SQ FT  
\$1M - \$2.25M



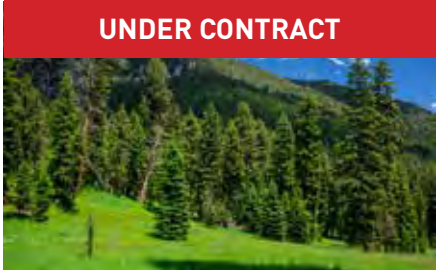
**UNDER CONTRACT**

Gallatin Foothills Lot 5  
\$950K  
*Call for more information*



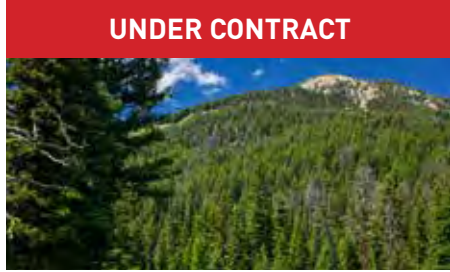
**UNDER CONTRACT**

Saddle Ridge Unit U-2  
3,155 +/- SQ FT / \$1.75M



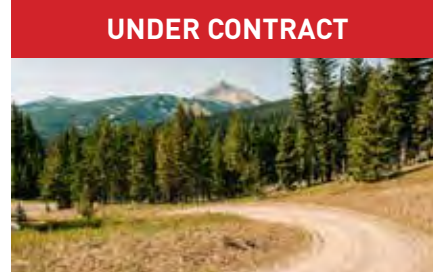
**UNDER CONTRACT**

The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 3A  
20 +/- ACRES / \$817,500



**UNDER CONTRACT**

The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 4A  
20 +/- ACRES / \$817,500



**UNDER CONTRACT**

The Ranches at Yellow Mountain - Tract 1L-2B  
42.40 +/- ACRES / \$1.8M



Big EZ Lot 42 & 43  
40 +/- ACRES  
\$799K

**COMMERCIAL**



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

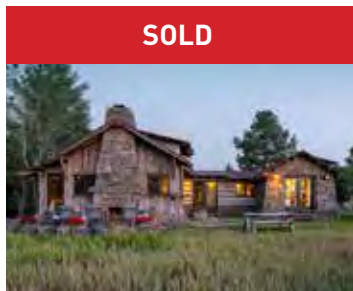


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3250 Two Moons Rd  
4,064 +/- SQ FT / \$1.995M



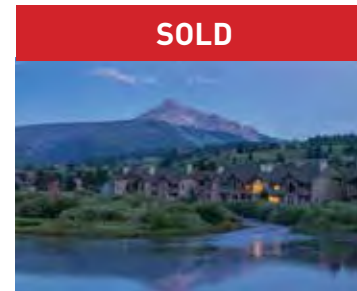
**SOLD**

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



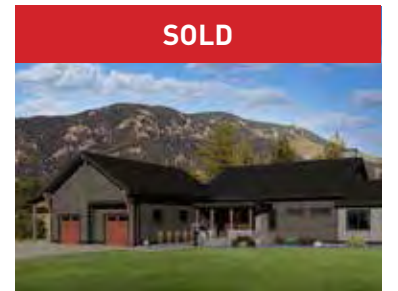
**SOLD**

529 Clancy Way, Bozeman, MT  
4200 +/- SQ FT / 1.01 +/- ACRES  
\$1.69M



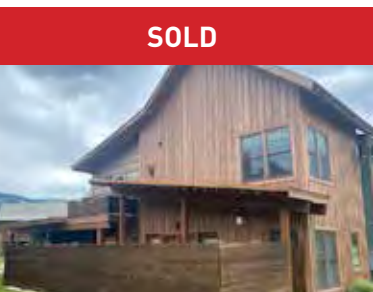
**SOLD**

Crail Ranch Unit 40  
List Price: \$1.35M



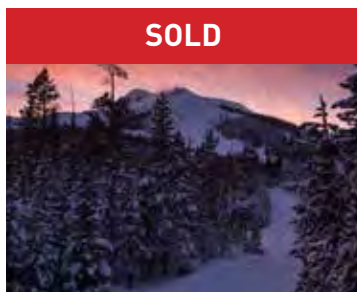
**SOLD**

106 Prairie Fire Rd  
3594 +/- SQ FT plus garage  
\$1.325M / 1.679 +/- ACRES



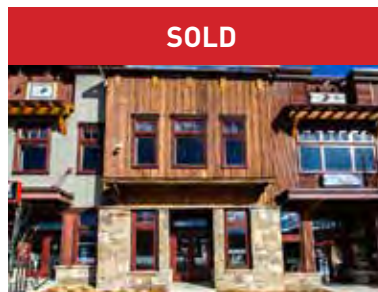
**SOLD**

189 B Pheasant Tail  
1590 +/- SQ FT / \$699K



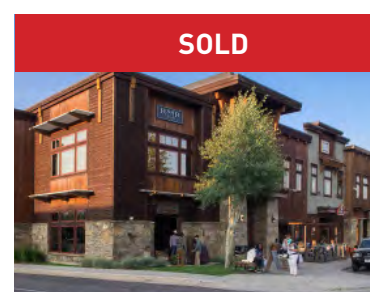
**SOLD**

Lot 39 Diamond Hitch  
1 +/- ACRE / \$595K



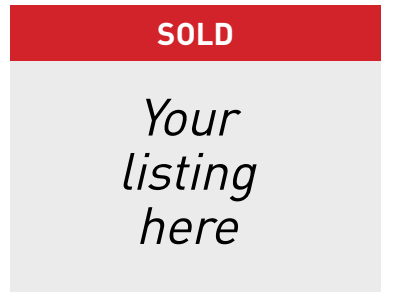
**SOLD**

Marketplace Unit 104  
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**SOLD**

Marketplace Unit 202  
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# Big Sky artist, resort ski patroller, paints her office

BY MIRA BRODY

**BIG SKY** – Anna Middleton embraced watercolor for a few reasons: the supplies are easy to pack for mountain adventures, the paints are simple to clean up and, when she's out painting en plein air, the medium allows her to slow down and see the landscape she grew up around in a new way.

Today, you can find Middleton's sweeping landscape renditions at the Hungry Moose Market and Deli, Montana Supply and on her website, but her journey to becoming a professional artist was sparked by a day not many in the Big Sky community will forget—the day COVID-19 halted operations at Big Sky Resort last March.

Middleton, working her first season as a ski patroller, suddenly found herself with nothing to do. Fueled by her boredom, the Big Sky native decided to pour her energy into a talent that started as a hobby four years prior—a leap she says she never would have taken if it hadn't been for the pandemic.

Although she has no formal background in the arts, Middleton has always been an artistically minded individual. She owned and operated her own photography business, Anna Middleton Photography, right here in Big Sky while in high school before moving to Walla Walla, Washington to attend Whitman College. The rhetoric studies major earned her EMT certification, moved back to her hometown and worked summers as a backpacking guide for teenage girls with Sanborn Western Camps in Colorado. Watercolors were low maintenance enough to pack on her backcountry trips, and it provided her with the gift of slowing down and appreciating the mountains around her in a new way.

“When you see something beautiful, there's an immediate response—you pull out your phone, take a picture and walk away,” Middleton said. “Watercolor is a much slower process and as you spend more time with it, it becomes more beautiful. There's potential for that to become more interesting and watercolor has really taught me that. I find complexities and detail that I would miss in a photo.”

Now in her second season as a ski patroller, Middleton is fortunate to be able to work 40 hours a week among the crags, headwalls and peaks that act as her unceasing muse.

“It's where I'm from,” Middleton said. “I've seen Big Sky grow and change a lot as a community but the landscape has stayed the same, and I think people come here [and] are blown away. This is gorgeous but it's even more beautiful if you spend time with it and I've been really lucky to have had my whole life to experience this place.”

Middleton works mostly in small dimensions—11x14, 5x7 and 4x6—in a series she calls Tiny Notebook (which you can follow on her website) and began as postcard gifts to friends and family. She has since been experimenting with panorama style pieces as well. She'll watercolor or sketch in a small notepad while out in the field, capturing the light and strokes and



Anna Middleton is a watercolor artist who grew up in Big Sky and works as a fulltime ski patroller where she can soak in her inspiration—the surrounding mountains. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA MIDDLETON

spending time getting to know the landscape, then translates and refines her work later on in the studio.

The young artist credits her community for the inspiration that drove her to success. From fellow artists such as Kene Sperry, Ryan Turner, Arianne Coleman and Jill Zeidler, to businesses, like the Hungry Moose, whose marketing manager, Andrew Robin, first encouraged Middleton to display her postcards for sale in the market.

Just as Middleton uses her skillset as a ski patroller to make a bad situation better for those who need help getting off the mountain, she has embraced the sudden changes COVID-19 presented in her life. Although she's unsure what this summer will bring, she hopes to continue leading trips into the backcountry.

“Learning to ski is a little bit about the sport but it's also about learning something new, testing your abilities; it's about feeling terrified and learning something scary, gaining confidence and playing in the snow,” Middleton said. “I've come to love ski patrol for a reason I didn't expect—it's inspiration for my painting and allows me to see the mountain in a way I never thought I would before. Getting to stand in the cirque as the sun is rising and it's -10 degrees but everything is bright pink—I think: ‘oh my gosh I have to paint this.’”

*Middleton sells giclee prints, postcards, folding cards and stickers on [skycolorart.com](http://skycolorart.com). Postcards, stickers and folding cards are available at the Hungry Moose Market and Montana Supply. You can follow her on Instagram at [@skycolorartMT](https://www.instagram.com/skycolorartMT).*



Anna takes solace in being present while painting in the mountains. She believes the longer you spend among them, the more you notice and feel from their presence, a power she hopes comes across in her work. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA MIDDLETON



# CLASSIFIEDS



## NOTICE

### NOTICE TO THE BIG SKY FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE DISTRICT MEMBERS

An Election of two trustees for the Big Sky Fire District Board of Trustees will be held on May 4, 2021.

Declaration of Candidacy forms for the election are available at the Big Sky Fire Department, Station #1 - Westfork Meadows, 650 Rainbow Trout Run, Big Sky, Montana and the Gallatin County Election Department, Gallatin County Courthouse, 311 W. Main Street Room 210, Bozeman, Montana.

Original Declaration of Candidacy forms must be filed with the Gallatin County Election Department no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 8, 2021.



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**Friday - Sunday, starting December 11<sup>th</sup>**  
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*For the comfort and safety of our guests and crew, with COVID in mind we are booking per sleigh instead of per individual. This gives the booking party the opportunity to fill their sleigh as desired.*  
*Maximum of 10 guests per sleigh, 2 sleighs available for booking.*  
 Special events & dates are available on request.

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## NOTICE

### AUDIT PUBLICATION STATEMENT

An audit of the affairs of Big Sky Fire Department has been conducted by Rosie Barndt CPA, P.C. The audit covered the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

Section 2-7-521, MCA, requires the publication concerning the audit report include a statement that the audit report is on file in its entirety and open to public inspection. This report is available to the public at 650 Rainbow Trout Run, Big Sky, MT 59716 or at [www.bigskyfire.org](http://www.bigskyfire.org) (Home Page/About Us/BSFD Master Plan, Annual Reports, and ISO Public Protection Classification/2020 Audited Annual Financial Report). Big Sky Fire Department will send a copy of the audit report to any interested person upon request.

Sincerely,

Big Sky Fire Department

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**Riverstone Ranch**

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## AMUSE-BOUCHE

*Amuse-bouche refers to an appetizer, and by French translation means, "to entertain the mouth." It offers a glimpse into what you should expect from a meal. Also it's free, compliments of the chef.*

### The best job ever?



BY SCOTT MECHURA  
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

We like tenure in the workplace. Well, at least I do.

Don't get me wrong. There's something to be said for the person whose experience has come from many positions over their career. But when regular turnover in a position is the norm for years, maybe decades, yet in the midst of all that, one individual is able to retain tenure for an extended period of time, it speaks to a number of qualities that that individual may possess that others do not.

Henry Haller was the longest tenured white house chef who presided over the kitchen of five presidents: LBJ, Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan. Sure, his talent initially put him in his position. But as those around him would say, it was a host of other personality traits, such as consistency, flexibility, reliability, and maturity that allowed him to gain purchase in such an exalted position.

We all know the old adage that kitchens are hot. Both figuratively and literally. But I can't imagine a hotter kitchen than the one in the White House.

But it was two of those traits in particular that aided chef Haller in excelling at his position.

He was extremely talented of course. But unlike his predecessor, Rene Verdon, and many chefs in general, he was known for being very open and flexible.

After enduring the food and menus of President Lyndon B. Johnson for two years, chef Verdon, who Jackie Kennedy hired, finally resigned when he was asked to prepare a state dinner consisting of spareribs, cold garbanzo bean puree and spoon bread.

Born in Switzerland in 1923, Haller followed the usual path of a traditionally educated and trained chef. In other words, he started young.

He first apprenticed in a hotel in the city of Bern at the age of 16. From there, he bounced around throughout Europe until he received an offer to stay within the company, but move to Montreal. It would get him much closer to America, so he happily agreed.

Like many European chefs of his era, he had visions of a career in the U.S. From Phoenix to New York City, Haller moved from hotel to hotel, each time advancing his position. And it was the Ambassador Hotel in Manhattan that his cooking got the attention of Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson.

Think of the people he must have met. From dignitaries, to celebrities. From generals to diplomats.

What is sometimes lost on those not in the profession is that it is challenging at times to be a reactionary chef. Many chefs are at their best when they are in a creating mode. That is to say, when they are conceptualizing recipes, dishes and entire menus or banquets on their own terms. But the role of a White House chef also consists of coming up with everything from the first family's daily favorite meals, to entire state dinners at the request of either the president or the first lady.

And though chef Haller was beloved by both staff and first families, he did learn early on something he carried with him the rest of his time in the White House. After being scolded by President Nixon after he said in an interview that the president likes to mix up his own martinis, Haller learned to, no matter what, "keep your mouth shut."

Henry Haller was white house executive chef from 1966 until his retirement in 1987. Chef Haller died last month at the age of 97.

*Scott Mechura has spent a life in the hospitality industry. He is a former certified beer judge and currently the multi-concept culinary director for a Bozeman restaurant group.*



# American Life in Poetry: Column 824

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

Naomi Shihab Nye lives in San Antonio, Texas. Here she perfectly captures a moment in childhood that nearly all of us may remember: being too small for the games the big kids were playing, and fastening tightly upon some little thing of our own.

*Editor's Note: This column (30) is a reprint from the American Life in Poetry archive as we bid farewell to Ted Kooser, and work to finalize the new website and forthcoming columns curated by Kwame Dawes.*

## Boy and Egg

Every few minutes, he wants  
to march the trail of flattened rye grass  
back to the house of muttering  
hens. He too could make  
a bed in hay. Yesterday the egg so fresh  
it felt hot in his hand and he pressed it  
to his ear while the other children  
laughed and ran with a ball, leaving him,  
so little yet, too forgetful in games,  
ready to cry if the ball brushed him,  
riveted to the secret of birds  
caught up inside his fist,  
not ready to give it over  
to the refrigerator  
or the rest of the day.

*American Life in Poetry provides newspapers and online publications with a free weekly column featuring contemporary American poems. The sole mission of this project is to promote poetry: American Life in Poetry seeks to create a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. There are no costs for reprinting the columns; we do require that you register your publication here and that the text of the column be reproduced without alteration.*

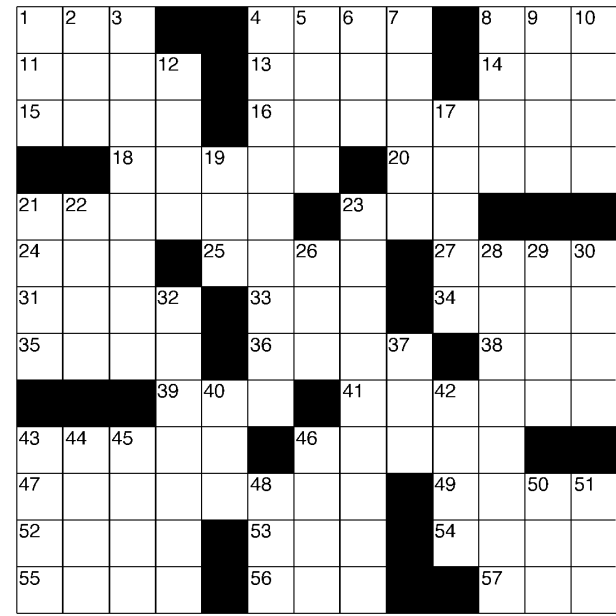
## Corner Quote

**“I admire machinery as much is any man, and am as thankful to it as any man can be for what it does for us. But it will never be a substitute for the face of a man, with his soul in it, encouraging another man to be brave and true.”**

**—Charles Dickens “Wreck of the Golden Mary”**

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

<p><b>ACROSS</b></p> <p>1 Army service number (abbr.) 4 Move quickly 8 Receipt (abbr.) 11 Game of skill 13 Commotion 14 Pulpy fruit 15 Afr. gazelle 16 Once Zambia 18 Inuit house 20 Blue-green 21 Bit 23 Price 24 Amer. Bar Assn. (abbr.) 25 Agency (abbr.) 27 Heroic 31 Binary digits 33 Peak 34 Rough 35 Help 36 Willingly 38 Malay gibbon 39 Fluidity unit 41 Fifteenth-century helmet</p>	<p>43 Borden cow 46 State (Ger.) 47 Woe 49 Wet 52 102 (Rom. numeral) 53 Adjective-forming (suf.) 54 Your (Ger.) 55 Branch 56 Pheasant brood 57 Three (Ital.)</p> <p><b>DOWN</b></p> <p>1 Braz. tree 2 Turf 3 Name 4 Nog (2 words) 5 Silver salmon 6 Fuss 7 Grape fern 8 Sambar deer 9 107 (Rom. numeral) 10 Afrikaans 12 Wood (pref.)</p>	<p><b>ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE</b></p> <p>CHEM TBS ABAS AARE AEC ROTC ATALANTA MALA MET SKALD TED SEA DEAR PLENARY SCALE COXA DER ACAD SWIFT NEAREST SUNG ADA DDT TOILEARS RAIL WAINSCOT ESNE ANT LEDA IAGO NAY RAAD</p> <p>17 Live coal 19 Eye-infesting worm 21 Woman's work basket 22 Ancient Heb. month 23 Font 26 Cost of living index (abbr.) 28 Stretch (2 words) 29 Scientific name (suf.) 30 Certification (abbr.) 32 Band 37 Federal Aviation Admin. (abbr.) 40 Beset (2 words) 42 Millrace 43 Geological epoch 44 Den 45 Svelte 46 S. Afr. town 48 Here (Fr.) 50 Sea (Fr.) 51 Before</p>
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# BIG SKY BEATS

## 2021 Grammy Nominations Playlist

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

The 2021 Grammy nominees were announced on Nov. 24, 2020. Originally, the 2021 show was scheduled to air on Jan. 31, 2021 but was delayed due to COVID-19 concerns and now have been officially rescheduled to March 14, 2021. The delay provides an opportunity to listen to all of the nominated artists in preparation for the awards show in March, if you haven't done so already. Even if you have, here are ten bangers from the artists nominated for the 2021 Grammys.

1. “Black Parade” by Beyoncé
2. “Circles” by Post Malone
3. “Savage” by Megan Thee Stallion ft. Beyoncé
4. “Cardigan” by Taylor Swift
5. “Everything I Wanted” by Billie Eilish
6. “Say so” by Doja Cat
7. “Don’t Start Now” by Dua Lipa
8. “Rockstar” by DaBaby ft. Roddy Ricch
9. “Watermelon Sugar” by Harry Styles
10. “Un Dia (One Day)” by J Balvin, Dua Lipa, and Bad Bunny ft. Tainy



PHOTO BY JASON LAVERIS/FILM MAGIC



# BACK40

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

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

## Winter Camping: Like Hell, Frozen Over

BY MAGGIE SLEPIAN

There are plenty of sensible winter activities in Montana. Most folks ski, snowboard, ice climb, or borrow a kid and go sledding. I'm in the minority of Montana-dwellers. I spend the frozen season dashing from house to car and back, cranking the living room thermostat. Then I tried winter camping.

I was contemplating this decision when I stomped out of the woods, my pack digging into my shoulders and my stupid gaiters sliding down my calves. The final snow-covered meadow stretched out before me, one last godforsaken booby trap on this frigid hike.

I took a tentative step onto the open snowfield, then another. On the third, I plunged through the crust jamming myself so deep I had to flop onto my stomach and rock like a beached whale to free the entrapped leg. I rolled to a solid spot, took three steps, and repeated the torturous process. My fiancé Rocky followed, falling waist-deep and muttering a string of curses under his breath.

We weren't on an impressive mountaineering trip or backcountry expedition. On this February day, Rocky and I, along with our giant mutt Sako, were just trying to get to Mystic Lake, outside of Bozeman, Montana. We'd spent the past four hours slipping and postholing, and planned to spend the freezing night under ripstop nylon and soggy down.

Our “campsite” at the frozen lake was silent and still on arrival, the area slumbering under a blanket of snow. I turned in slow circles beneath the dull gray sky, looking for a place to set my backpack.

“There's nowhere dry,” Rocky said, pulling the tent from his pack. “There's snow. Everywhere. Let's get the tent set up before my hands freeze off.”

We stamped out a semi-flat area, and pitched the tent with numb fingers. I shoved the stakes into the snow. They instantly popped out as we tightened the fly. In an uncharacteristic show of common sense, we reburied them horizontally, and counted it a short-lived victory.

The most basic of camp chores turned infuriating as we fumbled through crusty snow attempting to keep our gear dry. By the time we'd unloaded our packs and inflated our sleeping pads, the sweat from our hike had dried, and we were both shivering under clammy, synthetic base layers. We changed into dry camp clothes, which I'm convinced saved my life.

As the sky dimmed and Sako began chasing snowflakes, I pictured friends back in Bozeman sitting in a cozy restaurant booth, stuffing their faces with sushi and knocking back \$9 cocktails. Rocky lit our thimble-sized stove and gingerly wedged it in a pocket of snow, balancing the pot on top. Within a minute, the snow under the stove melted and tipped our sad clump of shelf-stable Alfredo to the ground.

I retreated to my sleeping bag and gnawed a half-frozen granola bar, trying not to think about a warm bed or real food. Rocky trudged off to hang the food bag (to deter hibernating bears) then reappeared and dove shivering into the tent, shoving his Nalgene into his sleeping bag.

“We need to sleep with our water bottles so they don't freeze.”  
 “The fuel canister too.”  
 “Someone told me the water filter breaks if it gets too cold.”  
 “Put your socks in there so they'll dry out.”

I shuffled the debris pile at the bottom of my sleeping bag until I could lay flat, then buried my head in the mummy hood and tried to sleep, listening to the dog leaping through branches outside.

It was pitch-black when I opened my eyes, and my watch said 2 a.m. I lay there for a moment, trying to figure out where I was and why I was lying





on a canister of fuel. As my mind cleared, I heard a rattle and “clack-clack-clack” from Rocky’s side of the tent.  
 “Rocky?” I hissed, shaking him. He was shivering.

“I don’t think ... my sleeping bag ... is warm enough.”  
 “Which one did you bring?”  
 “My 37-degree. I thought I’d be warmer.”

If I hazarded a guess, I’d say the temperature that night hovered around 200 below zero. It might have been 25 F. Instead of berating my popsicle fiancé, I whacked the tent to shatter the crusted ice, unzipped the fly, and stuck my head out, squinting for our dog.

“Sako!” I called hoarsely. He crunched over and stuck his head inside the tent. I knew the added body heat would make the night bearable, so I grabbed Sako’s collar and dragged his bulk inside, wedging him between Rocky and the tent wall. We spent the rest of the night tossing around the stinky nylon sardine can, but at least we weren’t hypothermic.

In the morning, we hacked our way out of the ice-encrusted nylon igloo, frozen shut with the condensation from our breaths. I stuffed my feet into frozen shoes and we shook off the tent, crushing it down to pack into its stiff stuff sack. Without ceremony, we began the six-mile posthole/ice luge back to the truck.

While we wouldn’t win the award for savviest campers, we didn’t die, so points for that. And we did some good ol’ fashioned learning.

It turns out venting your tent is key to escaping it the next morning; a 37-degree bag just will not do; camp clothes will save your sorry life; and snow won’t keep your tent stakes down just because you wish it so. Our glorious shakedown hike also made me bite the bullet and learn to ski. Those people tend to stay on top of the snow.

*Maggie Slepian lives in Bozeman and hates winter. She just returned from through-hiking the Appalachian Trail, which incidentally, was really cold.*

*A version of this story was first published in the Winter 2016 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.*

## Snow camping savvy

If you still think winter camping sounds fun, here are some pointers to make the process more enjoyable. We learned the hard way so you don’t have to.

- 1) Bury your tent stakes horizontally using a “deadman anchor.” Or invest in snow stakes, aka tent stakes on steroids.
- 2) At camp, immediately remove hiking layers and don dry camp clothes before you get chilled. It’s harder to warm yourself up than to stay warm.
- 3) Melting snow uses more fuel than boiling water – bring enough fuel for melting snow and cooking.
- 4) Bring the right gear. Sleeping bags have two ratings: “comfort” and “lower.” Still screwed it up? Put a bottle of hot water in your sleeping bag. And secure the bottle cap.
- 5) Vent your tent. Condensation builds when warm air can’t escape the tent. Keep the fly pulled tight, but leave the zipper partially open.

**Have fun out there.**



# OUTLAW EVENTS



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**WEDNESDAY, JAN. 27, 4 P.M.**

Virtual podcast with Josh McCain and Jeremy Keller of Big Sky Bravery, sponsored by Miller Roodell Architects.  
**Available on Outlaw Partners Facebook.**







The Big Sky Resort Area District (Resort Tax) staff would like to thank the following partners for supporting the community COVID-19 surveillance testing program.

- ◆ **The Big Sky Residents and Employees** for participating and helping to keep our community safe and open.
- ◆ **Big Sky Relief Partners** for your ongoing operation and financial support.
- ◆ **Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky** for letting us use your offices for testing distribution for the month of December.
- ◆ **Big Sky Water & Sewer District** for housing the mobile lab.
- ◆ **Bozeman Health/Big Sky Medical Center** for providing contact tracers.
- ◆ **Lone Mountain Land Company** for providing us with a drive-thru location for test distribution.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bierschwale  
Executive Director

Kristin Drain  
Finance & Compliance Manager

Jenny Muscat  
Operations Manager

Sara Huger  
Administrative Assistant





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**TED<sup>x</sup>** BigSky

x = independently  
organized TED event



# AWAKENING

View speakers, ticket and livestream details at [TEDxBigSky.com](https://TEDxBigSky.com)



# TEDxBigSky returns in 2021 with the theme of ‘Awakening’

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – TEDx is returning to Big Sky for its fifth year on Jan. 30, 2021, and this year the theme is “Awakening.”

The focus will be on presence or consciousness without thought and will feature stories about people helping each other, businesses changing their focus to help the greater good and perspective shifts in the face of need.

What began in 1984 as a conference to share new ideas concerning technology, entertainment and design has become one of the most renowned speaking series in the world. TED Talks now cover a wide range of topics and occur around the globe in more than 100 different languages.

Past TED speakers include Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Al Gore, Bono, author Elizabeth Gilbert and Sir Richard Branson, among scores of others.

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TED has created a program called TEDx. TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At our TEDxBigSky event, TED Talks video and live speakers will combine to spark deep discussion and connection within the community. TEDxBigSky presenters will have up to 12 minutes to deliver their talk to the audience.

Outlaw Partners brought TEDx to Big Sky for the first time in 2017 with the theme “Big Ideas Under the Big Sky” which featured six speakers.

This year, the 2021 Big Sky Ideas Festival will focus on the Awakening process that the country has gone through in 2020. As the world emerges from the lockdown, there are

many stories of how people changed their lives, businesses pivoted their plans and focus, and incredible examples of humanity and community building.

“Our world has endured extraordinary changes in the past 12 months,” Ennion Williams, VP of Events at Outlaw Partners said. “Emerging from these changes are profound examples of human awakenings to new thoughts, routines and social changes that will shape our world in the future. TEDx Big Sky 2021 will shed light on the awakening moments of our 2021 speakers and give perspective on our new world and how we might navigate it.”

In addition to TEDx, the Ideas Festival will feature four days of events including music and film premieres. For the safety of the community due to COVID-19, a small audience comprised of the families of speakers will be allowed in the Warren Miller Performing Arts theater but otherwise, the event will be entirely virtual.

Nine speakers will be presenting this year:

**Cathy Whitlock**, *Regents Professor in Earth Sciences at Montana State University*  
**David Leuschen**, *Co-Founder and Senior Managing Director of Riverstone Holdings LLC*  
**Josh McCain**, *Founder and President of Big Sky Bravery*  
**Lane Lamoreaux**, *photographer and videographer*  
**Rob Balucas**, *owner of babaLucas Creative*  
**Jim Salestrom**, *singer/songwriter*  
**Max Lowe**, *photographer and director for National Geographic*  
**Blu, mystic**, *medicine woman, musician, artist and storyteller*  
**Louise Johns**, *documentary photographer, National Geographic Explorer, instructor*

For more information on speakers, their topics, and updates, please visit the event website: [tedxbigsky.com](http://tedxbigsky.com)



## Wednesday Jan. 27:

### VIRTUAL PODCAST 4 P.M.

A conversation with Josh McCain and Jeremy Keller, of Big Sky Bravery sponsored by Miller Roodell Architects. Available on Outlaw Partners Facebook page.

### THE ARCTIC CIRCLE TO YELLOWSTONE: A CONVERSATION ON CLIMATE 6 P.M.

A roundtable conversation presented over live stream, with leading conservationists and a showing of Max Lowe’s film “Bare Existence.” The panelists will include Cathy Whitlock, Max Lowe, Twila Moon, and Kristen Gardner and the panel will be moderated by Todd Wilkinson.



## Thursday Jan. 28, 6 p.m.:

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM MY DISABILITY DURING THE COVID WORLD

An open discussion with speakers Lane Lamoreaux, Rob Balacus and Seth Dahl and a showing of a trailer of Seth’s film “Flowing Air.” This event will go in depth with these two speakers on their setbacks as disabled men and how they have dealt with the COVID-19 experience.



## Friday Jan. 29, 5 p.m.:

### FRIDAY AFTERNOON CLUB



FAC will stream live with Jim Salestrom from Acre Kitchen.



## Saturday, Jan. 30, 6 p.m.:

### TEDxBigSky

All nine speakers will present their talks in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. Visit [tedxbigsky.com](http://tedxbigsky.com) to access the live stream of the event.

**TEDx**BigSky  
 x = independently  
 organized TED event



# TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

Nine speakers will speak at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Jan. 30 to articulate the theme of this year's Big Sky Ideas Festival: "Awakening."

This year, the 2021 Big Sky Ideas Festival will focus on the Awakening process that the country has gone through in 2020. As the world emerges

from the lockdown, also emerging are the stories of lives changed, businesses pivoting, and incredible examples of humanity and community building.

EBS spoke with all nine of the speakers who will be presenting at TEDxBigSky 2021, their stories and answers are all featured below.

## LOUISE JOHNS



Louise is a documentary photographer with a master's degree in Environmental Science Journalism from the University of Montana. A National Geographic Explorer, her work examines the relationships between people, places and animals, with a particular focus on rural, agricultural and indigenous communities. Johns began documenting the landscapes and people of the American West in 2010 while working as a horse wrangler in Montana's Centennial Valley.

Her work has appeared in a variety of outlets including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Nature Conservancy, Patagonia, and High Country News. In addition to her photojournalism work, Louise has taught photography courses to underserved youth, worked internationally as a photography instructor for National Geographic Student Expeditions, and taught photojournalism at the University of Montana. She lives in Montana, where she pursues stories that help her better understand the place she calls home.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme "Awakening" mean to you?*

**Louise Johns:** "When I think of awakening, I think of how our hearts are connected and how that can wake us up to the world around us, especially the natural world. Are we seeing the world in a more analytical way or are we feeling our way through the world with our hearts and putting that at the forefront of our relationships with each other, with place, and with the nonhuman world? There is much room for us to awaken to our sense of home: the care and responsibility we have toward the communities we live in and the places we live, including the spaces that include wildness. The times that I've felt the most awakened would be when I've dropped into my heart space and am acting and responding to the world from that place. Awakening could mean creating a different path of communicating and that is cultivated through empathy and compassion. That's the way I try to approach my work as well: with deep respect and empathy for the people, and places that I'm working with on telling a story."

**EBS:** *How did you become a National Geographic Explorer?*

**LJ:** "I grew up in Virginia and my father was a National Geographic photographer for my whole life. He started off in newspapers and then worked for National Geographic, so as long as I've been alive he's worked for Nat Geo. He went over to the editorial side in the early 2000s and he eventually became the editor of the magazine and was editor for about 10 years. My whole childhood I was surrounded by some of the best photographers in the world, so just being part of the National Geographic family was how I grew up. My family also traveled with him quite a bit, mostly in southern Africa. I didn't decide I would become

a photographer until I went to college at the University of Montana ... in 2010 as an undergrad and thought I wanted to do something in journalism. I took some classes in the journalism school my first year and at first didn't take to journalism very well. I quickly decided that reporting was not the job for me. I didn't want to be part of this news cycle

reporting hard news. But before I changed majors, I took a photojournalism class sort of on a whim. ... I found the camera as a way to communicate with the world. That class taught me the nuts and bolts of how to tell a story with a camera and I fell in love with it. That was my sophomore year in college and since then it's been my life's work. I finished undergraduate, and then I worked as an assistant for a few years with a National Geographic photographer named Erika Larsen. I then went back to graduate school in 2018 to pursue my master's degree in Environmental Science Journalism, which I just finished in May 2020."

**EBS:** *What does your photojournalism work mean to you?*

**LJ:** "The issues I'm interested in covering usually have something to do with people's connection and relationship with the land and with the wild and human-animal bonds. That comes from what I've always been drawn to as a person, from my childhood growing up with horses and my journey. We lived in South Africa several times as my dad was working there when I was a child and most of his work revolved around wildlife. I've always had a real affinity for wildlife, animals and big open landscapes. When

I moved to Montana 11 years ago now, and worked on a ranch in the Centennial Valley, I found a palpable sense of home. I also documented my life as I was living there, so the camera has in a way helped me find myself."

**EBS:** *What do you hope attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**LJ:** "I want people to come away with an understanding of different approaches to storytelling and how much stories can affect people's lives. I mean that for both the people I photograph and for the people who see my stories, and not just my stories but good stories in general. Photographs are a very powerful medium of communication—a universal language—they transcend words and the spoken language. No matter where one comes from, a photograph has the potential to move someone emotionally. We have a responsibility as photojournalists and photographers to really honor the power of it and honor the people and places we are telling stories about. Through this deep honor and respect, I hope to contribute to bettering our society in some way through my work."





# TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

## BLU



Blu is a devotee of life beyond the veil—a mystic, medicine woman, musician, artist and storyteller. Her curiosity of maximizing the human potential has taken her deep into the studies of The Gene Keys—a technology which has supported her to activate dormant parts of her own DNA while guiding others into their own genetic blueprint. She has been endorsed by Richard Rudd, the Founder of the Gene Keys in her teachings of this profound lineage.

Blu has also spent the past seven years as a student in the shamanic world—studying the Shipibo lineage in the Amazon jungle as well as being a devoted student and facilitator of The Earth Temple— at the Center of Prayer and School of Shamanic Arts. She is committed to

learning the ways of the plant teachers and understanding how we can work together to heal some of our deepest wounds.

Blu is also the host of the Dejá Blu podcast, which has over 120,000 unique downloads worldwide, where she interviews some of the most brilliant minds on the planet today. Blu utilizes the art of storytelling to take people on a journey into their own consciousness and to activate media as medicine.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**Blu:** “I have geared my whole life around being awakened. Awakening means to me a shedding of any identity or story that is somebody else’s, whether it’s society, or a person that has projected onto me to be the way that I live my life. Awakening is an opportunity for me to learn to actually trust my own intuition my own instincts and my own truth above the status quo of what society expects. Awakening means to me, a deeper listening to our Earth, the people on the Earth, and what is truly needed for us to actually thrive as a collective.”

**EBS:** *How did you become interested in the shamanic world and the Gene Keys?*

**Blu:** “About four-and-a-half years ago, I was diagnosed with a hereditary hearing disorder, which I was shared, was progressive, hereditary and incurable meaning that essentially I’m going deaf. That took me into wanting to understand my own engineering of why this is even happening in the first place and what is it here to teach

me. It took me on a journey of realizing that the way that we communicate is not necessarily through words, but there is a 70 percent mass below the surface of the water of the iceberg of nonverbal communication that most of us are not tapping into because we are distracted by our five senses. It’s in that feeling, where actually truth is born ... It guided me in a place where I realized that my superpower is to feel what most people are not speaking into and being able to support others to transmute trauma, when they don’t even realize they’re in it. The shamanic realm put the right frame around what actually was my superpower.”

**EBS:** *Tell me about your work with the Gene Keys and how that has helped you to unlock your potential?*

**Blu:** “I just so happened to have in my Gene Keys information—I had a deafness genetic. I actually looked deep into the deafness, which was essentially the shadow side of the genetic, and according to the Gene Keys, every shadow has a gift. By looking at the shadow and understanding it, what I learned from the Gene Keys was as a byproduct of me not actually listening to myself, not listening to my own needs constantly listening to other people, beyond actually what my own truth was, and I created a deafness were I actually physically faded out the sound of other people’s truths over my own ... The Gene Keys helped me shift my narrative from it being a curse to it being a superpower.”

**EBS:** *What have you learned from unlocking your potential?*

**Blu:** “I’ve realized that once I’m truly acting from a place of alignment with the reason why I feel like I came to this earth in the first place, then I can truly be of service from that place. What I’ve learned from putting the right frame around what was, I’ve now actually been able to be of service to support other people to put the right frame around their superpower that was once seen as a great challenge. My service has been unlocked, my ability to support and empower other individuals where they do not see potential, and to allow them to rewrite the narrative that this is happening for them, as opposed to happening to them.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**Blu:** “A shifted perspective of how our challenges in life hold within it the seed of a great promise and a great potential. It’s up to us to be curious enough to look within to find the secrets and the goal that has always been within us. It’s within every single person.”



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# TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

## LANE LAMOREAUX



Lane Lamoreaux is a venturesome, camera carrying wanderer of the West. Finding a sense of reverence in its vast and stunning scenery and a yearning to share breathtaking scenes, a camera naturally became a close companion. His photographs and films have become his way of expressing love and gratitude for our vast public lands—especially our rugged wilderness areas.

Lamoreaux kept a camera close throughout his service in the U.S. Marine Corps and his nine years as a wildland firefighter as a Hotshot and a Smokejumper. Off-the-job injuries in 2013 led him to change careers and create a new livelihood with a camera. He's carved out a niche for his work by creating training films for the National Fire Center, allowing him to also remain a part of the fire community. Lamoreaux loves moving messages and telling stories via the creative discretion inherent behind a camera lens and as a video editor.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**Lane Lamoreaux:** "To me, it means optimizing, it means realizing all of our resources. Awakening needs to also make realizations, which implies learning; you gain insights, you realize things that you wouldn't have otherwise known. 2020 has been an awesome example of abundant opportunities for just that, because so many of us have had our hands forced down a different pathway that we wouldn't have otherwise chosen. We had the opportunity to see scenery that's not on our daily commute, that's enabled, just awesome opportunities that wouldn't exist otherwise and I've certainly had my share as a videographer.... I've been making training videos for this nonprofit organization training people how to operate drones in reconnaissance and disaster humanitarian assessment. Awesome, man. That probably that opportunity wouldn't have presented itself had this year not been so crazy."

**EBS:** *What was it like to transition from the Marines and firefighting to focusing on photo and video?*

**LL:** "It's been fairly evenly split. I am a paragliding instructor and with COVID, there's just so many people that want to learn to fly. It's a form of escape. I've been super busy, and I trained 27 students so far this year. ... The transition with me being fired, it was tough, but it was so awesome. I had such incredible support. After my most debilitating injuries, my supervisor let me stay on light duty for over a year. Over the course of that year, I was connected with the National Fire Center, specifically their media department. I started making training videos and they liked it and I kept making them while I was

a Forest Service employee. Then, in 2015, I took my arduous duty pack test to get red colored again and I missed the time, by less than a minute, but nonetheless, I missed the cut-off so I had to resign, and that was kind of sad, but I was also excited, because now I'm going to take my relationships and what I've been doing, producing videos, and now, do it as a private contractor. So, it's just been awesome that my exit to my fire career has given me the opportunity to still keep one foot in the fire world, and still connect with my friends because they're required to watch my training videos or fire refresher every spring. I always insert little subtle things that only my friends would get. I smuggle clips in my videos, kind of like mini formal shoutouts to the people I used to work with."

**EBS:** *How did your relationship with photo and video change after your injuries?*

**LL:** "It became much more professional. I took my savings, I just invested. I went all in on photography and I was determined that that would become my livelihood. It just works really well with the new body that I had, because it has totally different strengths and weaknesses and in the fact that I can operate a camera just like I could years before, and it's just opened up a lot of doors."

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**LL:** "I want people to reframe their understanding of their resilience. I want people to take away this idea that you can cultivate, you can build resilience, before you need it. This is something you can proactively do, and it only enhances the quality of your life. By doing so, the inevitable setbacks and trauma and hardship that we'll all encounter, you'll be so much better off."

**EBS:** *Is there anything else you want to share with our readers?*

**LL:** "We have this saying in fire, when things are really kind of terrible, you're on a super steep fire or you have a seven-mile pack-off with 150 pounds, it means you're just in an awful situation. We have this slogan that we use, that I transferred over to my new life, especially in 2020, that is, 'embrace the suck.' I just love that it's so simple, and it may seem a little harsh, but what I love about it is it's so honest and in unfortunate situations, just admitting that they're not pleasant and in being honest with yourself, despite the pressure of positivity. I think having a constructive attitude is what I focus on, because, to me, a positive attitude is just too much of a binary. It's black and white you're positive or negative, whereas constructive is much more open ended when it comes to embracing the suck. When you're dealing with rough situations, it just encourages a mindset of resourcefulness. You never get tested if you're never challenged, and this was certainly a year that's challenged all of us in some form."

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# TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

## DR. CATHY WHITLOCK



Dr. Cathy Whitlock is a Regents Professor in Earth Sciences at Montana State University and a Fellow of the Montana Institute on Ecosystems. She fell in love with Yellowstone in the 1980s and, since then, has been doing research there as well as seeking comparisons in other parts of the world.

Whitlock is nationally and internationally recognized for her research and leadership activities in the field of climate and environmental change. She served as lead author of the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, which has inspired climate-change

discussions across the state. In 2018, Whitlock became the first person ever from a Montana university to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

**Explore Big Sky:** *Tell me about your research?*

**Cathy Whitlock:** “Well, I’ve had a love affair with Yellowstone since I was a small child. My family used to travel from upstate New York, to the west coast to see relatives and we’d always go through Yellowstone so that got my interest in the park and then as I went to college, I realized that you could actually do research in Yellowstone. Now that I’m at Montana State University, it is a place where I can inspire students and help students do their own research in the park.”

**EBS:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**CW:** “The planet is experiencing a lot of change that’s moving us into places we haven’t been before, unprecedented areas. I think we’re awakening to what that actually means for us as global citizens but also as people who live in this extraordinary ecosystem.”

**EBS:** *As a leader in the field of climate and environmental change, what goals are you working towards?*

**CW:** “Well, the big thing we’re working through now is we’re actually finishing an assessment of what climate change means for Greater Yellowstone. This is really exciting because it’s a partnership of people from three states, and also from federal agencies, and we’re really looking at what it means for the different parts of the ecosystem in terms of how they will be affected directly by climate change and what it means for their water resources. I’m super excited about that it’s going to be released May 2021, we’ve been working on it for a couple years now. ... I’ve been doing a couple of things. One of them is I’ve been looking at the ecological impacts of hydrothermal activity in Yellowstone, and other parts of the West. So that’s a matter of looking at the impact of hydrothermal explosions, big geyser events, and that kind of thing, how does it affect the ecosystem. The other project I’ve been working on is in Argentina, which is looking into the history of the lower forests the dry forest and how that’s changed through time.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**CW:** “Yellowstone is an extraordinary ecosystem that is of global importance. It’s the last intact pristine ecosystem in the middle latitudes of the world. We have a responsibility to understand it but also to protect it.”

## ROB BALUCAS



Rob Balucas is an ‘every-man joe’ who was thrust into extraordinary circumstances in 2015 when a cycling accident rendered him paraplegic. At the time he was training for his first half IRONMAN triathlon, which was supposed to take place the very next weekend. He vowed to return to triathlon within a year and raced in three sprint-distance triathlons the next year following his injury.

Since then, he’s competed in five half IRONMANs, including the 2019 half IRONMAN World Championships in Nice, France. His next goal is to

qualify again for the Kona (full) IRONMAN World Championship and race in triathlon’s biggest stage as a paratriathlete.

Outside of paratriathlon, Balucas resides in Southern California with his partner, Erika, and their dog Chloe. He is a small business owner at babaLucas Creative,

serving the branding, marketing, and website needs of small businesses and non-profits.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**Rob Balucas:** “There’s a parallel for me that a lot of people are awakening to the idea that our freedom and liberty are so inalienable and it’s kind of like what people in my situation go through all the time, you learn really quick it’s not guaranteed. There’s nothing you can do, and you have to figure out how to accept your circumstances and live a particular way that is confined from what you thought it should be.”

**EBS:** *How have the challenges you have overcome as a paratriathlete changed you?*

**RB:** “For me it was a big switch because I lived until like 38. I pretty much, you know, lived life for arguably half my life and then all of a sudden it changed completely. ... It’s a new perspective, literally, because I’m standing up at five foot eight but I’m now four foot. So, it’s literally a different perspective. I think there’s a lot of things it confirms for me, like, the importance of people and relationships in my life. I always invested a lot of time building strong connections and bonds with people in my life and it paid in spades, if you will, when I got injured because there were a bunch of people who came to my side and helped me when I needed it.”

**EBS:** *What does the goal of qualifying again for the Kona (full) IRONMAN World Championship mean to you?*

**RB:** “It was just kind of like the Super Bowl of triathlon and it was just some nebulous thing out there that I never really had an ambition for because quite frankly, I’m really average as a triathlete. ... I have always liked to challenge myself and not just settle for where I’m at. There’s not a lot of paratriathletes trying to go to Kona relative to the able-bodied people. ... A big part of it was when I got the chair, it’s kind of like the gloves came off in terms of what’s important in life.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**RB:** “The big thing is, we’re far more capable than we generally think we are. I hear people tell me that they could never do a triathlon able-bodied or not, and I know they’re wrong because I’ve seen everything cross the finish line. I’ve seen overweight, I’ve seen thin, I’ve seen old, I’ve seen young, I’ve seen people with severe disabilities being tethered or carried by their parents. ... I’ve seen everything cross the finish line of a triathlon and it just goes to show that we’re far more capable if we just hunker down and went and did it went after it, and worked for it. We can have it. We can weather bigger storms than we think we can.”

## DAVID LEUSCHEN



David Leuschen is the Co-Founder and Senior Managing Director of Riverstone Holdings, LLC, one of the world’s largest energy investment firms, as well as the largest independent investor in renewable energy. He sits on the Investment Committees of all the various Riverstone investment vehicles, and on a number of boards of directors of Riverstone portfolio companies.

Prior to founding Riverstone, Leuschen was a Partner at Goldman Sachs and founder and head of the Goldman Sachs Global Energy and Power

Group. He is also president and sole owner of Switchback Ranch LLC and on the Advisory Board of Big Sky Investment Holdings LLC.

Leuschen serves on a number of nonprofit boards of directors, including: as a Trustee of United States Olympic Committee Foundation, a Director of Conservation International, a Director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Founding Member of the Peterson Institute’s Economic Leadership Council, a Director of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, and a Director of the Montana Land Reliance.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**David Leuschen:** “Doing things in a new way – especially as it applies to the disruptive technologies that will cure climate change.”

**EBS:** *What inspired you to build a career in renewable energy?*

**DL:** “Part necessity, part dedication to doing the right thing.

- 1) Necessity – capital is no longer available to fund fossil fuel investments.
- 2) Doing the right thing – we are perfectly positioned to move the needle on climate change.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**DL:** “An understanding of what the decarbonization future looks like.”



# TEDxBigSky 2021 Speaker Lineup

## MAX LOWE



Max Lowe has crafted his skill as a director and photographer in his search for adventure and unheard narratives. In some of the most remote corners of the world, Lowe has been witness to stories spanning the gap of human experience.

His career began in 2012 with National Geographic with a Young Explorers Grant. He went on to work with National Geographic Magazine as well as NG Adventure and Travel, where he forged a career for himself traversing the globe, telling both his own stories as well as those of the people he encountered along the way.

In recent years, Lowe has directed, shot and produced numerous short documentaries and branded films including the award-winning “Adventure Not War” and “Bare Existence.” In the spring of 2020, in partnership with National Geographic Channel, he completed his first feature documentary project, “Torn,” an exploration of his family’s trauma after the death of his father.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**Max Lowe:** “It kind of plays into what my last year has looked like, which has been focused on working on my first feature doc project, which also happened to be about my family and my own experience with one of the most impactful and traumatic events of my life, which was the death of my father in 1999 and the subsequent discovery of his body in 2016 ... When I thought about what awakening meant to me, it was kind of that you can use storytelling to see yourself as a character in your own story—whether or not you’re actually making a film about yourself—and by that, kind of separate yourself from that sense of self that insulates you from sometimes seeing the things that you need to see that are sometimes closest to you.”

**EBS:** *What inspired you to travel the globe and seek out stories?*

**ML:** “It was probably growing up with parents who instilled that as part of our lives. I traveled internationally for the first time when I was two years old to go meet my dad after he had summited Everest with my mom in Thailand. I think that the fear of the unknown is something that paralyzes some people into not going off and traveling, so being inspired to do that by my parents really brought about this hunger to do it more in my later life, and then weave that into my career as a filmmaker and photographer.”

**EBS:** *What is your favorite subject to shoot?*

**ML:** “People just in general, I mean, I’ve shot stories across the gambit largely in the outdoor and adventure space just because that’s kind of where I grew up as a person and in my career. I think that engaging with interesting characters and putting those characters in a situation or a scene, or a landscape, or an interaction with wildlife, whatever it might be. I think that stories with people in them are the most interesting ones to other people because that’s how we relate to the world.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**ML:** “I hope that they are inspired to maybe try and observe themselves as characters in their own lives. I think it has the power to—if you are willing to let yourself go there—really dissolve your ego and sense of self and allow you to see things in yourself that you might not otherwise. Vulnerability is honestly one of the most powerful things that you can share with other people.”

## JOSH MCCAIN



Josh McCain is the Founder and President of a Bozeman-based nonprofit, Big Sky Bravery. Their mission is to reconnect active-duty Special Operations members with themselves and civilians, an unmet need McCain observed through his brother-in-law after he returned from his 14th deployment. After quitting a promising career in New York and moving to Bozeman to dedicate his time to the topic, McCain found a gap in nonprofit assistance for the active-duty community—especially in the SOF community. To this date, over 200 men

and women of the Special Operations community have gone through Big Sky Bravery’s weeklong programs.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**Josh McCain:** “My brother-in-law was returned from his 14th deployment at the time in Special Operations, and that’s awakening to me. Every time he would come back home from deployment you could see a small part of him was left over there.

I had this epiphany, this awakening, right, to do something for guys that are still serving, especially ones that are at the tip of the spear and Special Operations.”

**EBS:** *How does Big Sky Bravery support the SOF community?*

**JM:** “The foundation of our program is based on three major principles. Number one is the value of extremely high risk, and high adrenaline based recreational activities. These guys when they’re overseas are doing, you know, the most fast-paced, demanding, and horrific missions that our country has. When they get back home, the majority of them wind down with alcohol and, you know, other unhealthy things. We wanted to get them an environment where they had to do the exact same thing which is execute. The second is their value of self-worth. Which is, you know, when they get established in these units it would be very difficult to not have that consume your life and that be your identity, it’s like an NBA or an NFL player. I’ve seen Special Operations make up their entire identity and we want them to focus outside of that you know, what did life look like before the military, what does it look like after the military, what excites you in your personal life what makes you come alive. The third—which is to me is probably the most important—is bonding the trust between civilians and members of the most elite Special Operations clients that our nation has. They didn’t have any meaningful relationships with civilians, and it scared the hell out of them when they were getting out because the only thing, they were used to is their teammates and all of a sudden, this entire world is thrown at you, and you don’t have these connections and you don’t have that brotherhood or that sense of camaraderie, outside of your team that you’re going to lose.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**JM:** “One thing that we’ve kind of come to peace with is finding what it is inside of all of us that makes us come alive and makes us a better person ... It starts within, if you can find something that you truly believe in and that really just makes your heart and soul come alive, there’s a lot of good difference or a huge difference in good change that you can make in the world. And that’s what I hope to gain out of my speeches people just want to take that leap forward to find something that is currently missing in their life.”

## JIM SALESTROM



Jim Salestrom is a storyteller, Emmy Award Winning songwriter and lead singer in CBS EPIC country rock band “Timberline.” Jim was friends with John Denver and is featured on Denver’s “Different Directions” album. He has also been a member of Dolly Parton’s band since 1979.

Salestrom has performed for four U.S. Presidents at the White House, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the U.S. Supreme Court four times. This will be his first TED Talk.

**Explore Big Sky:** *What does the theme of awakening mean to you?*

**Jim Salestrom:** “... My theme and my talk are about people who have inspired me, and they include President Jerry Ford. I got to play for him a number of times, and he’s an amazing guy, and he hand-writes thank you notes to everyone you know, he was really old school, and he was amazing. I’m going to sing a few songs and tell a few stories. I’m going to try to keep it at 12 minutes, and I’m really looking forward to it.”

**EBS:** *What inspired you to become a musician?*

**JS:** “Well, I went to a preschool in Omaha for kids that had, you know, that had an interest in music. My folks had been taking us to the symphony and they’d been taking us to church every Sunday and they sang in the church choirs, and they always had music on in the home. I remember seeing Elvis Presley on The Ed Sullivan Show when I was, I must have been like four or five, and then I remember the Beatles and I just for some reason I always knew that that’s what I wanted to be I wanted to be a musician.”

**EBS:** *How has your successful musical career changed you?*

**JS:** “Well, I’ve been really fortunate to try to be grounded and to stay grounded. I’ve seen what celebrity, and fame and money and power can do to certain people and a lot of people don’t know how to handle it. There’s no school for becoming a celebrity. And I’m really grateful, in a lot of ways, that I never really became a celebrity. I feel very, very blessed and very lucky, and I’ve, you know, hopefully not changed too much I’ve been pretty happy through all of it and I’m really happy that I get to do the TED Talk.”

**EBS:** *What do you hope that attendees of TEDxBigSky will take away from your talk?*

**JS:** “I hope that they’ll have an understanding that, you know, a person like me could make a living, a comfortable living, as a musician, and that these people have been inspirational to me they’ve given me the courage to do what I do and they’ve taught me some valuable lessons. I’m hoping that people will take away the idea that there are people in their lives that have inspired them, and there’s also people in their lives that they’re inspiring right now. I hope that that’s the case with me. I know it’s the case with just about everyone in the audience.”



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