

ExploreTM

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Big Sky

April 9 - 22, 2021
Volume 12 // Issue #8

**Surveillance testing
wraps up**

*FOBSE honors LPHS
class of 2021*

**On the Ballot: Transportation
District Expansion**

***A guide to Earth Day in
Gallatin Valley***

**Big Sky Virtual Kitchen
launches new Wine Series**



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ON THE COVER:

Mountain goats are a common sight at Big Sky Resort. Here, a billy looks on from its Lone Mountain perch as skier Andrew Belli enjoys a spring run down the ridge. PHOTO BY PATRICK CONROY

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Surveillance testing wraps up

After 18 weeks and 53,046 cumulative tests, the COVID-19 surveillance testing program in Big Sky is coming to an end. The program played a large part in helping the Big Sky community adapt to the ever-changing pandemic throughout the winter and return Ophir School and Lone Peak High School to 100 percent in-person learning.

10

FOBSE honors LPHS class of 2021

The Friends of Big Sky Education Community scholarship program awarded over \$70,000 in scholarships to 22 Lone Peak High School seniors. The scholarship, in its seventh year, will go to support students as they head off to pursue their post-grad endeavors.

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On the Ballot: Transportation District Expansion

Currently, the boundaries of the Big Sky Transportation District do not match those of the Big Sky Resort Area District, a complicating discrepancy. This May, a limited pool of Big Sky voters will be able to weigh in on proposed changes to the current Transportation District boundaries.

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A guide to Earth Day in Gallatin Valley

After being cancelled in 2020 due to concerns over COVID-19, the Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival returns this year along with many great events throughout the month of April. The festival this year will take place outside of the Bozeman Public Library and it will feature food, live music, exhibitors and more.

40

Big Sky Virtual Kitchen launches new Wine Series

Richard Sandza of the Big Sky Community Organization is partnering with Andrew Robin and the Hungry Moose Market & Deli's wine expert, Ben Mackall to launch a monthly virtual class. Each session will feature a recipe and wine pairing recommendation providing a fun way to gather with friends, cook, learn, and most importantly, eat good food and drink good wine.



Opening Shot

The snow is melting, the daylight is longer, and the time has come for some of our favorite summer outdoor activities. This past weekend, the trails at Copper City made for some great mountain biking. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

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25 TOWN CENTER AVENUE | 145 TOWN CENTER AVENUE | 66 MOUNTAIN LOOP ROAD | 181 CLUBHOUSE FORK



Earth Day started in 1970 as an international celebration to show support for environmental protection. What was one new thing you changed or did this year/recently to celebrate the Earth and protect the environment?



Zane Patton

Big Sky, MT

“This past year, I realized that living so close to work I didn’t need my car for my daily commute. I now have been biking to work each day, helping reduce my carbon footprint. I also make an effort to use washable and reusable masks rather than the disposable ones.”

Irish Freeman

Bozeman, MT

“One thing I did to protect the environment this year is make sure my cigarette butts don’t end up in our waterways and disposing of them properly. I also have been working on not using single-use plastics to help the animals and our environment.”

Katherine Berceau and Adon Ash

Big Sky, MT

“Each spring we have a tradition of walking around town and picking up trash. I know this area is really populated by tourism which is great, but a lot of times that leads to a lot more people who litter here.”

Felicia Van Orkum

Salt Lake City, Utah

“I’m probably going to go get some gloves and pick up trash. On Earth Day we might not use plastic like we usually do. And use compost and recycle them.”

OP-ED:

Big Sky Resort’s pass options for 2021-22 season

Dear skiers and riders,

Spring is here and the skiing has been fantastic. We’re confident that we’ll finish out the season as planned on April 18. We couldn’t have done it without our incredible team members, guests, and the entire Big Sky community working together to make it a success. We have a busy offseason ahead of us, with Swift Current 6 construction resuming on April 19, and complete renovations of the Huntley Lodge and Summit Hotel already underway.

With this season nearly in the rearview mirror, we’re already looking ahead to the next by debuting our 2021-2022 season pass lineup, launching today, April 6, and offering the lowest prices on all pass options through April 30.

This season taught us a lot. Through several operational adaptations, our goal has always been to deliver guests the most exceptional on-mountain experience possible. We hope to continue that effort by making a significant shift to our pass lineup and lift ticket model to maximize our guest’s ability to ski and ride the high-alpine terrain off Lone Peak and minimize wait times at the Tram.

For the 21/22 season, lift access products including lift tickets, Ikon and Mountain Collective passes, and select Big Sky Resort season passes will no longer have Tram access included as part of their base product. Tram access will now be offered as a day-of purchase at the Tram, or through a season-long Tram Access Packs that will offer guests a limited number of days to be used any day of the season.

For those who are committed to the high-alpine experience on Lone Peak, the Gold Pass remains the best option with unlimited, season-long access, including unlimited Tram access, with additional benefits offered from last season. With this new approach, Gold Passes will have limited availability so we encourage guests to secure their purchase while supplies last.

The Double Black Pass will also offer full-season ski access with 10 Tram days. We also added additional passholder benefits included with your purchase.

Ultimately, this quality versus quantity approach is a major shift in how we sell and manage access to our Tram. Our goal is to improve the guest experience and get the Tram line back to 30 minutes on average consistently. This requires strategic changes to make this a reality. The Lone Peak experience is like no other in North America, and we want to ensure a quality experience for all guests.

While our complete pass lineup is now available for purchase at the lowest guaranteed prices, the new Tram Add-On products will be available for purchase later this summer, alongside daily lift tickets.

I know there will be many questions about the Tram Pack add-on—and while we are still working to organize all the intricacies of this paradigm shift—please reference bigskyresort.com/tram-access-faq to review our season pass lineup and learn more about the details we have to share at this time.

The Big Sky mountain experience continues to evolve, and our commitment to keeping it unique and special stays true. Our 2025 Vision articulates the plan to build a best-in-class infrastructure to complement what is already the best ski terrain in North America.

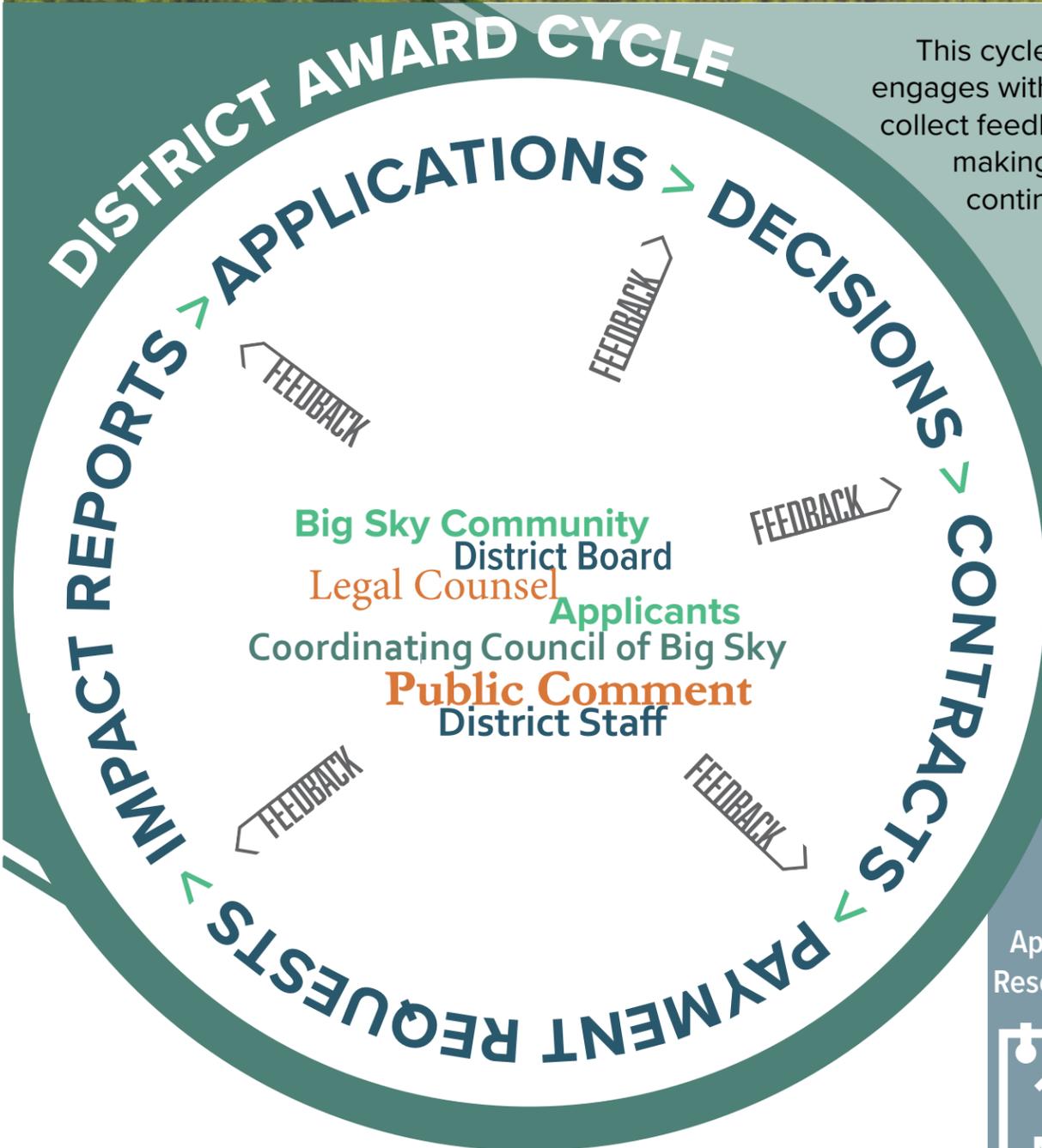
We wish you a great summer ahead and hope to see you on the mountain next season.

— Troy Nedved
General Manager, Big Sky Resort



BETTER TOGETHER

A biweekly District bulletin



This cycle illustrates how the District engages with the Big Sky community to collect feedback and support decision-making with Resort Tax funds. We continue to refine the process to provide clear and concise direction to applicants and develop a methodology that supports the Board in making strategic decisions.

Did you know...
The District recently introduced an objective scoring system for FY22 requests.

District Events

FY22 Funding Application Deadline
ResortTax.org/funding **15 APRIL**

12 MAY Board Meeting* @ 9:00 am

Memorial Day Office Closed **31 MAY**

7 JUNE Application Review Meeting #1* @ 5:30 pm

Application Review Meeting #2* @ 5:30 pm **10 JUNE**

*All meetings are open to the public and held via Zoom. Public comments are welcome and highly encouraged. Visit ResortTax.org for more info.

Spring is in the air and FY22 Resort Tax applications went live on March 1st. As snowpack melts and flowers blossom, we also begin to see the growing impact of last year's funded projects. We invite you to participate in this year's process by reviewing applications and sharing public comment. The District's locally elected Board of 5 Directors use your feedback to help guide them in making strategic community investments.

Building on the District's strategic pillar of "Engaging the Community", we have embodied the spirit of "double loop learning" through multiple opportunities for feedback outlined in the District Award Cycle. We live in the era of social media and technology. While it might seem logical to vocalize your opinion through social channels — it misses the mark to truly voice your opinion. We have made it easier than ever to make your voice heard.

Share public comment by emailing Info@ResortTax.org or by attending District meetings via Zoom.

Administered by the Big Sky Resort Area District, Resort Tax is a 4% tax on luxury goods & services.
OUR VISION: "Big Sky is BETTER TOGETHER as a result of wise investments, an engaged community, and the pursuit of excellence."



Montana's Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices internationally recognized

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Montana Properties has been recognized with the Berkshire Elite Circle Award as one of the Top 50 companies in the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network in 2020. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices is one of the world's fastest-growing residential real estate brokerage franchise networks, with more than 50,000 real estate professionals, nearly 1,500 offices throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Europe and the Middle East.

The company, which ranked No. 24, was recognized virtually during special awards ceremonies at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices' annual Sales Convention in March 2021. Real estate professionals from across the globe attended the annual business and educational event.

"We are thrilled to be recognized among the best companies of the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices' network," said Mike Basile, Broker/Owner of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Montana Properties. "This prestigious award is a testament to our excellent service and outstanding client satisfaction."

On March 30, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Montana Properties was also recognized as the number one company in Montana by Real Trends in their 2020 report.

"We couldn't have accomplished this without the trust our clients put in us every day and the dedication of our agents and staff that provide our clients with the best real estate service," said Craig Danenhauer, President of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Montana Properties.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Montana Properties became a member of the network in 2015 and has been in business for over 63 years.

Gallatin County Health Officer to depart

GALLATIN MEDIA CENTER

BOZEMAN – Matt Kelley, Health Officer at Gallatin City-County Health Department, announced on Wednesday that he has accepted a new position as the first chief executive officer of the Montana Public Health Institute. Kelley will step down as Health Officer, but plans to continue working full-time in his current position until sometime in June in order to lead the department in its pandemic response and to assist in a search for the county's next health officer.

"As challenging and trying as the pandemic has been, I love being health officer in Gallatin County and leaving will be very difficult," Kelley said. "This new role allows me to continue working throughout Montana to improve the health and quality of life for all Montanans. It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to build a new organization to serve the state that I love."

Kelley became health officer in Gallatin County 11 years ago and has helped guide GCCHD to assemble and grow a highly qualified staff, develop financial resources and community partnerships necessary to serve a rapidly growing county, and address major public health challenges, such as COVID-19.

Becky Franks, chair of Gallatin City-County Board of Health, said the Board would commence with a search for Kelley's successor immediately. She said the Board will be looking for someone to carry on the work pursued by Kelley and the health department staff over the past 11 years.

County extends mask mandate, loosens business capacity restrictions

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – "We're not quite there yet," said Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley at a special April 5 Board of Health meeting at which the board voted to extend two, and rescind two, local health rules related to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Although vaccines are getting into arms at a steady pace, the county is still a concerning hotspot for the virus as the weather warms and tourism season reignites for the summer.

The two extended rules, which will be revisited at a meeting in early May, are the local mask mandate, and the Phase 2 of reopening related to business capacity restrictions. Starting today, April 5, restaurants and bars can increase their table capacity from six to eight, and reduced the distance between bar seating from 6 feet to 3 feet.

Kelley cited the current vaccination rate—which sits at around 28 percent—as well as the rising COVID-19 case numbers—the seven-day rolling average is currently 35.2 per 100,000 residents—as concerning data points to keep health rules in place and ensure the safety of the more vulnerable in our community.

"It's everybody's right to be healthy and to feel safe," said board member Seth Walk. "And just because you might not get a severe disease doesn't necessarily mean our job is over. And our job is to keep folks safe. Nobody deserves to get sick."

The board also voted to rescind two existing COVID-19 health rules: one that enforced a quarantine and isolation requirement, and another that limited visitation at local nursing homes and assisted living facilities. According to Kelley, the county has "almost never used" the quarantine and isolation rule and rescinding these will change very little. Kelley asserted that while these rules are no longer in effect, that contact tracers will continue to ask those who are COVID-19 positive or in close contact with a case, to quarantine for 10 days.

School Board Plans Ahead

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – With the 2020/21 school year drawing to a close, the Big Sky School District #72 School Board is moving forward on construction projects and aims to be proactive with school COVID-19 protocols.

Bids for construction of the new track and field were opened today and Cristie Tate, owner of Tate Management, reported to the board that the bid came in on budget at about \$2.65 million. On April 6, the board approved a pre-construction contract with Jackson Contractor Group Inc. and will not award Phase 1 bids until the entire scope of the project is known.

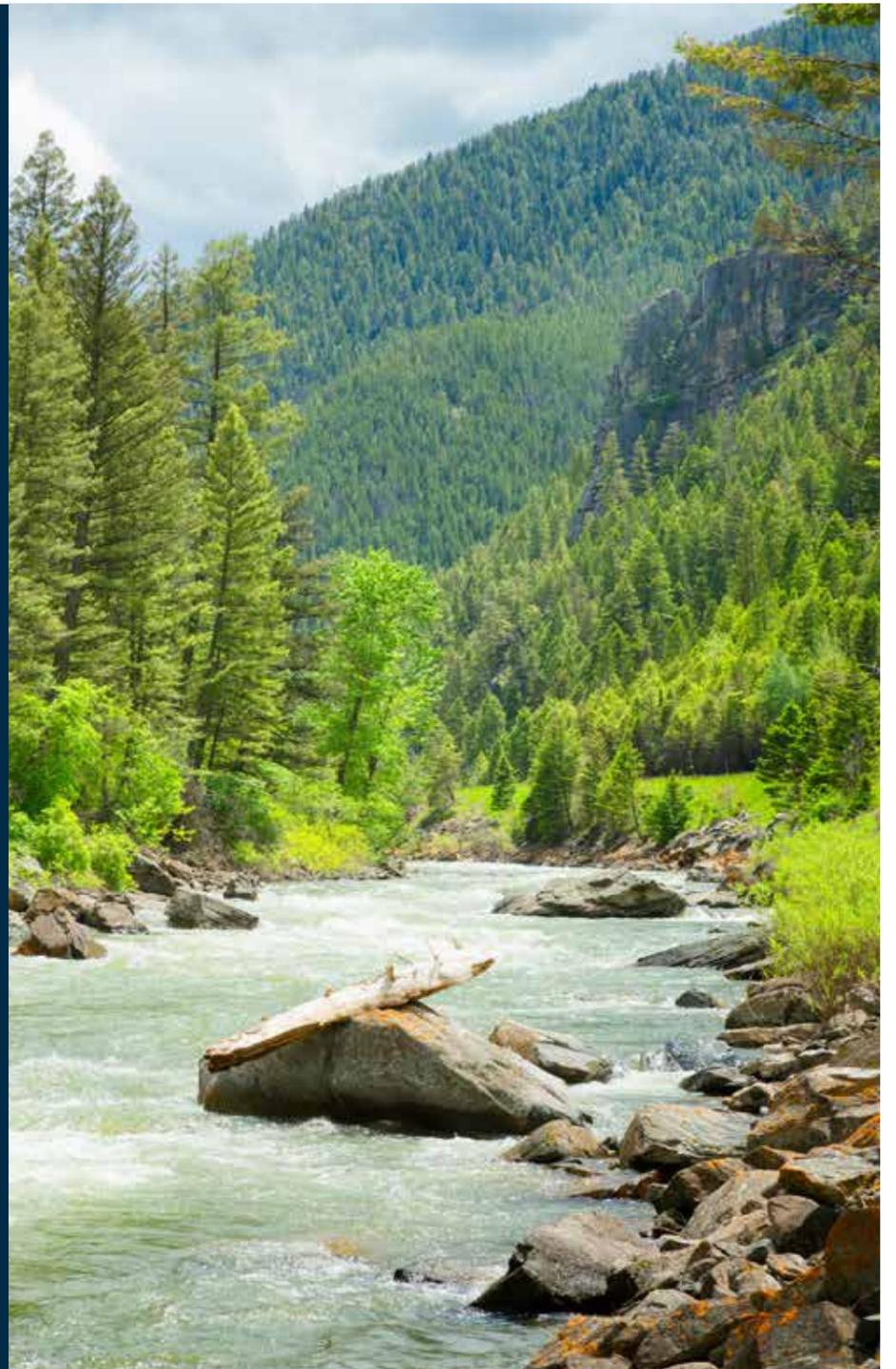
In another unanimous vote, the board extended the school mask mandate and COVID-19 protocols until the next board meeting on May 5. This move allows the board to be flexible and adjust health measures as needed in concert with current Gallatin City-County Health Department guidelines.

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Vote to expand transportation district could create continuity, ease

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – On May 4, a select pool of voters in Big Sky will elect to either expand the current Big Sky Transportation District boundary to be congruent with the Big Sky Resort Area District boundary or leave it as is.

The district boundary frames a portion of Montana Highway 64, or Lone Mountain Road, from the road’s junction with U.S. Highway 191 up to Big Sky Resort as well as the stretch of U.S. 191 from the Big Horn Center south to the Corral. While most of Town Center is encompassed, pieces to the south are not.

Established in 1991, the Big Sky Transportation District is one of seven districts in the Big Sky area and is charged with providing transportation services to the otherwise unincorporated, dual-county community. The district has a board of three county-commission appointed members and two staff members.

David Kack, the district’s coordinator, pointed to a number of reasons to expand the boundary.

One, he said, is to better reflect the geographical scope of the services the district actually provides. The district services, including the Skyline Bus, vanpooling and some by-demand transportation in the shoulder seasons, extend well beyond the current boundary. Bus routes exist to and from Bozeman, up the mountain to Moonlight Basin and vanpooling to the Yellowstone Club.

“We are providing service to places like Moonlight Basin and parts of the Town Center that aren’t in the current transportation district so it makes sense to be as broad as we can,” said Kack, adding that the district has also

made it a point to match services to needs, and in a growing community the needs are likely to expand.

“Certainly, in the summer there’s desire to get service to some of the trailheads again,” Kack said. “Some of those are a little farther than the places we’re going right now so sometimes you can’t stretch a route far enough and you just have to create some new service.” In addition, he said there’s been discussion about adding more buses and employees, an airport service, vanpools with other large employers like Big Sky Resort, among other expansions.

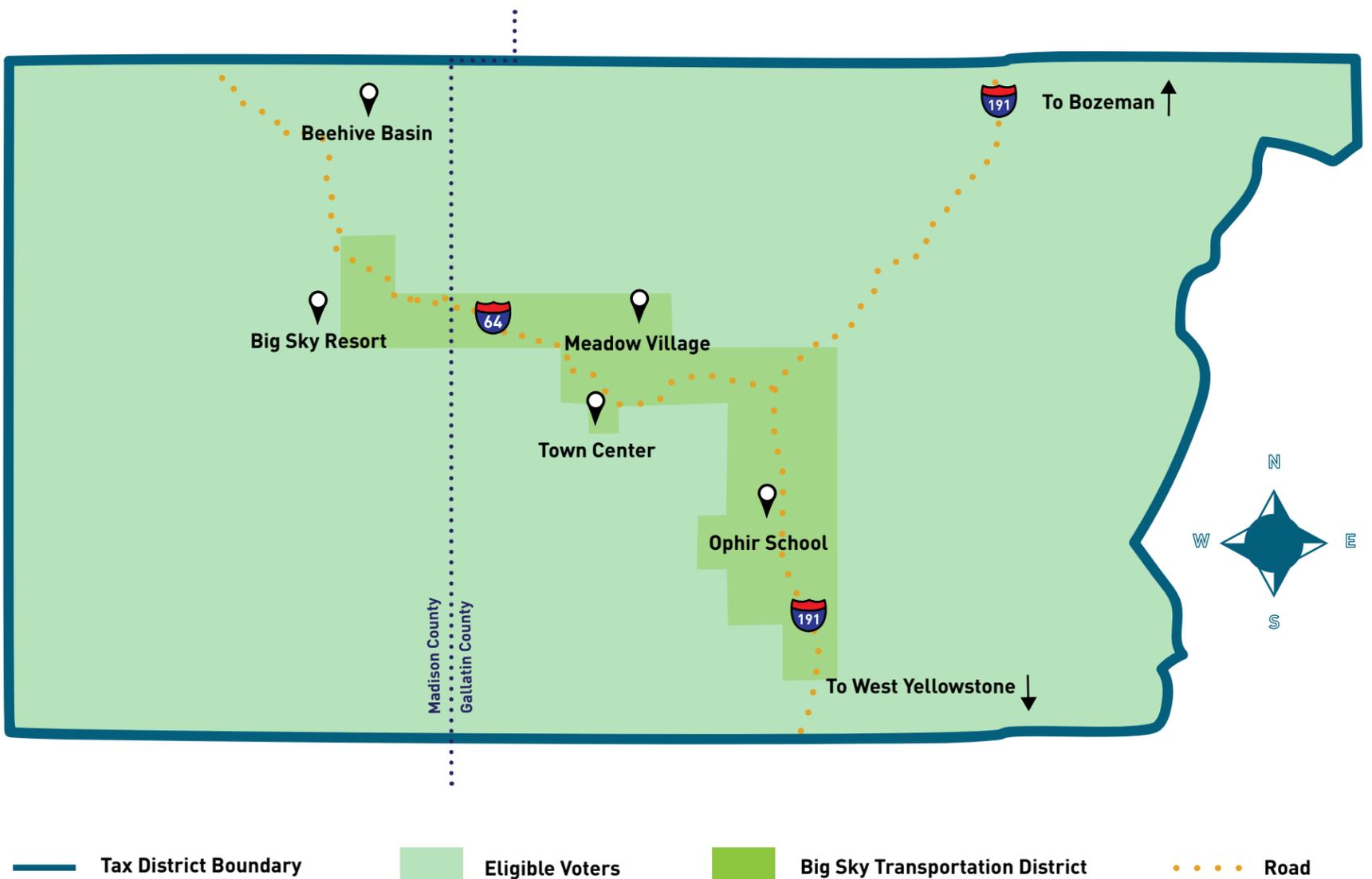
Matching some of the boundaries, Kack said, will also create clarity and ease. For example, only part of the Big Sky area electorate—voters registered in the Big Sky Area District but not the transportation district—may vote on the issue of the transportation boundary expansion. Having congruent district boundaries uncompliments such matters.

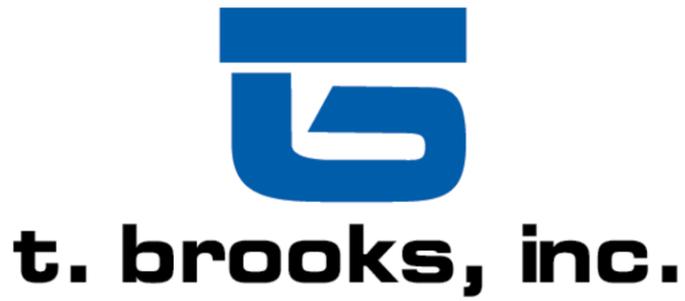
Montana law also permits urban transportation districts to levy a tax in mills on all property within the transportation district. According to Kack, bringing more property into the boundary will help reduce that levy if it becomes necessary because a higher quantity of properties will be contributing.

According to a 2020 Montana Department of Transportation report, the Big Sky Transportation District is one of the top rural providers in the state, third only to Butte Silver Bow Transit and the HRDC/Galavan/Streamline services in Bozeman. In the last 10 years, collective Skyline services provide more than 168,000 total annual rides on average, a number that is trending upwards quickly. The district reports that since the 2010 fiscal year, rides are up 81 percent.

Eligible voters will receive a mail-in ballot by mid-April. The ballots must be returned by May 4.

Big Sky Resort Area District Boundary





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FOBSE awards scholarships to LPHS class of 2021

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – The Lone Peak High School graduating class of 2021 sat in spaced out chairs covering the gym floor while friends and family looked on from the bleachers. The occasion was the 7th annual Friends of Big Sky Education scholarship awards ceremony.

“Given the events of the past year, we are thrilled to be able to hold this ceremony in person,” said Dr. Marlo Mitchem, principal at LPHS.

Dr. Mitchem opened the event with that sentiment and added that this is her favorite time of year because it is time to honor the senior class ahead of their graduation.

“This ceremony is a reminder of the incredible community we are all privileged to be a part of,” Dr. Mitchem said. “A community that values education, individual pursuits, and most importantly, has a generosity of spirit.”

On Friday April 2, 2021 FOBSE awarded 37 scholarships to 22 Lone Peak High School seniors totaling over \$70,000 in awarded funds, a number that shows just how generous the Big Sky community is. Of the 22 who applied, all received a scholarship and 11 of the applicants had A averages.

FOBSE is a non-profit entity formed in 2004 with the goal of supporting education in the Big Sky community. As part of its mission, FOBSE fundraised to build Lone Peak High School, aided in starting the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, and spearheads the scholarship

campaign to help fiscally support LPHS seniors in their post-high school endeavors.

There are 39 scholarships available for students to apply to each year and they range in amount from \$400 to \$6,000. Students are eligible to apply to and be awarded multiple scholarships which are reviewed by the FOBSE scholarship committee.

Anne Marie Mistretta, VP and secretary of FOSBE, said that she was very pleased with all of the applicants this year.

“Hands down this was the best set of applicants, these were the best applications in seven years of this program,” she said. “The students are introspective; they understand themselves and their responsibility to community, they were all phenomenal applications.”

Mistretta spoke at the ceremony following Dr. Mitchem and shared the duty of announcing students and their awards with Whitney Littman, a FOBSE board member.

Each student was called up to the podium along with the sponsor or sponsors of their scholarship and they were all preceded by thoughtful anecdotes and mention of their various accolades. Mistretta and Littman often quoted students’ applications when introducing them and sharing the various answers students provided when asked what they had learned about themselves.

The 22 students all provided thoughtful answers as well as a wide variety of plans for the future. Some are headed to four-year universities to study

FRIENDS OF BIG SKY EDUCATION COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - LPHS CLASS OF 2021

Nadia Benjdid

The Milkie's/Wrap Shack Scholarship | \$500
The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Scholarship | \$1,000

Ruth Blodgett

The Sotheby's International Realty Scholarship | \$1,000
The Tina Barton Memorial Scholarship | \$1,000

Nathan Browne

The Lee Poole Memorial Scholarship by Moonlight Basin | \$500

Dolan Cain

The ACE Hardware – Big Sky Scholarship | \$2,000

Hannah Dreisbach

The Scott and Martha Johnson Scholarship | \$2,500

Joseph Edwards

The Big Sky NAPA Scholarship | \$500
The Amy Raden Memorial Scholarship | \$1,000 (x2)
The McKillop Electrical/Mountain Scapes Scholarship | \$750

Reilly Germain

The Big Sky Vacation Rentals Scholarship | \$2,500
The Richard (Dick) Allgood Memorial Scholarship | \$3,000

Chloe Hammond

The Helms Family Fund Scholarship | \$2,500

Ivy Hicks

The Gallatin Canyon Women's Club Scholarship | \$6,000

Evan Iskendarian

The Huntley Scholarship for Environmental Studies | \$1,500
The Gregory Mistretta Memorial Scholarship | \$1,500
The Big Sky Conoco Scholarship | \$1,000

Jackson Lang

The Milkie's/Wrap Shack Scholarship | \$500
The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce Scholarship | \$1,000

Nadia Benjdid

The Spanish Peaks Community Foundation Scholarship | \$2,000 (x2)

Della Levine

The American Bank Scholarship | \$1,000

Lilyianne McCarthy

The Richard and Marie Luechtefeld Memorial Scholarship | \$1,000
The Big Sky Build Scholarship | \$1,000
The First Security Bank Scholarship | \$1,500

Brooke Meredith

The Lone Peak Physical Therapy Scholarship | \$1,500

Grace Redmon

The Buck and Helen Knight Foundation Scholarship | \$2,500
The Hungry Moose Market and Deli Scholarship | \$1,500

Michael Romney

The Yellowstone Club Community Foundation Scholarship | \$3,000 (x2)
The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center Scholarship | \$750

Ashton Russell

The Devon White Memorial Scholarship | \$1,000 (x2)

Nolan Schumacher

The Big Sky Real Estate Company Scholarship | \$2,000

Delaney Smith

The Bechtle Architects Scholarship | \$1,000
The Simkins Family/Town Center Scholarship | \$1,500
The Yellowstone Real Estate Scholarship | \$1,000

Madison Strauss

The Lone Mountain Land Company Scholarship | \$2,000

Sara Wilson

The Roxy's Market Scholarship | \$1,000
The Friends of Big Sky Education Scholarship | \$1,000

Sayra Yaqoob

The Agency – Insurance Division Scholarship | \$1,000 (x2)
The Hammond Property Management Scholarship | \$400

Additional scholarships

Mark Robin Scholarship for Creative Writing not awarded.
Glore Family Fund Scholarship not awarded.

topics such as architecture, nursing and business. Others are interested in pursuing trades such as becoming a mechanic, learning to pilot helicopters or welding.

Nathan Browne plans to attend Wake Forest University in North Carolina this fall and while he hasn't chosen a major yet, he is leaning towards business. During his high school career, Browne has been involved in volunteer efforts connected to the Gallatin River and he enjoys golfing and skiing.

Browne is the recipient of the Lee Poole Memorial Scholarship by Moonlight Basin which provides him with \$5,000 for his post-grad endeavors.

"Receiving the generous scholarship from Moonlight Community Foundation was an honor," Browne said. "I feel humbled about my work being recognized and very grateful to be a part of a community that not only recognizes me but supports myself and my classmates."

He said that the scholarship money will help him to pay for things like textbooks and a computer, and it will give him freedom to participate in extracurriculars he chooses at Wake Forest.

Reilly Germain will be attending the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University in New York. She has been involved in a variety of extracurriculars while at LPHS including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Model UN, Volleyball and Track among others.

"Receiving these scholarships means so much to me because college tuition is only getting more expensive and we're so lucky that we have a supportive community that wants to help us succeed," Germain said.

She is the recipient of The Big Sky Vacation Rentals Scholarship and The Richard (Dick) Allgood Memorial Scholarship which together total \$5,500 in awarded funds. Germain said the money will help her pay for her higher education and support her in pursuing a career in hospitality.



On Friday April 2, Friends of Big Sky Education awarded over \$70,000 in scholarships to 22 Lone Peak High School seniors. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTEN BROWNE

After the scholarships were presented to each student, Mistretta and Big Sky School District Superintendent Dr. Dustin Shipman, offered closing statements.

Shipman pointed to the Big Sky community as a great example of resilience and praised all who were involved in the scholarship program. He asked students to stand and give a round of applause to the FOBSE board, sponsors, parents and the entire community.

Mistretta offered good wishes for the students to be successful in all of their future endeavors and capped her remarks with song lyrics.

"When you head out of state, we hope you keep in mind the words of cowboy poet and balladeer Dave Stamey in his song titled 'Montana,'" she said. "The lyrics are: My parents gave me Montana\No matter where I go it carries me\When I look inside I see, Montana."

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Big Sky wraps COVID-19 surveillance testing program

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – In January, Twist Thompson, owner of Blue Buddha Sushi in Big Sky, swabbed his nose with a test provided free through the Big Sky COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Program. He dropped his sample off and it was delivered to a mobile lab located next to the water and sewer building.

Within a day, he got a call. His test had come back positive.

The local business owner quickly contacted his employees to have them tested through the program. Days before anyone else had symptoms, the asymptomatic tests revealed a handful of other positives among the Blue Buddha crew, allowing the restaurant to close before further transmission could occur.

“It just really let us, in a time where there’s so much uncertainty, act with some sort of rapid speed,” Thompson said.

On April 9, the Big Sky Winter COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Program concluded what many have called a successful effort. The program provided free asymptomatic COVID-19 tests to community members, small businesses, large employers, healthcare and public safety employees and the Big Sky School District. After processing more than 50,000 tests since it began on Dec. 7, the program yielded 913 positive cases.

The testing effort was the product of a multidirectional partnership: Fifty percent of funding was provided by private enterprises, 25 percent came from area resort tax and the remaining quarter was funded by philanthropic foundations including the Spanish Peaks, Moonlight Basin and Yellowstone Club community foundations.

“This was quite a pioneering effort,” said Kevin Germain, board chair for the Big Sky Resort Area District. In addition to obtaining the funding, the partners worked with testing company LetsGetChecked to bring a mobile lab to Big Sky so tests could be processed on-site in under 24 hours and the results could be communicated directly to state and county jurisdictions.

Germain added that it was important for the group to work with state and Gallatin County officials to add to testing resources rather than deplete existing services.

“We appreciate the collaboration with those who organized the Big Sky surveillance effort and their willingness to run the program in a way that did not impact testing in the rest of the county,” Gallatin City-County Health Officer Matt Kelley wrote in a statement to Explore Big Sky.

Studies report that more than 50 percent of COVID-19 transmission came from asymptomatic people. The testing program led to the detection of more than 900 asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 and Bozeman Health provided contact tracing to ensure that people were properly isolated. “That had direct results on stopping the spread,” Germain said.

In addition to cutting off transmission, Germain believes the testing program had broader community effects.

“I think it gave our community a peace of mind that they knew that people were being tested and that we were staying on top of it,” he said.

The Big Sky School District, which is currently offering 100-percent in-person learning, used the surveillance testing to perform weekly testing.



Alejandro Contreras, emergency clinical laboratory scientist and Sarah Martir, clinical laboratory scientist, prepare processed COVID-19 test samples for computer input. Both scientists are on a rotation at the lab in Big Sky but are from California. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

“It’s been instrumental because it gives us real-time data to work with,” said BSSD Superintendent Dustin Shipman. The school district will continue to test those without symptoms using a mail-in option.

Providing asymptomatic testing for small businesses played a key role in keeping shop doors open during a busy winter season, some local owners said.

Thompson also owns a Blue Buddha in Page, Arizona, a town near Lake Powell comparable to the size of Big Sky. With the exception of the February outbreak, his Big Sky location was able to remain open throughout most of the winter season.

Meanwhile, in Page, Thompson said employees struggled to find tests, sometimes driving three to four hours to get them. The Arizona location was lost about five months of in-house dining over the last year.

Larger community employers, including Big Sky Resort, Yellowstone Club and Lone Mountain Land Company, also took advantage of the program to keep chairlifts spinning and operations moving forward.

“Surveillance testing is one of the key tools that the resort and community implemented to control infection rates, keeping our employees safe and our resort open,” Big Sky Resort General Manager Troy Nedved wrote in a statement to EBS. “We’re grateful for the unique partnership that brought surveillance testing to the Big Sky community this winter.” Big Sky Resort will end its ski season on April 18 after successfully remaining open all winter.

Though the mobile LetsGetChecked lab has rolled out of town, the remaining tests will continue to be distributed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the drive-thru located at 1700 Lone Mountain Trail. Tests can then be dropped off at the same location using the overnight deposit box. People submitting samples should expect results within 24-72 hours.

During a recent installment of EBS’s Big Sky Town Hall Series, BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale said that now, a year after the pandemic struck Big Sky, there’s light at the end of the tunnel.

“Shots are going into arms, we’re seeing our case load here in Big Sky and also throughout the state of Montana continue to drop,” he said during the April 2 interview. “I’d say there’s definitely an aura of hope about the community right now as we’re beginning to turn a corner.”



The LetsGetChecked mobile lab, located near the water and sewer district in Big Sky, has allowed for on-site testing and 24-hour response for the Big Sky COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Program. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

BSRAD approves budget, funds lobbying efforts in Helena

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Resort Area District approved its budget for fiscal year 22 and allocated funds to a lobbying effort in Helena at an April 7 board meeting.

The budget includes some increased and decreased line items from previous years. Notably, the budget for public information was approved for a \$70,000 increase with the intention to put effort into further engaging the community with the district.

“We have made it easier now more than ever with COVID for our community to be able to engage,” BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale said during the meeting. “I think we just need to continue to lean into it and provide these opportunities for the community to really voice their support and opposition when there are areas of concern within the community, and when the district is focused on the right things we need to hear from Big Sky.”

The total budget was approved at \$939,953, a nearly 18 percent increase from the fiscal year 21 budget.

The board also approved the allocation of \$36,000 for a lobbying effort in the Montana Legislature to expand funding options for the planned upgrade of the water and sewer wastewater treatment plant and other water and sewer projects. Because of voters’ election to apply an additional 1 percent to resort tax for use of these infrastructural projects, BSRAD can contribute up to \$27 million. BSRAD Board Director Steve Johnson reported that the projects’ total estimate of \$45 million has increased to \$52 million.

After an alternative funding option for the project, the use of the State Revolving Fund, has fallen through, the resort area and water and sewer districts are working on obtaining a cut of federal COVID-19 relief dollars recently given to the state.

Montana received nearly \$3 billion of the \$1.9 trillion from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, and a Montana house bill recently allocated the funds, including apportioning \$500 million for infrastructure projects.

“Steve, Danny and I, who have been working with the subcommittee at the water and sewer district, really feel like it’s our fiduciary responsibility to the community of Big Sky to do everything we can to see if we can leverage our dollars with some of the federal stimulus dollars for our water and sewer projects,” said Board Chair Kevin Germain.

Germain said an agreement has been arranged with lobbyists in Helena—the same lobbyists BSRAD worked with on the 1 percent for infrastructure, Johnson added—to work from now through October when the funding decisions are made to try and procure ARPA funds for Big Sky water and sewer projects.

The lobbying efforts will total \$60,000 and, proportionate to the agreement between the water and sewer district and the resort area district in funding the projects, BSRAD will cover 60 percent of this cost and the remaining 40 percent will be covered by the water and sewer district.

Bierschwale also provided a brief executive summary during the meeting and said that based on preliminary collection data, February resort tax collections are anticipated to total roughly 5 percent below last year. “We feel confident that the community will close out the season strong,” Bierschwale wrote in his report.

Bierschwale also requested the board review a draft policy manual for the district to be discussed at the next meeting.



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LPHS teacher named recipient of second STEM award

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Kate Eisele, a biology teacher at Lone Peak High School, is now one of five winners of a program run by Advancing Science Research Teaching and funded by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals. This follows her receiving a grant from the Society for Science & the Public back in December 2020, which provided STEM research kits for students in underserved communities nationwide.

On March 27, Eisele received an email from Michael Blueglass, director of the ASRT program, informing her of the award, her second STEM award of the year. ASRT is a national educational outreach program that aims to increase the number and quality of programs, courses and clubs that provide science research opportunities to high school students. Eisele applied back in November of 2020 after hearing about ASRT through a Society for Science & the Public email newsletter.

“Your application made it clear that you are a very dedicated, enthusiastic educator focused on making a difference in the lives of your students,” Blueglass said in his congratulatory email.

Eisele comes from a family of teachers—six generations back on her dad’s side, and three generations on her mom’s side. She earned her teaching credential 11 years ago and she now teaches a ninth-grade biology course, junior and senior level Diploma Program biology, and an International Baccalaureate class called Theory of Knowledge.

As part of being one of the five finalists in the program, Eisele will receive an intensive week of customized consulting sessions with Blueglass who founded the program. Blueglass will travel to Montana the week of Aug. 25 to work with Eisele on developing new ideas for science research opportunities at LPHS with the ultimate goal of sending students to the International Science Fair.

“I’m hoping it’ll really help me build a culture where scientific research is something that kids are going to be able to add to their college applications, that they participated



Dr. Kate Eisele, a ninth-grade biology teacher at Lone Peak High School, was recently named a finalist for the Advancing Science Research Teaching consulting program. PHOTO BY JESSICA BOUGH

in the regional science fair and maybe they qualified to go to the International Science Fair, which is a pretty prestigious event to attend,” Eisele said.

ASRT was started by Blueglass, in partnership with Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, based on a successful science research program he ran as a teacher in Westchester County, New York for 25 years. At first, Blueglass was offering his services as a consultant and visiting schools in his county to help them build their programs. Then, Blueglass partnered with Regeneron Pharmaceuticals to fund the program and now he travels across the U.S. to work with the five finalists of the program each year. This year, in addition to five finalists who receive a week of in-person consulting, Blueglass said they added five semi-finalists who receive two days of virtual consulting.

The relationship doesn’t stop after the allotted week or two days. Blueglass explained that the consulting will then turn into a long-term mentorship where he will keep in touch with winners and continue advising them. His goal for the initial consulting is to provide teachers with actionable ideas, activities and strategies they can use immediately.

“My whole model is the opposite [of what is standard,]” Blueglass said. “It’s building skills, scientific thinking skills, presentation skills, and then carrying out a science fair project, because I know those skills will last kids a lifetime.”

Eisele expressed excitement to work with Blueglass and to start applying his knowledge to grow science programs at LPHS.

“I’m excited to learn from him,” Eisele said. “He’s got a lot of experience and a lot of resources to share and he is somebody that I would seek to emulate, he sent kids to the International Science Series every year of his teaching career but one.”

“She’s wonderful, enthusiastic, dedicated and she’s going to make a difference, she already does and she’s going to continue to,” Blueglass said of Eisele. “I’m just glad to be a part of it.”

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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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SECTION 2:

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT
& OUTDOORS,
AND SPORTS

The benefits of bone broth pg. 18



Is Gallatin County sacrificing its elk to rural sprawl? pg. 24



Big Sky's freeride athletes vie for world tour qualification pg. 30

New behavioral health concerns come to light as pandemic fades

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – One year ago, behavioral health specialists accurately predicted the wave of pandemic-induced anxiety, depression and isolation that would ride in on the tailcoats of the COVID-19 virus. A year later with vaccines underway and regulations loosening, the exit out of the pandemic is in sight, and so is a new set of looming mental health challenges, according to experts.

“We really have two phases during the pandemic,” said Maureen Womack, system director of behavioral health at Bozeman Health.

The first phase she described as the response to uncertainty and isolation: increased depression, stress and anxiety. This description is on par with recent local and national reports, which have found that symptoms of depression and anxiety have increased this past year—up 5 percent between August 2020 and February 2021, according to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report.

Now a year later, Womack says we are entering the second phase—that feeling of a tight chest and short breath that has become familiar while watching people move through a crowd on a TV show is about to become a reality for many.

“We’re now seeing what we’re calling the pandemic paradox, where people are now afraid of coming out of lockdown and coming out of being isolated,” she said.

That paradox, Womack says, is the mental adversity that exists at both ends of the pandemic. “It’s going to be just as hard to come out of the pandemic as it was to go into the pandemic,” she said.

In a recent survey published by the American Psychological Association, 49 percent of Americans reported feeling uneasy about adjusting to in-person interaction at the end of the pandemic. Results among adults who received a COVID-19 vaccine were comparable at 48 percent.

Womack says fear and anxiety are the most common emotional responses as we approach a release from social lockdown. “We find ourselves kind of clinging to what we’ve adapted to and what is kind of our comfort zone,” she said.

Womack said that for adolescents, the emotional fallout has been especially exacerbated. Biologically, teens are supposed to be separating from their parents, she said. But after being trapped at home for a year, the return to normalcy may be a rough transition.

“Now we’re asking teenagers, right at the time of summer, to try and go back to their normal life when they’ve been impacted for a year, and it’s creating tremendous anxiety, social anxiety and fear of acceptance,” Womack said.

This is a trend also recognized by the APA survey which found that Gen Z teens (13-17) and Gen Z adults (18-23) were experiencing elevated levels of stress and depression, and Gen Z adults were the most likely generation to say their mental health has worsened throughout the pandemic.

Emerging from the pandemic may also be exceptionally challenging for older generations, Womack said. “Even though they may be vaccinated, they know that they are particularly vulnerable,” she said. “Many of them did not seek medical help during the pandemic and so they’ve had an exacerbation of their underlying medical conditions and not seeking help and so they feel particularly vulnerable going back out into the population.”

Womack believes the key to addressing this anxiety will be striking the balance between risk and validation.

“We know the pandemic will end,” she said. “But we also have to realize and give ourselves the grace to know it is okay not to be okay with it.” For some people, living a more introverted lifestyle created a comfort zone that may be unpleasant to come out of, she added.

The other side to that coin, though, is grounding risk assessment in facts. Womack suggests talking through the anxiety once it’s been acknowledged and identify what the fear is of. At some point, we’ll have to take risks, she says.

“We have to say ‘Yeah, you know you have a right to be anxious, there’s some reality to this anxiety, there are some true unknowns. And yet, I so enjoyed my life, and it’s so important to get back to those things that brought me joy that I need to take that risk,’” Womack said.

The good news is that this doesn’t have to be a solo task. In a 2020 survey of the Big Sky area, 56 percent of key informants ranked mental health as a “major problem” in the community, mostly citing access as the primary issue, but community partners have been hard at work to address this.

The Behavioral Health Coalition, comprised of several community partners dedicated to normalizing behavioral health needs and providing resources, has supported the introduction of behavioral health service implementation in the community. This includes ongoing community-wide focus groups that provide feedback to the coalition to make sure that programming is informed by real struggles.

“I am going to meet with my therapist’ or ‘I am going to a support group’ should be as commonplace as meeting with a physical therapist to rehab from a skiing injury,” said Ruthi Solari, director of community partnerships at the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, a partner in the coalition.

“It’s going to be just as hard to come out of the pandemic as it was to go into the pandemic.”

The coalition plans to announce increased servicing early this summer.

In addition, the Big Sky Medical Center offers 24/7 support and hosts two psychiatric service providers. The Montana 2-1-1 hotline also provides behavioral health information and resource connection for non-emergency needs.

Big Sky’s Women in Action also provides a comprehensive list of local resources, including two counselors who provide a sliding-fee scale to those who qualify.

“The one thing that we have learned from this pandemic is that we can’t pull ourselves up by our bootstraps,” Womack said. “People are suffering, their suffering is real. It’s based on a very traumatic event that’s what happened to all of us. We’ve lost a year, in essence, and that it’s okay to not be okay. It’s okay to be afraid to emerge from a pandemic, and that there is help available.”

Yours in Health

The benefits of bone broth



Bone broth, made by simmering the bones and connective tissue of animals, is both a trending dish and a mineral- and nutrient-rich drink. EBS columnist Dr. Andrea Wick provides a recipe for the magic broth in her most recent column. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ANDREA WICK

BY DR. ANDREA WICK
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Bone broth, made by simmering bones and connective tissue of animals, is now becoming a popular food item that is even starting to sweep the menus of local restaurants. What is the big deal? Besides it tasting delicious are there really added health benefits?

The magic of bone broth benefits happens when animal bones are slow cooked for many hours with added apple cider vinegar. The apple cider vinegar helps to leech minerals and nutrients from the animal bone. Any kind of bones can be used: chicken, elk, beef and fish. It has a low-calorie content and will help you to feel full.

The healthy minerals and nutrients in bone broth include: phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, potassium, silicon and sulfur. These minerals actually help to re-mineralize your bones. They are also a great source of electrolytes, which benefit cellular health.

Connective tissue such as tendons and ligaments contain glucosamine and chondroitin, which help in reducing inflammation and arthritis symptoms. Glucosamine and chondroitin are popular supplements used for naturally helping with joint pain.

Along with being a great source of minerals, bone broth is also high in collagen, gelatin and amino acids.

Collagen is a wonderful healer of the gut and digestive system because of the amino acids that are naturally viable. Collagen and gelatin naturally contain glutamine, which is an important amino acid that repairs and heals the gut lining. Therefore, it helps to decrease any inflammation in the intestinal tract.

Collagen produces benefits that can be seen on the outside, too. The fibrous protein helps increase the elasticity of the skin and may help to prevent wrinkles, sagging skin and cellulite.

The marrow of the bones is a great source of healthy fats such as omega-3s and 6s. Due to the high amounts of “good” fats, a reduction of “bad”

cholesterol can be a benefit. If you ever wondered why grandma always suggested drinking broth and eating chicken soup when you were sick, it’s because broth helps to fight respiratory infections and the common cold by clearing mucus from passageways.

Last but not least, bone broth has high amounts of glutathione. Glutathione helps the liver naturally filter any toxins and eliminate heavy metals.

Having a happy liver also helps the immune system function more optimally by mobilizing cytokines. Cytokines are proteins that are secreted by the cells of the immune system. They are the chemical messengers that help to eliminate any “bad” cells.

Making bone broth is simple, and I encourage you to try it at home. I personally love to sip on a cup first thing in the morning.

Dr. Wick’s Bone Broth Recipe

Add the following ingredients in a pot on the stove or in a slow cooker:

- 1 gallon of water
- 2 TBSP of apple cider vinegar
- 2-4 pounds of animal bones
- 4 stalks of celery
- 2 large carrots
- 1 onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and pepper to taste

Slow cook for 24 hours.

Enjoy the benefits!

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 to learn more.

Water Wisdom

Progress report

BY DAVID TUCKER
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

In January 2018, after two years of multi-stakeholder community engagement, the Gallatin River Task Force and its partners released the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan, a 177-page document intended to guide conservation, restoration and education efforts throughout the upper Gallatin watershed.

Fast forward three years and we think it's high time we checked in with the plan to assess our community's progress and ensure we're all being held accountable to the Gallatin River.

Since day one, water management in Big Sky has been a collaborative undertaking. Because we all want to protect the Gallatin River, partnerships have proven paramount, and progress has been the only option.

And progress is what we've seen. While it can sometimes seem that the Gallatin is doomed, major steps forward have been taken in the last 18 months—none larger than the community's support for a new wastewater treatment facility in Big Sky.

Once complete, this facility will treat wastewater to a standard seen nowhere else in Montana, greatly expanding our wastewater reuse options. This is important as our water-strapped region searches for innovative solutions to supply issues. Higher quality effluent means we can irrigate golf courses, public spaces, community parks and other landscapes without using fresh water and without further compromising water quality. Plus we can pursue other wastewater recycling options that are more beneficial to watershed health and the water cycle, like snowmaking and groundwater recharge.

In this way, the new plant satisfies all three focus areas of the Sustainable Watershed Plan: It improves the ecological health of river systems, it improves wastewater treatment and expands reuse options and it conserves fresh water, augmenting the water supply and availability. Progress, indeed.

Another Watershed Plan priority is improving conditions in the Gallatin Canyon, roughly the area from the Conoco south to the Rainbow Ranch. This stretch of river is at risk as development potential here is significant and coordinated wastewater management is lacking. But all that is changing, and for the better.

Just this winter, four landowners formed the Gallatin Canyon County Water and Sewer District, creating a governing body to advocate for sustainable

water choices. This sets the stage for central sewer collection in the Canyon instead of the jumble of individual septic systems and small community systems that exist there now. While some of these adequately treat waste, taken together they pose a significant threat to ground- and surface-water quality. A centralized system for collection will radically decrease current and future problems.

Because we know that our water resources are limited and that the Gallatin's health hangs in the balance, reusing treated wastewater has always been a community priority. Recently, we took another big step forward in that regard, and checked another Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Plan box.

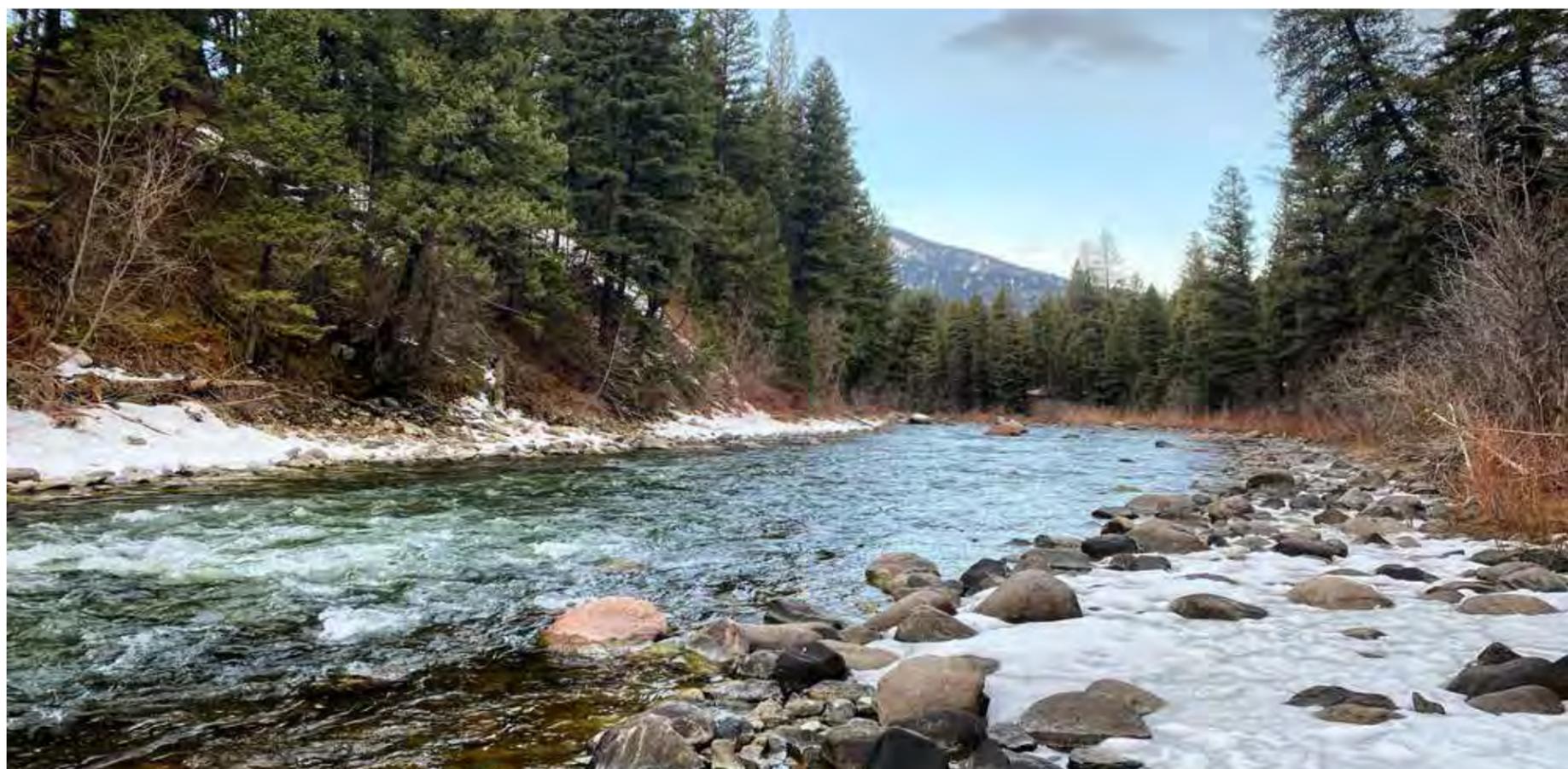
The Yellowstone Club submitted an application for a permit to reuse highly treated wastewater for snowmaking, a process that would further discourage discharge into the Gallatin while bolstering the in-stream flows of summer. This process can serve as a model for other area resorts that typically use fresh water for snowmaking, and it doesn't have negative environmental impacts on water resources. In fact, because this water will now be stored in the snowpack and released during runoff, this process actually improves in-stream conditions. Again, progress.

While infrastructure-scale projects are vitally important to the health of the Gallatin, so too are individual actions taken by our residents and visitors. As we know well, there are more of us living in and visiting Big Sky than ever before, and we all need to do our part.

To that end, the Big Sky Water Conservation program has grown from nothing to over 100 participants just in the last three years, saving over 6 million gallons of fresh water. Through this program, we can establish a culture of conservation in our headwaters community, increasing accountability and empowering change.

By now it should be clear the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Plan is much more than just a heavy, spiral-bound document that sits on a shelf. It is the guiding force influencing not only the Task Force's work, but the decision-making of the entire upper Gallatin community. Water managers, real-estate developers, small-business owners and local residents are all using this plan because they all had a stake in creating it, and they all have a stake in ensuring it is implemented.

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



As the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Plan turns three, EBS columnist David Tucker reflects on the progress that has been made in improving water quality and expanding water conservation. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

Gallatin Valley Earth Day 2021

Events coming up April 11-28

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

GALLATIN VALLEY – The Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival returns this year after a hiatus in 2020 with the theme “transforming and healing our earth together.”

The nonprofit organization Gallatin Valley Earth Day, started by Anne Ready in 2019, has been working hard to plan the in-person festival this year as well as many other virtual events throughout the month of April.

After the success of the 2019 festival, GVED decided to honor the 50th anniversary of Earth Day with a larger event, the 2020 Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival, but the event was canceled due to COVID-19. Prior to the cancellation, GVED had one and a half blocks outside of the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture reserved as well as participation from 50 local businesses and the partnership of the City of Bozeman.

“We are very excited to hold an in-person Earth Day Festival this year,” said Ready. “After being cooped up, people are ready to get out and walk, bike and run.”

The Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival will give people ample opportunity to get outside with live music, food, kids activities, exhibits and more. There will be guided walks by the Sacajawea Audubon Society as well as activities at Story Mill Park, and the first annual Earth Day “Run for the Sun.”

Explore Big Sky spoke with Ready to get the scoop on all the exciting events coming up that are listed below. Visit gallatinvalleyearthday.org for more information and to access the virtual events.

Virtual screening of “2040”, April 11

Award-winning director Damon Gameau embarks on a journey to explore what the future could look like by 2040 if we simply embrace the best solutions that exist today. Visit gallatinvalleyearthday.org to access the full movie which will be available starting April 11.

“Wind Energy Basics” Talk, April 13, 12 p.m.

A virtual talk with Professor Robb Larson from Montana State University, and Mayor Terry Weickum of Rawlins, Wyoming. Larson will discuss how wind energy works including pros and cons and the potential for wind energy in Montana and mayor Terry Weickum will share how bringing a wind farm to Rawlins boosted their economy. Visit gallatinvalleyearthday.org to register.

Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival at the Bozeman Public Library, April 17, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Look forward to a fun-filled day of exhibits, food, music and children’s activities. Exhibits will include: an electric car, an electric Harley Davidson, solar panels, composting, native plants, fish and wildlife, wetlands, City of Bozeman water conservation and important climate information. The



Various organizations will be at the 2021 Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival to show their exhibits. PHOTO BY ANNE READY

Gallatin Valley Earth Day presents ~

Wind Energy Basics

with Robb Larson
MSU engineering professor



Tues. April 13 ~ noon



SPECIAL GUEST: Republican Mayor Terry Weickum of Rawlins, WY will share how he created a budget surplus by bringing a wind energy farm to Rawlins.

REGISTER a www.gallatinvalleyearthday.org






Professor Robb Larson from MSU and Mayor Terry Weickum of Rawlins, Wyoming will discuss how wind energy works including pros and cons and how wind farms can boost economies.
POSTER COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY

children’s activities are sponsored by the Montana Science Museum, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, and will include making musical instruments from recycled materials and more.

“Bridger Bowl is For The Birds”, April 18

The Bridger Mountains are a primary North American migration route for raptors. More than 15 species, including the Golden Eagle and Bald Eagle, might be viewed over the course of the annual raptor count. 2021 marks the 30th year of the field work conducted on Bridger Bowl’s ridge during September and October, culminating in Bridger’s annual Raptor Fest in early October. But the Bridger range is also home to more than 30 species of songbirds. Bridger Bowl is committed to protecting its bird life - learn what you can do to support birds at home. Watch the “Landscaping for Birds” PowerPoint by Paulette Epple and the Sacajawea Audubon.

“The Effect of Climate Change on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem” Talk, April 19

Dr. Cathy Whitlock, PhD, Research Professor, Regents Professor Emerita of Earth Sciences, Fellow of the Montana Institute on Ecosystems and one of the authors of the former Gov. Steve Bullock’s Montana Climate Assessment presents an overview of what effects we can expect to see, here in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Go to bridgerbowl.com to watch the talk.

Get Started on Zero Waste with Julie Fathy, April 19, 7 p.m.

Learn the ins and outs of creating a zero-waste household from local expert Julie Fathy. Zero waste is the notion of reducing one’s waste through environmentally considerate actions. In this workshop, local zero waste expert Julie Fathy will lead you on an inspiring visual journey of her “zero waste” home. She will provide concrete tips and easy-to-adopt ideas for decreasing your household waste. You’ll leave with solutions for creating a healthy, beautiful and vibrant life that’s environmentally thoughtful. Join us for this informative workshop!

“Grain by Grain” Book Club Discussion, April 20, 7:00 p.m.

Bozeman Public Library book club discusses “Grain by Grain” with special



Similar to the 2019 Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival, this year there will be food carts from local vendors. PHOTO BY ANNE READY

guest Bob Quinn. We don't have to accept stagnating rural communities, degraded soil or poor health. By following Bob's example, we can grow a healthy future, grain by grain. Visit: bozemanlibrary.org/services/adults/book-clubs/bozeman-public-library-book-club for more information.

“People and Wildlife: Conservation and Coexistence” Talk, April 21, 12 p.m.

Join Mike Phillips, cofounder and director of the Turner Endangered Species Fund and Lisa Upson, director of People and Carnivores for this Library Community Forum. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81083440088>

Your Energy Efficient Home, April 21, 7:00 p.m.

Join local contractor, Rob Evans of Constructive Solutions and Infrared Solutions, to learn how to make your home more energy efficient - whether building a new home or improving your existing home.

Earth Day Seed Exchange, April 22, 3:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate Earth Day in the Education and Outreach Center located in Manhattan by picking up free wildflower and vegetable seeds saved from our gardens. This will be another opportunity to sign up for our Gallatin Pollinator Initiative program and pick up your free pollinator seed mixes to start your own pollinator plots. Visit http://gallatincd.org/event/earth-day-seed-exchange/?instance_id=1000 for more information.

Music & Film Night, April 22, 7:00 p.m.

Local musicians perform and children from our community share their



Children's activities at the 2021 Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival will include making musical instruments from recycled materials and more. PHOTO BY ANNE READY

Get inspired!

2040 - the film

Join the REGENERATION



What could the future look like by the year 2040 if we simply embraced the best solutions already available to us?

Watch online anytime

April 11-18

REGISTER: www.gallatinvalleyearthday.org



The documentary “2040” is an upbeat look at how the climate crisis can be addressed and the globe bettered by the year 2040. POSTER COURTESY OF GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY

ideas on how to make our Earth a better place. The evening will include a vocal duo of “This Pretty Planet” performed by Kate Bryan and Betsy Wise, an instrumental Cello piece by Isla-Mari Lee and her daughter Elizabeth Lee and more. Watch a short film and learn how Claire Vlases, as a middle schooler, raised the money to put solar panels on Bozeman schools. Visit bozemanarts-live.com/calendar to register.

“Drawing Together,” April 23, 5:30 p.m.

An evening of art, wine and cheese and climate advocacy. Join Butte artist, Laurel Egan, for a virtual drawing class. Visit bit.ly/DrawingTogether4-23-21 to register.

“Need to Grow,” April 24 through May 1 watch anytime

With an estimated 60 years of farmable soil left on Earth, the film “Need To Grow” offers an intimate look into the hearts of activists and innovators in the food movement. An 8-year-old girl challenges the ethics of a beloved organization, a renegade farmer struggles to keep his land as he revolutionizes resource efficient agriculture, and an accomplished visionary inventor faces catastrophe in the midst of developing a game-changing technology.

Plants for Birds Garden Open House, April 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sacajawea Audubon Society will host an open house tabling event at the Plants for Birds Garden within the Learning Garden at Story Mill Community Park.

Guided Bird Walk, April 24, 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Meet at Story Mill Park nature preserve and Sacajawea Audubon Society will take up to 16 people in two smaller groups of 8 on a guided bird walk.

Gallatin Valley Earth Day Run, 2021: A Run for the Sun!, April 24, 9 a.m.

This run aims to raise money for the Bozeman High School Solar Schools Club to put solar panels on our schools. This race is sponsored by the Big Sky Wind Drinkers.

Earth Day in the Park, April 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Get your passport stamped and turn in for a prize drawing.

Heating and cooling your home in a Greener Way, April 29, 7:00 p.m.

A virtual talk with heating and cooling professional Ron Hubert.

CHECK OUT OUR SPECIAL EVENTS!

Awareness Wednesday The Basics of Spring Cleansing with Callie Stolz
Wednesday, April 14th 6:30-7:30pm

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May 5th-18th

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7:00-8:00pm
Body Melt

MONDAY

9:00-10:15am
Core Flow Yoga

4:15-5:15pm
Après Ski Yoga

TUESDAY

7:30-8:30am
Rise and Shine Yoga

9:00-10:00am
Warrior Flow Yoga

Noon-1:00pm
Lunch Break
All Levels Yoga

5:45-7:00pm
Heated Flow

WEDNESDAY

7:30-8:30am
All Levels Yoga

10:00-11:15am
All Levels Yoga

4:15-5:15pm
Après Ski Yoga

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am
All Levels Yoga

9:00-10:00am
All Levels
Vinyasa Flow Yoga

Noon-1:00pm
Lunchbreak
All Levels Yoga

5:45-6:45pm
Heated Flow

FRIDAY

10:00-11:15am
Core Flow Yoga

5:45-7:00pm
All Levels
Kundalini Yoga

5:45-6:45pm
Restorative Yoga

SATURDAY

9:00-10:15am
All Levels Yoga

5:00-6:15pm
All Levels Yoga

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THE NEW WEST

Is Gallatin County sacrificing its elk to rural sprawl?



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Holly Pippel has seen amazing things. Across her home dale when most people seem too busy to pay attention, she's observed lines of elk trailing over ridgelines at sunrise and under the full moon with their regalness pronounced as they pause in silhouette. She's been out there at calving time, witnessing wapiti mothers coming together and giving birth to their calves in spring, then forming nursery bands. She's stood freezing in darkness, listening to elk bulls bugle and spar during the autumn rut.

Pippel has put in countless hours moving throughout the Gallatin Valley which enwraps Bozeman, Montana, and is experiencing one of the fastest per capita human population growth rates in the rural West. What Pippel has chronicled is enough to make the heart swoon and should simultaneously be interpreted as a clarion call of alarm.

Were she not a nature photographer, real estate associate and manager of a small business here in the valley, her perspective could easily be dismissed by those who deny that what's happening in the southern Gallatin Valley is steadily progressing toward a point where habitat for migratory elk is permanently lost, as sprawl replaces old farms and ranches. She and a growing number of residents don't want that to happen.

Pippel's photographs are reminders of what's at risk. Prior to coming West, she got a degree from Florida State University in criminal justice and then lived in Thomasville, Georgia where she operated an equine riding and training business.

Today, Pippel makes her home on the outskirts of Gallatin Gateway and whenever possible works with farmers and ranchers interested in trying to protect their land in perpetuity. Not long ago, I became aware of both her extraordinary photographs and her own backstory. Our conversation begins below.

TODD WILKINSON: *You are one of Greater Yellowstone's very talented yet lesser-known nature photographers. I must say that your images of elk in the Gallatin Valley are both stunning and eye-opening. When did you first start taking photographs of wapiti?*

HOLLY PIPPEL: *When I first moved to the Gallatin Valley in 1995, elk and other wildlife soon became a passion of mine. Spending time in the mountains and valley horseback or on foot with my camera became my quiet place to soak up the sounds, smells and behavior of the wildlife here. At the end of August every year I could hear the elk bugle from my cabin where I lived on the Flying D. It was like an alarm clock that drew me to the hills to carefully sit undetected and watch the elk interact.*

TW: *What's also intriguing is that you didn't have to go to Yellowstone or Grand Teton to build your portfolio of great elk landscape shots. Could you perhaps comment on what it says about the Gallatin Valley and other valleys in Greater Yellowstone that still have a strong semblance of their rural character, which also translates into open space and higher quality habitat.*



Elk including calves in the Gallatin Valley must navigate a growing maze of obstacles, including traffic, fences, structures and even loose dogs that force them to divert course. PHOTO BY HOLLY PIPPEL



Holly Pippel on the other side of the camera lens carrying the antlers and skull of a large bull elk that died during the winter. PHOTO BY VAL ASHER

HP: *People comment all the time on my elk photos and think I must be in Yellowstone! Not so. In several areas around the Gallatin Valley there are herds of elk. This is a big part of what makes our valley special and keeps the feel of Montana and not "just another valley" as in other more heavily populated states. The rural landscape is what brought us and keeps most of us here. My hope is that this specialness will not be lost to sprawl.*

TW: *Having lived in the Gallatin Valley for a quarter-century gives you perspective and your photos, besides being exquisite glimpses at elk presence and seasonal migration, are going to be important as historic visual touchstones—hopefully not eulogies. What are some of the changes you've witnessed in terms of development and elk behavior over time?*

HP: *Over time there have been big changes in the valley, as to be expected. The depressing thing is that many of these changes came without thoughtfulness for the wildlife and skyline viewsheds where many are building. It's a delicate balance between landowner rights, profitable farming, hunting, wildlife management and growth. All of these areas need to be given the respect they deserve. The "Gateway Elk," as I call them, have had trials and tribulations, as well as "the salad days" when the herds had more space. The introduction of wolves back onto the landscape and valley growth have changed their migration patterns and tolerance for being in closer proximity to our homes and human activity. Add COVID-19 into this equation and that brought the masses to the outdoors and closer to the hidey holes on public lands where wildlife get recharged for another day.*

TW: *You are based in Gallatin Gateway where, out your western window, you can enjoy the benefits of Turner putting a conservation easement on the 113,000-acre Flying D, meaning it will never be developed to any major extent. Meanwhile, you've observed the tidal wave of sprawl and leapfrog development emanating from Bozeman and Belgrade. At the same time, traffic loads on Highway 191 have swelled, often dominated by construction worker commuters heading south to work at Big Sky. What are conservation-minded people in Gateway talking about these days?*

HP: *One of the looming hurdles and stresses they currently face on a daily basis is traffic and growth with no zoning or thoughtfulness for our wildlife. This and growth are the main topics most of us who have lived years or lifetimes in the valley speak about. I live off of Highway 191 and it sometimes takes me 10 minutes to pull out and often it is a Hail Mary move. A little gap between cars would be much appreciated by all of us who live off of 191.*

TW: *And how is the traffic manifesting itself with regard to wildlife?*

HP: *The lack of care our valley drivers show for the elk, turkeys, deer or whatever species, as those animals try to cross roads to water, grazing, calving grounds and sheltered nap areas is mind boggling to me. A lot of people say, "It's the new people moving here!" Honestly, it's mostly the locals and workers going to and fro to Big Sky using Cottonwood and Gooch Hill roads. They hurry*

the elk along as they [the elk] try to cross. I have seen elk fall to the pavement being pressured by drivers as they try to cross the road or lay all day in an open field after they have given up trying to migrate to quieter places. Of course, the elk are on the move at the same time of day when traffic is heaviest on these roads which makes it even more of a challenge for them. If the people wanting to drive fast to go to work in Big Sky, a more suitable route is Huffine to 191.

TW: *Short of the last remaining rural lands being protected or wildlife underpasses or overpasses being built across Highway 191, what else would you suggest?*

HP: I encourage people to slow down and remember why you moved here and support the wildness of the valley. Plus slowing down to watch the elk for a moment is good way to start or end your busy day. Here, I'd like to extend a big thank you to the private landowners who try and keep these elk habitat areas whole and protect the historic corridors for our valley wildlife all while making a living off of the land. The conservation efforts of Ted Turner and his family have had such a positive impact for the Gallatin Valley and beyond. My personal time on the Flying D was nothing short of educational and inspirational.

TW: *In the last few years, it seems that one of the fastest-growing professions have been real estate brokers. They're on the very front lines of the transformation that's occurring with the natural environment. And yet they can help to educate people who come here and may not be aware how Greater Yellowstone is different from other regions they came from. What positive role can realtors play?*

HP: Realtors do play a role in educating people as they come explore the possibilities of moving to the Gallatin Valley. I always hope that I can convey what it means to be a good neighbor not only to our human neighbors, but to our wildlife residents as well. This includes also being knowledgeable about weeds and weed control. They should understand how water crosses property and why hunting is a tradition, and know about trail systems, farming practices and what to expect when you live next to a farm or ranch. I find that most people I encounter are interested in becoming an asset to the community and not a hindrance in the new place they call home, but education is key.

TW: *As alluded to, you once lived on the Flying D as an employee and so you understand the importance of the ranch as a sort of refuge for public wildlife away from the intensifying human footprint. The only way to preserve the movements and long-term vitality of elk in the valley is through an accelerated strategy that involves conservation easements, planning and zoning, biologists say. Based on what you've witnessed, how quickly is the window of opportunity closing?*

HP: The window closes a little more each day in the valley and at the South end before the Gallatin Canyon there is little left as a safe passage to the Flying D. I believe that a couple of the herds on this end of town rely solely on the east side of 191 for food, water and shelter. So, they really depend on what happens with development on the east side. Some private landowners are wanting to secure the possibility of development down the road on portions of their land for their children and grandchildren. A safety net of sorts. Therefore, they go forward to get things platted before zoning laws may change. Others have taken a different approach. A few farmers in the south end of the valley have placed crucial areas for the preservation of farming and wildlife habitat in conservation easements, if they could afford to do so. I am very fortunate to have landowner permission to hike and sit and take photos on a few of these properties.

TW: *What about the newcomers who may not understand the correlation between undeveloped land and wildlife?*

HP: Many of the new landowners enjoy the elk and other wildlife that partake in foraging on their land. However, we need to be conscious that it involves safeguarding our farmers' livelihood when they lease land from you and rely on harvest yields. So, should the lessee pay the difference to the farmer? I'm not sure what the answer is. But farmers and ranchers are key to the conservation effort in keeping corridors open



More humans building dream homes and ranchettes can become a nightmare for stressed out wildlife. In Gallatin Gateway, this herd huddles with a jungle gym in the foreground. PHOTO BY HOLLY PIPPLE

and healthy managed populations and putting food on our tables and hay in our barns. Bottom line is there are a lot of people moving to this valley and if we don't preserve the charm and wildness we will lose the very thing that drew us all here.

TW: *Only decades ago, thousands of elk would pass through the southern Gallatin Valley and some of them headed westward to the Flying D and then, in recent years, northward in winter. If we lose these herds what does it say about us and our values?*

HP: For me personally if we lose these herds, it strips away the natural element of the valley that I have cherished and makes me question the very souls of some of us. Knowing that on any given morning I can jump in the truck in my glorified pajamas with my coffee and have spectacular sunrises, sometimes that includes the Gateway Elk, other wildlife cannot be replaced. Going to Yellowstone is wonderful, but these herds are crucial to the character of the Gallatin Range we claim to respect. As I said before, I hope we don't turn into "just another developed valley." At some point I'm hoping the powers that be and citizens choose to come together and preserve what remains.

Wildlife deaths on our highways is way up. Wouldn't it be great to get some esthetically pleasing wildlife corridors built across our busiest highways? They seem to have great success in other states. Not only that but wildlife and our wild places generate millions of dollars in revenue for our state each year. It's big business and another reason to cultivate and protect it.

TW: *Your art and photographs are more than pretty pictures. They speak to the sense of the wildness people living here cherish. When the imagery is on their walls, what message do you hope it conveys?*

HP: When people see my images, I hope it provokes emotions of joy and contemplation and makes us question our place as humans in the natural landscape. What are we willing to do to protect habitat and wildlife while keeping a balance between livelihoods, development and recreation. My message to readers would be to slow down and really watch and listen. You will be surprised what you see and hear.

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



Remote pockets of elk and habitat in the eastern Gallatin Valley are becoming rarer and rarer. PHOTO BY HOLLY PIPPLE



Dying for powder

BY MOLLY ABSOLON
WRITERS ON THE RANGE

Sometimes you hear a crack or a roar. More often the first sign is snow shifting around your feet. The snow starts in a slab and then breaks into blocks that knock you off your skis, careening down in a slide moving as fast as 60 to 80 mph. If you're lucky, you live through it, plastered with snow. If not, you're entombed, hurtled over a cliff, killed.

There have been 36 avalanche fatalities in the U.S. this winter, a streak of avalanche deaths not seen since 1918.

The accidents all occurred at a time when forecasters had rated the avalanche danger considerable or high. Both ratings mean avalanches are likely and travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended, and yet people, including me, chose to venture out despite the warnings. The question is, why?

Research shows that people push the limits of safety in pursuit of a reward, usually in the form of a flush of dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that is released when your brain is expecting pleasure. All of us seek it out in some form. For winter recreationists like me, powder skiing—which at its best feels like flying—is the ultimate dopamine high.

“Dopamine is how we use positive reinforcement to train dogs,” writes Jake Hutchinson, in the April 2021 issue of *The Avalanche Review*. Hutchinson is an avalanche educator based in Utah. “In the same way, it unwittingly trains us. Each ski run we take that doesn't have consequences subconsciously reinforces our behavior.”

Snow is often described as a “wicked” learning environment, a term first used by psychologist Robin Hogarth in 2015. He says a learning environment is like a game of chess, where rules are rigid, the board and pieces visible, and feedback immediate. “Kind” learning environments allow people to learn from their mistakes. But in wicked environments, feedback is delayed or nonexistent; people never learn.

Backcountry skiing is thus a classic wicked environment. Every time you successfully ski a slope without it avalanching, the lesson you take away is “OK, you made a good decision.”

This winter, many skiers became cautious because of the dangerous snowpack and were able to safely recreate even when avalanches were a

concern. Others pushed the envelope, and while most got away with it, 36 people went from the euphoria of a powder run to the terror of being caught in an avalanche.

“We so well understand the rewards of powder skiing, but we as humans fail to grasp the consequences,” says Drew Hardesty, a forecaster for the Utah Avalanche Center. “The subconscious mind does not know death... and on a visceral plane, it remains this esoteric concept... But who among us has experienced the absolute joy and ecstasy of a powder run? Yes, that would be all of us.”

Avalanche educators believe that their efforts over the past 10 to 15 years have had a positive effect in reducing avalanche accidents. Even as numbers of backcountry winter recreationists have risen, avalanche fatalities have been flat or even decreased in recent years. Per capita, the likelihood of dying while skiing in the backcountry still remains rare. Yet deaths by avalanche always make headlines, leaving non-skiers to question what can seem like reckless behavior.

“I don't know anyone who's stood at the top of a slope and thought, ‘Well, this could kill me, but it's going to be epic powder skiing!’” says Jenna Malone, an avalanche educator and physician's assistant in Salt Lake City.

“All of us who ski tour have loved ones, families, people who care about us. No powder turn is worth the pain we would cause them by dying in an avalanche, and on a deep level we all know that. We go anyway. We believe that with training, a solid ski partner who calls us on our blind spots, planning and good decision-making, we can make it safer.”

All of us rationalize our choices. It can be easy to call someone's decisions foolhardy or risky, especially when we don't understand what they are doing. We backcountry recreationists are aware of the potential danger of our sport, but like anyone who puts on a seatbelt when they get in a car, we take steps to minimize our exposure.

Unfortunately, some mistakes will always be tragic.

Molly Absolon is a contributor to Writers on the Range.org, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She subsidizes her passion for outdoor recreation by writing books and articles from her home in Victor, Idaho.



Spring fishing: Post-winter and pre-runoff waters

BY PATRICK STRAUB
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Spring fever is a real thing. For local anglers the day is spent daydreaming of trout lies on the Gallatin, fishing the fast pocket water of the Madison River while gazing toward the snow-capped peaks or loading up the camper and joining the crowds on the Missouri River. The next few weeks for anglers are akin to waking from the bear's den, a fresh season ripe for enjoyment.

Is this the year you finally hike to that high mountain lake or teach your kids to double-haul? Possibly, but keep it simple and take care of yourself before taking care of others—you've earned some stream time after another long Montana winter. Here are the best local waters to alleviate your spring fever.

Gallatin River

The first two weeks of April are a delight for anglers on the Gallatin River. With consistent hatches of Blue Winged Olive mayflies and the prospect of some early caddis or a few late skwala stoneflies, this small freestone produces surface-feeding trout on a daily basis. The only downside of the Gallatin River in early April would be if unseasonably warm weather—daytime highs above 70 degrees—causes the river to rise and become too muddy to fish. If that occurs, head to the Upper or Lower Madison River.

Upper Madison River

The Madison River's reputation precedes itself. Some anglers think it is too crowded nowadays, some anglers think it is best fished with tandem nymph rigs and some anglers wish for the return of the bygone days of large rainbow trout eating marginally presented flies in the river's fast riffles. In April the Upper Madison isn't crowded, there's trout chasing streamers and rising to Blue Winged Olive mayflies, and despite a good drift being essential to fool the river's trout, most anglers willing to put some time into improving their skills can catch trout on the Madison River. Important: April on the Upper Madison is spawning season for many of the river's rainbow trout. Never stand on redds—small gravel that has been scrubbed clean by spawning trout—and never target spawning trout.

Lower Madison River

April on the Lower Madison provides a variety of angling options. Intrepid anglers can hike into the Beartrap Canyon and find relative solitude, especially on a weekday. With the added sunshine of Daylight Savings, on-the-ball anglers can get in a short post-workday float. And unlike the summer months when throngs of swimsuit-clad pleasure floaters dominate the river and water temperatures often climb above 68 degrees, April is arguably the best month of the year for fly fishing the Lower Madison.

Missouri River

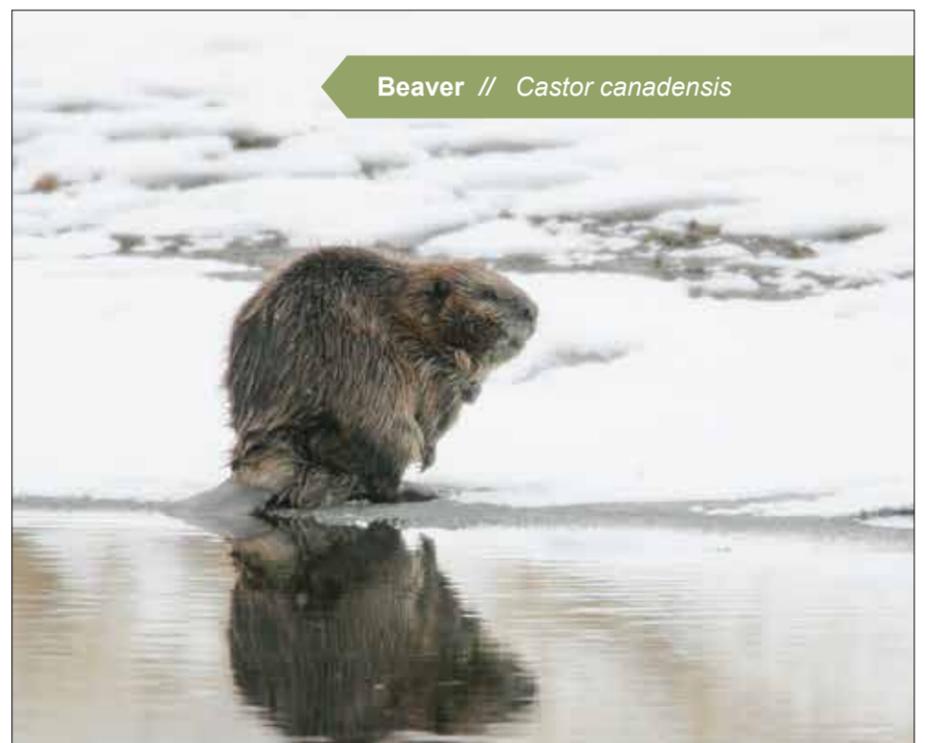
Because the Missouri River originates at Holter Dam, its flows are clear and consistent. Also consistent is the fishing. With strong hatches of Blue Winged Olive mayflies and nearly a half-dozen fly shops expounding on the river's great fishing, the hardest challenge in April is finding which Instagram account to follow. Similar to the Upper Madison, many rainbow trout are still spawning. Never stand on redds—small gravel that has been scrubbed clean by spawning trout—and never target spawning trout.

Secret Creeks

While some anglers measure success in likes or follows, plenty of other anglers like not being followed. With many of our smaller creeks open year-round, early April is ideal for exploring some off-the-beaten-path waters. Before fishing always check current regulations as some creeks remain closed to protect spawning fish.

Spring fever this year is on steroids—a year ago most of us were in lockdown—and with the anticipated boom of summer recreation, we are going to be sharing our waters with a lot of visitors soon. The next few weeks a lot of local anglers come out of hibernation. Be sure to give a friendly nod or tip of the hat to other anglers making their overdue daydreams reality.

Patrick Straub has fished on five continents. He is the author of six books, including "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Fly Fishing" and has been writing the Eddy Line for nine years. He was one of the largest outfitters in Montana, but these days he now only guides anglers who value quality over quantity. If you want to fish with him, visit his website, <https://www.dryflymontana.com/>.



DID YOU KNOW?

- 100 colonies estimated in 2015 in Yellowstone National Park

- One colony may support 2–14 beavers that are usually related. Six is considered average

- YNP's beavers escaped most of the trapping that occurred in the 1800s due to the region's inaccessibility

Unregulated trapping, deforestation, and destruction of dams due to unwanted flooding have continued to affect the beaver population.

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Roy Williams and the NCAA hoops transfer portal

BY AL MALINOWSKI
EBS SPORTS COLUMNIST

On April 1, Roy Williams, the head coach of the North Carolina Tarheels men's basketball team surprised the college hoops world when he announced his retirement. Once it was confirmed that this announcement was not an April Fool's hoax, well-earned accolades began to hit social media recognizing Coach Williams' accomplishments. After all, it's not often a coach of three national championship teams announces his decision to call it quits.

"I no longer feel I am the right man for the job," Williams said during the press conference. More likely than not, there are multiple reasons why he felt this way and I can't help but assume the college basketball transfer portal is one.

Previously, athletes who have signed letters of intent with colleges were ineligible the first year when they decided to transfer to another school. In certain circumstances, the NCAA could review the situation and grant a waiver for the year of ineligibility, though this process seems subjective.

Now it appears the NCAA intends change the rules to grant transfer athletes immediate eligibility at least once. With that assumption in mind, there are currently over 1,000 men from Division 1 basketball programs who have already entered their names in the transfer portal. And that number is expected to grow.

In many cases, the process of recruiting players must be incredibly rewarding for coaches, the players and their families. The primary reason most good people first get involved in coaching is the chance to develop relationships with young people and serve as a mentor. Providing an opportunity to talented athletes to continue to participate in their sport at a college level must be gratifying.

In other instances, recruiting must be frustrating, disillusioning and exhausting. When one considers the dishonest and improper behaviors that can occur in recruiting (and we all know it happens), the time commitment to recruit kids, which often can begin in middle school, must already feel endless.

With the anticipated changes to the transfer portal rules, coaches will now be required to recruit their own players continuously. In my opinion, recruiting is often the first step in developing a relationship but, much like any good relationship, it evolves over time, often with the assistance of adversity.

The transfer-portal process, for some, will never allow those coach-player relationships to work through adverse conditions together and mature. It unfortunately encourages them to avoid adversity rather than overcome it.

Some predict the current transfer-portal climate will encourage other successful coaches to retire earlier than expected. While that prediction may prove true, the good coaches may also find a way to modify their recruitment process.

In the best interest of both players and coaches, I hope that the system can be revised so both sides are held more accountable to the commitment that was made to one another. Then fans of college basketball can go back to worrying about players leaving early for the NBA.

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 and believes participation in competitive athletics has been critical in establishing his core values.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

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Local wrestler grabs fourth at state tourney

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Last year, Owen “O-dog” Edgar, a then-third grader, set a goal for himself: make it to the state wrestling tournament. Due to the pandemic the tournament was canceled, leaving Owen even hungrier for success this year.

“Last year my goal was to make it to state,” Owen said. “This year my goal was to place at state.”

On March 21, 10-year-old Owen finished fourth in the Montana Amateur Athletic Union State Wrestling tournament for 9 and 10-year-olds in the 60-pound weight category.

“Last year, I was supposed to go to state for my first time. Then because of COVID that didn’t happen,” Owen said. “So then for my first time going, getting fourth in state that was really cool.”

Owen has been wrestling for three years now and has been practicing at the Bozeman Wrestling Club and attending Ophir Elementary School since moving with his family from New Jersey to Big Sky. Mark Edgar, Owen’s dad, said one day Owen came home to announce that he wanted to wrestle. Mark and his wife, Kara, were surprised by Owen’s choice, which was inspired by the movie “Rocky.”

Concerned with his safety, Mark’s first instinct was to try and talk him out of it, but he eventually came around.

“He’s clearly excelled at it and he’s a very disciplined child, so the sport has been a great fit for him,” Mark said.

Wrestling has helped Owen become a goal-oriented and driven young athlete.

“We’re just really proud of Owen because he did set two goals for himself this year during COVID,” Mark said. “One was to place in the Montana State Tournament and the second was to ski the Big Couloir. It’s just great to see him set goals and then meet them so we’re really proud of him.”



Owen “O-dog” Edgar finished fourth in the Montana AAU State Wrestling tournament in the 9-10-year-olds, 60 pounds category. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK EDGAR

He met his wrestling goals and had to take a rain check on the Couloir this year. Slide-for-life conditions this season merited a conservative decision to wait until next year, but Mark said the Couloir will definitely be one of Owen’s 2021/22 goals.

Owen’s initial inspiration to pursue the sport came from cinema and now he has a real-world hero, professional wrestler Jordan Burroughs. Owen said he watches Burroughs on TV and does a lot of the same workouts as him.

Owen’s coach, Derry McLane, founded the Bozeman Wrestling Club and has a son who wrestles at Oklahoma State University. The program includes about 75 wrestlers from the area and Owen makes the trip down the canyon

two to three nights a week for 90-minute practices.

Before Owen asked to wrestle, Kara explained that neither she or her husband had seen a wrestling match before, and she said it was hard to watch their son walk onto the mat alone.

“It was an adjustment period for me, just watching the aggression and the technique and learning about the sport, but I am super proud of Owen. He is a very self-driven child,” she said.

Mark echoed Kara saying it is stressful to watch matches but recognizes the sport’s merit.

“I’ve come to learn all the great lessons that [wrestling] teaches that athlete,” Mark said. As an individual sport, there’s no one else to blame for mistakes, he said.

Mark praised the entire wrestling team for being a supportive community with great sportsmanship.

“It’s one-on-one, on the mat. I think that translates into a lot of things in life terms of just owning your responsibility, only you know how hard you’ve worked, how hard you’ve trained, how well you’ve prepared for that moment.”

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Big Sky's freeride athletes vie for world tour qualification

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – A small crowd gathered in Stillwater Bowl on Friday afternoon, eyes turned toward the Headwaters ridgeline at Big Sky Resort, following the tiny movements of the skiers and riders waiting above for their turn to drop into Three Forks for the Freeride World Tour Qualifiers. Gasps and cheers punctuated the crisp spring air alongside the banter of the commentators.

“Bib 32 dropping in three ... two ... one ...” crackled the walkie-talkie on the judge’s table. A lone snowboarder dropped into Three Forks, a run on the far end of the Headwaters ridge, and danced down the side of the mountain, a speck of colorful clothing against a snow-white backdrop.

Now in their third year, the FWQs are hosted by the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation and funnels some of the foundation’s best athletes from their junior freeride programs into the Freeride World Tour where they’ll compete on an international level in resorts in Switzerland, Andorra and Japan. Friday’s event consisted of four-star athletes over the age of 18 in four different categories: ski female, ski male, snowboard female and snowboard male. Each run is judged based on five elements: line control, technique, fluidity, style and energy.

“We’re super stoked to be involved,” said BSSEF’s Head Coach and founder of the FWQ, Wallace Casper. “It’s amazing to be holding events and seeing the other side of being an event organizer and seeing all the back work of it. It’s been a lifelong passion for me and a dream come true.”

Casper, originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, has been skiing competitively since he was 11 at local mountains such as Snowbird and Alta. While at Montana State University, he founded the MSU Freeride Team and ran it for two years before joining BSSEF in 2016. The foundation had all the programs in place to train freeride junior athletes, so Casper saw the opportunity to grow the program to serve adult competitions as well and worked with the FWQ to make it a reality at Big Sky Resort. He says with the mountain’s “steep and gnarly” terrain, it was a natural fit.

“The terrain at Big Sky is world class,” Casper said. “We’re the only resort with triple black diamonds and it just seemed like a great place to hold the FQT.”

See the full FWQ results provided by BSSEF.

Big Sky FWQ 4*						
RESULTS - March 26, 2021 - BIG SKY 4 STAR FINALS						
Judges:						
FEMALE SNOWBOARD						
PLACE	BIB	COUNTRY	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	RESORT/TEAM	RUN 1
1	27	USA	Kiana	Puman		28.2333
2	22	USA	Rose	Struble		28.1333
3	4	USA	Sheila	Girindstaff		26.2667
4	28	CAN	Audrey	Hebert		25.6000
5	36	USA	Hailey	Neutgens		23.2000
6	3	USA	Randa	Shahin-Larkin		20.9333
7	17	USA	Shawna	Mayo		17.7000
8	34	USA	Megan	Ceise		14.6333
MALE SNOWBOARD						
PLACE	BIB	COUNTRY	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	RESORT/TEAM	RUN 1
1	32	USA	Brian	Stenerson		36.1333
2	30	USA	Holden	Samuels		34.3333
3	38	USA	Jack	Hessler		34.3000
4	37	USA	Michael	Mawn		33.6667
5	39	USA	Warren	Doyle		33.6333
6	69	NZL	Conrad	Niven		30.0000
7	7	USA	Patrick	Van Horn		17.9000
8	9	USA	Dave	Zook		15.8000
9	40	USA	Tilden	Woolley		14.8667
10	35	USA	Chance	Lenay		14.6000
11	6	USA	Colin	Lanigan		14.1667
FEMALE SKI						
PLACE	BIB	COUNTRY	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	RESORT/TEAM	RUN 1
1	45	USA	Lily	Bradley		33.5000
2	2	USA	Avery	Bernholtz		32.2000
3	47	USA	Tami	Razinger		30.9333
4	19	USA	Alex	Riedman		30.5333
5	1	USA	Courtney	Smith		30.0333
6	44	USA	Britta	Winans		29.3667
7	41	USA	Katarina	Seibert		28.2000
8	49	USA	Ellie	Oates		28.0667
9	43	USA	Heidi	Livran		27.3000
10	48	USA	Kelsey	Wittels		15.2000
11	42	USA	Taylor	Dobyns		14.2667
12	18	USA	Molly	Armarino		DNF
	46	USA	Jennie	Symons		DNS
	50	USA	Alexi	Mcinaki		DNS
MALE SKI						
PLACE	BIB	COUNTRY	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	RESORT/TEAM	RUN 1
1	58	USA	Leif	Mumma		35.4333
2	24	USA	Jack	Nichols		34.9333
3	5	USA	Race	Bingham		34.7333
4	13	USA	Hank	Bates		33.7000
5	53	USA	Chanc	Deschamps-Prescott		33.3333
6	56	USA	Sidney	Simard		33.2000
7	57	USA	Luuk	MacKenzie		33.1667
8	15	USA	Dominic	Rinaldi		33.0333
9	6	USA	Andrew	Rumph		31.6667
10	14	USA	Finn	Reddish		31.5667
11	16	USA	Tucker	Voilbrecht		30.8667
12	55	USA	Owen	Talimadge		29.9667
13	52	USA	Tyler	Curie		29.8000
14	31	USA	Holden	Bradford		29.3000
15	12	USA	Turner	Petersen		28.8667
16	29	USA	Chase	Samuels		21.9000
17	10	USA	Jedidiah	Kravitz		16.2000
18	26	USA	Eric	Lee O'Brien		15.1667
19	23	USA	Brennan	McCleary		14.0000
20	11	USA	Ryan	Tagawa		DNF
20	20	USA	Max	Bass		DNF
20	54	USA	Evan	Loring		DNF
20	59	USA	Cole	Wettersten		DNF
20	25	USA	Gripen	Moller		DNF
20	51	USA	Colton	Shaff		DNF
20	33	USA	Dillon	Flinders		DNF
20	21	USA	Kyle	Matlock		DNF
20	60	USA	Jasper	Donley		DNF
	61	USA	Ray	McDermott		DNS



Junior members of the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation cheer on competitors from their homemade snow pit. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

Male snowboard competitor Brian Stenerson, who later took first place in his division. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



Disco Dan—Author Dan Egan enjoying some spring skiing weather. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEGAN MEDIA

Ski Tips: Springing away from Old Man Winter

BY DAN EGAN
EBS COLUMNIST

Skiing around the mountain in the flurries of the late spring storm this week, I was thinking about how in Montana, winter doesn't yield to spring easily. Rather, it fights to hold on and reminds us that transitioning from one season to the next requires patience, tenacity and resilience.

Then I started to reflect on this past season and the memories with friends, family and strangers among fresh snow and endless turns—the winter of 2020-21 will not soon be forgotten with the cloud of COVID-19 that hung over us all. This season focused a spotlight on the overarching need for recreation, outdoors and each other. Like winter, the pandemic is lingering, clinging on and is requiring both a collective and individual perseverance.

Overall, let us tip our hats to the resorts that forged ahead with an uncertain future and provided an incredible season across the country that offered so much enjoyment for all of us. After enduring safety protocols, masking up, attempts at socially distanced lift lines, I would say well done ski resorts and thank you for providing access to the mountains.

You didn't have to go beyond the parking lots to see the amount of people that were soaking up winter sports. Families and friends gathered around tailgates, booting up, grilling lunch and creating après ski parties at the end of the day. This festive spirit was present at many resorts and I for one was moved by just how much people appreciated and wanted to enjoy the pleasure of winter.

With the onset of the spring weather, this appreciation has been amplified. Just judging from the retro outfits, I would say people are longing for days gone by. Why not? Spring skiing in soft snow is a delight. To maximize a spring skiing day, remember it is about timing and heading toward the east facing slopes first as the rest of the mountain shakes off the evening freeze. You have to allow enough time for the surfaces to soften from rough frozen tundra to the velvet corn snow we all crave.

When you get it right, the snow peels away under your skis or snowboard and the ride is smooth. Often, it's the groomed slopes that corn up first,

which means it's a time to focus on the quality of the turns and the quantity or the steepness of the slope rather than seeking out the smooth surfaces.

I always remind people that when skiing in the soft spring snow, bring your feet close together to create a wide stable platform to stand on. Make long, wide turns to allow the wide base of the skis to move the snow away under your feet.

The other benefit of this wide stable platform and making long wide turns is that it limits the twisting and torque on your joints, which often can be increased in softer sticky snow. The end result will be a balanced, efficient, smooth, stable run through the soft and the thick spring snow.

Spring skiing is special because it is social, people are happy, outfits are creative and fun and music can be heard from the base of the resort. If you listen in the wind, a collective sigh welcomes the longer days and blue skies.

However, winter has a strange way of holding on. It likes to linger through April with heavy wet snow, strong winds and dark skies shadowing the early spring which comes to life with birds chirping and the strong smell of pine amongst the flurries. It's an annual friendly battle in which winter is destined to lose and spring survives.

This annual struggle is apropos to this year's COVID-19 situation, the disease is fighting to linger, the vaccine is providing relief from the constant tension of the past twelve months and it is renewing our spirits. I'm not sure what the "new normal" will be, but I do know that in this time of year, hope springs eternal. Just like the stubborn winter grip, I for one am going to hold on to that as I make my last turns of the season, milking the last bit of enjoyment out of every turn—be it corn or powder snow.

Extreme Skiing Pioneer, Dan Egan coaches and teaches at Big Sky Resort during the winter. His steep camps run Feb. 25-27, March 4-6 and March 11-13. His newest book, Thirty Years in a White Haze will be released in February, for pre-orders visit www.White-Haze.com for autographed copies.

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Yvon Chouinard thinks food could
save the planet pg. 44



Making it in Big Sky: Big Sky Owners Association

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Big Sky’s largest and oldest homeowner’s association, Big Sky Owners Association, was formed in 1971 and seated its first Board of Directors in 1973. Early on in Big Sky’s history, BSOA served as the main governing body of the area. Today, BSOA serves to preserve, protect and enhance property values in Big Sky.

Some of the services BSOA provides include winter road maintenance, streetlights, speed control road signs and architectural review among many other functions. BSOA oversees over 2,300 properties spread across 8,000 acres spanning both Gallatin and Madison counties. There are nine people on the Board of Directors supported by a full-time staff that runs the organization.

The current Executive Director is Suzan Scott, a fifth generation Montanan who grew up in the state. According to Scott, both sides of her mother’s family are fourth generation Bozemanites and growing up she spent many summers and Christmas holidays in Gallatin Valley. She returned to Big Sky for the third time in 2012 after graduating from Montana State University to work for BSOA.

Explore Big Sky sat down with Scott to learn about the history of BSOA and the organization’s current role in the community.

Explore Big Sky: *What do you do as Executive Director of BSOA?*

Suzan Scott: “I oversee the programs, projects and staffing, as well as administer directives from the board of directors. We have nine people on the board of directors, and the BSOA is structured like a municipality. You have the board of directors performing the same positions as a city commissioner or county commissioner, they’re elected positions. Then you have the administrator, and then you have the staff to implement all of those directives. BSOA does the public services within the jurisdiction, those are the types of things that we oversee on a daily basis, whether that is enforcement of our covenants and governing documents or programs and projects that benefit our members and secondarily benefit the community.”

EBS: *As Big Sky’s largest HOA, what is your current role in the community?*

SS: “Our primary purpose is to support our membership but the BSOA still looks to provide a leadership role within the community and to contribute to the betterment of the community.”

EBS: *What programming and events does BSOA organize?*

SS: “One major thing that we do is the architectural oversight review of construction within the BSOA. If somebody is building a single-family home or a multi-family home, we review it for architectural purposes, the aesthetics of that construction plan, as well as the landscaping and the roads and driveways leading to the structure. This is to ensure that there are no pink houses, and everything is architecturally similar and consistent with the rest of the neighborhood. The zoning of the construction in Big Sky has already been implemented by the county, once they go to the county then they come back to the BSOA to submit plans of their construction and then we review that.”

EBS: *What makes BSOA different from other owners associations?*

SS: “We are very unique. When I first became the Executive Director, like my predecessor, I researched other HOAs to see how other HOAs do it. Since we’re unincorporated there’s just not anybody really like us in the United States. Generally the HOAs operate under a municipality, so we’re very unique, and we’re very large for an HOA as well. We cover 8,000 acres and we’re close to 2,400 properties. We have about 70 sub-associations and condo associations and subdivisions underneath us. We’re the master association and then we have those existing sub associations, condo associations and subdivisions that we oversee.”

EBS: *How does BSOA partner with other organizations in Big Sky?*

SS: “We partner with Big Sky County Water & Sewer District, we have also partnered with Big Sky Community Organization in the past, and somewhat with the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. I anticipate we will be partnering with the Gallatin River Task Force on a pond project. We own the Silver Bow ponds in back of the Silver Bow Condominium Association, as well as Little Coyote Pond across from the community park. For years we’ve been trying to dredge that out and make that into a viable fishing pond, it continues to silt in, and because of state requirements, as well as federal requirements, we haven’t dredged that and made that into a fishing pond yet. However, we have

been working with Big Sky County Water & Sewer District on that. We anticipate to also work with the Gallatin river Task Force on collaborating there as well. The Big Sky Chapel is interested in sharing a parking lot for that purpose for recreation and they’re planning to expand their parking lot. There are lots of ways that we can partner and cooperate with various organizations within Big Sky.”

EBS: *Tell me about the transition of BSOA away from being a quasi-municipality?*

SS: “We were the only game in town, in 1971 we were created by Chet Huntley as a quasi-municipality and since then Big Sky has grown so Town Center is outside of BSOA, Yellowstone Club is outside of us and Moonlight Basin and Spanish Peaks. As the community continues to grow our jurisdiction remains the same. However, the percentage of area that we cover and the number of residents and properties that we oversee declined. Town Center wasn’t there when we first were created, neither was Big Sky County Water & Sewer District ... BSOA started up the Big Sky Community Organization because we needed trails and recreation. We were very closely tied to the resort as well, many of the representatives from the resort were on the board. As I understand it, we got Big Sky Resort Area District going as well. There was a natural resource council that we started so we’ve been integral in expanding and assisting the growth of the community in that way.”

EBS: *How has BSOA’s role in the community changed over the years?*

SS: “Within the last 49 years, BSOA’s role has changed somewhat but our mission has remained the same. When the resort and Big Sky were first developed as an unincorporated area, BSOA was created as the pseudo-municipality for the Big Sky community in 1971. Since then, BSOA has been instrumental in creating many of the organizations that assist in governing the area today. Also, as Big Sky grows, the percentage of the area that BSOA governs becomes smaller. For instance, Town Center, Yellowstone Club, Moonlight and Spanish Peaks are all outside the BSOA jurisdiction.”

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

SS: “Expect the best, prepare for the worst, capitalize on what comes.”



The BSOA board convenes at a 2018 meeting. The current chair of the BSOA board is Eric Ossorio and there are nine board members. PHOTO COURTESY OF BSOA

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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, April 9 – Thursday, April 22

If your event falls between April 23 and May 6, please submit it by April 14 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, April 9

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Uncorked and Unplugged: Jacob Rountree

Blend – Wine Bar & Gallery, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 10

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Bozeman Winter Farmers Market

Gallatin County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.

Sunday, April 11

Virtual Screening of “2040”

Viewing at: gallatinvalleyearthday.org

Afternoon Tea

Starlite, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

Monday, April 12

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Gallatin Watershed Business Stewardship Webinar

Register: gallatinwatershedcouncil.org/events, 12 p.m.

Tuesday, April 13

Wind Energy Basics Talk

Register: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 12 p.m.

Service Industry Night

Blend – Wine Bar & Gallery, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

Wednesday, April 14

Universal Athletics Warehouse Sale

Gallatin County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.

Open Mic Comedy Night

J & Company Bar, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 15

Live Poker

Cat's Paw, Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Sunrise Karaoke

Eagles Bar, Bozeman, 9 p.m.

Friday, April 16

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Live Music: Donnie's Inferno

Kountry Korner Kafé, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 17

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Gallatin Valley Earth Day Festival

Bozeman Public Library, 10 a.m.

Bozeman Winter Farmers Market

Gallatin County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.

Sunday, April 18

Landscaping for Birds

Bridger Bowl, All Day

Big Sky Resort Closing Day

Big Sky Resort, 9 a.m.

Monday, April 19

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

The Effect of Climate Change on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

Viewing at: bridgerbowl.com

Get Started on Zero Waste

Online: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 20

Bozeman Public Library Book Club: Grain by Grain

Online: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 6:30 p.m.

Books in Common Discussion

Online: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 21

People and Wildlife: Conservation and Coexistence

Online: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 12 p.m.

Your Energy Efficient Home

Online: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 22 (Earth Day)

Special Earth Day Celebration

Online: gallatinvalleyearthday.org, 7 p.m.

Bucket Night

Bar IX, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

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WMPAC ends season, looks forward to summer

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – In the 19th century, parlor music was a popular form of entertainment. Singers and musicians would put on small, intimate performances in the parlor of their own homes for the enjoyment of a small group of family members and guests. On Friday, March 26, the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center hosted their own parlor concert featuring the Cascade Quartet from Great Falls on stage, and the Kronos Quartet, who joined virtually on-screen. Attendees were in for a rare treat—spaced out on stage with the musicians themselves, we could practically feel the vibrations of the string instruments in harmony as they played.

“Of course with classical chamber music, a lot of times the way it was written, it was meant for experiences like this—parlor concerts—the idea of being in living rooms with the players so that we can actually hear what is being said by composers,” said WMPAC’s Executive Director, John Zirkle on stage before the show. “We’ve had some performances of new music in the past and there’s an ethos on new music that says, you know, to really grasp it, you need to get on top of the music. And tonight we’re really going to have that opportunity.”

The Cascade Quartet includes violinists Mary Papoulis and Megan Karls, violist Alyssa Roggow, and cellist Thad Suits. The group was established by the Great Falls Symphony Association in 1978 with the intention of bringing live string music to local audiences and enriching the community. In addition to performing all over the state of Montana and the northwest, the resident quartet has successful outreach and educational programs in the local schools as well as the Great Falls Youth Symphony.

Cascade’s talent has reached national recognition—in 1996 they were one of five ensembles selected for Chamber Music America’s Educator/Ensemble Seminar at Oberlin Conservatory, and in 1998 the quartet participated in a cultural exchange concert series with the Lethbridge Quartet from Canada. In 2003, the quartet collaborated with cellist Yo-Yo Ma alongside his concerto performance with the Great Falls Symphony.

San Francisco’s Kronos Quartet is made up of violinists David Harrington and John Sherba, Hank Dutt on viola, and Sunny Yang on cello. The San Francisco-based classical group focuses on modern classical music and is considered one of the most celebrated and influential classical groups of our time, performing thousands of concerts and collaborating with many of the world’s most accomplished composers and performers.

Kronos’ newest undertaking, “50 for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire,” is a string quartet commission, performance, education and legacy project, which offers free sheet music of their original compositions so musicians all over the world can hone their craft.

March 26 was one of four performances featuring Cascade and Kronos, and the final show on the center’s winter marquee.

“This is the final show of this season, we’ve made it through the year, and the way I’m really viewing this is like the coda in music—it’s like a big exhale at the end of quite a long year,” Zirkle said.

He noted that although it was a strange and difficult year of adapting the performing arts parallel to a pandemic that prevents us from gathering, WMPAC’s winter season, because of its virtual platform WMPAC, live, reached more viewers than ever before—nearly 10,000 total. Zirkle’s personal favorite adaptation was “Through the Fourth Wall,” in which they transformed the WMPAC stage into a life-sized escape room type game that served 400 people through 71 unique experiences—all without a live performance.

Despite the challenges, Zirkle is optimistic about the center’s upcoming summer season and looks forward to integrating more of the offerings that worked well in winter, including an outdoor performance in the woods. He’s also eager to reach newcomers who have arrived with Big Sky’s growth.

“Right now we need to rebirth,” Zirkle told EBS. “This last year has been devastating. We are still here. We’re still a new center so there were things that were working really well before we had to close down so we want to get back to that.”



For the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center’s final show of the winter season, the Cascade Quartet from Great Falls performed on stage, and the Kronos Quartet joined virtually on-screen for a unique collaboration. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



Lena Marie Schiffer

'Laney Lou' keeps singing through the pandemic

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – It seems that most of Lena Marie Schiffer's life has been guided by music. The frontwoman of Bozeman folk and bluegrass band Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs began singing in high school choir and expanded her guitar and vocal skills by jamming with friends until she moved out to Bozeman and put in a Craigslist ad to meet local musicians. Through that ad she met the Bird Dogs' vocalist, banjo and dobro player, Matt Demarais, and alongside brother Ethan Demarais on bass, Brian Kassay on fiddle, mandolin and harmonica, and Josh Moore on vocals and guitar, the Bird Dogs took full shape in 2013.

Eight years later, the Bird Dogs just finished recording their fifth album, to be released in June, at the Panoramic House in Stinson Beach, California. It follows their 2019 first full-length studio album, "Sweet Little Lies," and three live albums.

"We're really proud of the work we've done on this [new] album," Schiffer said. "It was a huge release for our band to be able to have that time to work on that album. I think it's the best work we've done yet. We actually had the time to write these songs, versus when we're full time touring."

Pre-pandemic, the Bird Dogs were following a hefty touring schedule that spanned the West Coast and northern Rockies. When COVID-19 limited their ability to perform, Schiffer turned her energies toward solo and duo performing with fiancé Ryan Acker



Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs have been a Bozeman bluegrass and folk staple since 2013 when Schiffer (second from left) met Matt Demarais (third from left) through a Craigslist ad. PHOTO BY TYLER REL

in their pandemic-built home studio under the name the Canoe Dealers. The two met when the Bird Dogs opened for Acker's band, The Last Revel, at the 2014 Red Ants Pants Music Festival, stayed in touch, and started jamming soon after Acker moved to Bozeman and the two began dating in 2019.

One show in which they tested out their newfound chemistry was for Explore Big Sky's Friday Afternoon Club, right around the start of lockdown. The two played in their backyard and spoke candidly of the uncertainties much of the community was feeling collectively at the time. Schiffer says playing onstage with two people as opposed to five has been interesting—it allows for more of a conversation with the audience.

"It's more of an intimate experience, I think," she said. "With the full bands it's more of a spectacle. It's more of an energy output, more of a big event, and with the duo especially in the pandemic, we've really enjoyed

interacting with the crowds and having that back and forth relationship."

They say of both their bands that the time off has provided each musician space to breathe a little, and evolve as artists. Schiffer is optimistic live music isn't going to be stifled for long—the world craves it after a year of quiet stages. The Bird Dogs are fully booked for the summer already and the Canoe Dealers are making a name for themselves, but the most important thing to Schiffer is that music remains in her future.

"Art has always persevered through tough times," she said. "Artists are resilient people ... We've all been prepping for the release, and fans are ready to hear it."

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Gallery spotlight: Out of Africa In Montana

When art meets conservation

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Out of Africa In Montana Gallery in Bozeman specializes in collections of sporting, falconry, African and North American wildlife, and Western Fine Art. Gallery owner Skip Tubbs supports conservation efforts. These two elements are no coincidence.

Upon entry, you'll be faced with beautiful pieces from worldwide artists such as Simon Combs, Bob Kuhn and Julie Jeppen. Just as many visitors to the area come to Montana to experience the presence of wildlife, visitors to the gallery will be graced with the same force of presence among their likenesses.

In addition to impressive pieces at their location on 1050 E. Main St., Out of Africa In Montana Gallery is currently displaying art pieces "A Brush with the Wild, An Exhibit of Sporting and Wildlife Art" at the Bozeman Art Museum. The exhibit is on display through July 10 and is sponsored by Ducks Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Wild Sheep Foundation to raise awareness about Montana conservation efforts.

"The conservation groups are excited to support the art that shows what they're trying to support and preserve," said gallery manager Patty Boyd. "Without the conservation dollars that the hunter provide a lot of these habitats aren't going to be able to be conserved."

The gallery's roots began 40 years ago in 1980 as Artist Union Editions, a framing shop in the Downtowner Mall on Willson Avenue, then later as Framework Designs when they moved to Main Street in 1982. Around 1983, the frame shop began representing original print and etching artists in small art shows to benefit wildlife conservation efforts in the area. Tubbs' travels to Africa inspired him to begin representing African artwork, and in the mid 1990s, the Out of Africa In Montana Gallery took shape as a separate entity.

The gallery, separated off from the Framework Designs Custom Framing business, opened a location in Bridger Peaks Town Center off of 19th Avenue until finally



Out of Africa Gallery in Bozeman specializes in collections of sporting, Falconry, African and North American wildlife, and Western Fine Art. PHOTO COURTESY OF OUT OF AFRICA IN MONTANA

separating completely in 2005, and since 2007, Out of Africa In Montana Gallery has been serving art lovers from their location on East Main Street.

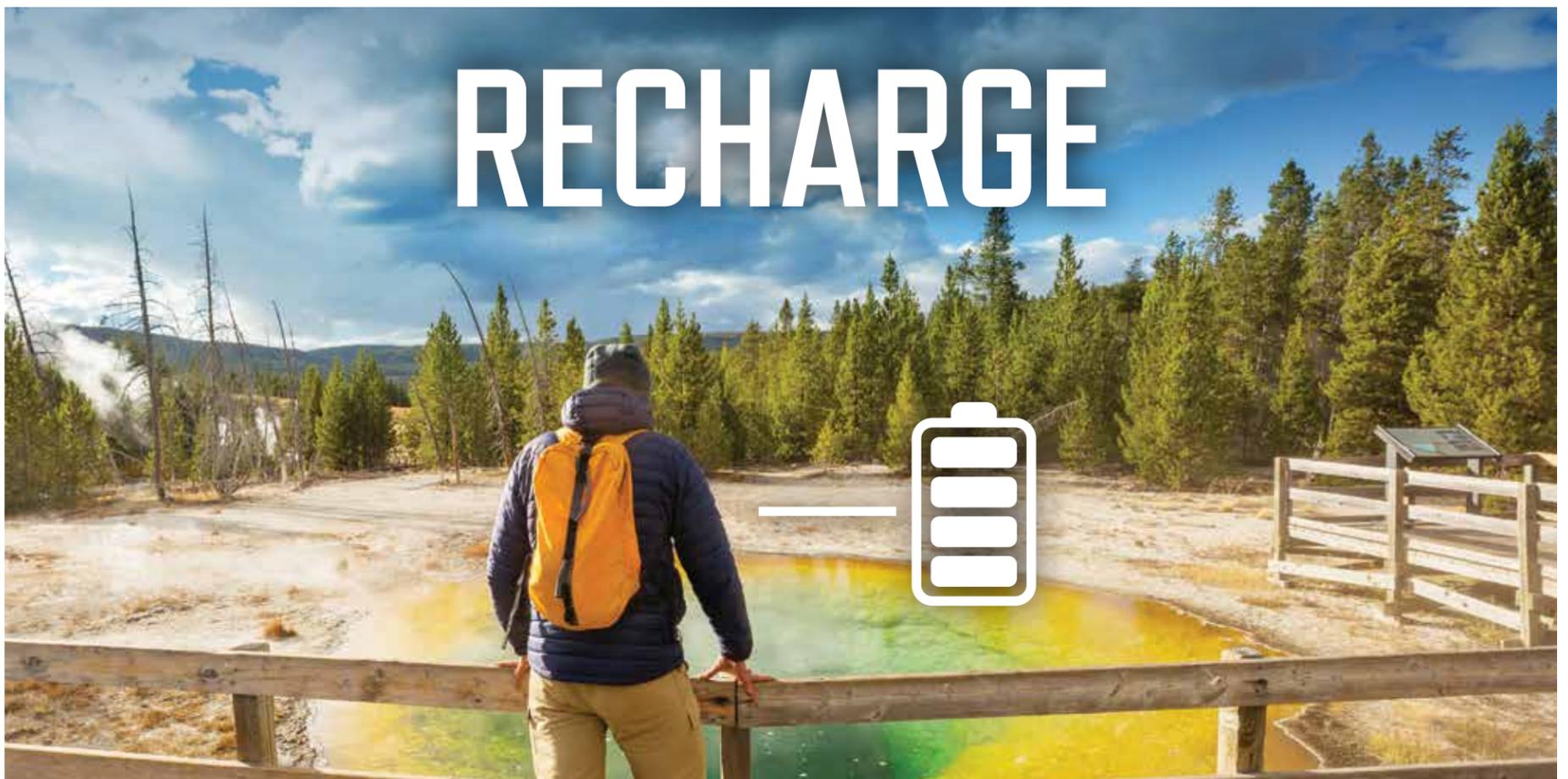
It was truly a gallery operation born out of passion, says Boyd, who joined as manager about a year and a half ago. Over the decades, customers have trusted Out of Africa In Montana Gallery to provide quality work and artists have trusted them to represent them.

Out of Africa In Montana Gallery will be joining the Big Sky Art Auction for the second time this summer, providing an eclectic variety of pieces including a Navajo rug and modern paintings. The gallery is currently open by appointment—you can visit their website for more information.

"I'm excited," Boyd said. "I want quality work in there for the bidder to choose from, I want the artist to be supported doing what they're born to do, and I also want the auction to win because I want the auction to continue every year."

Out of Africa In Montana Gallery will be featured at this year's Big Sky Art Auction from July 16 through 18.

Visit bigskyartauction.com for more information.



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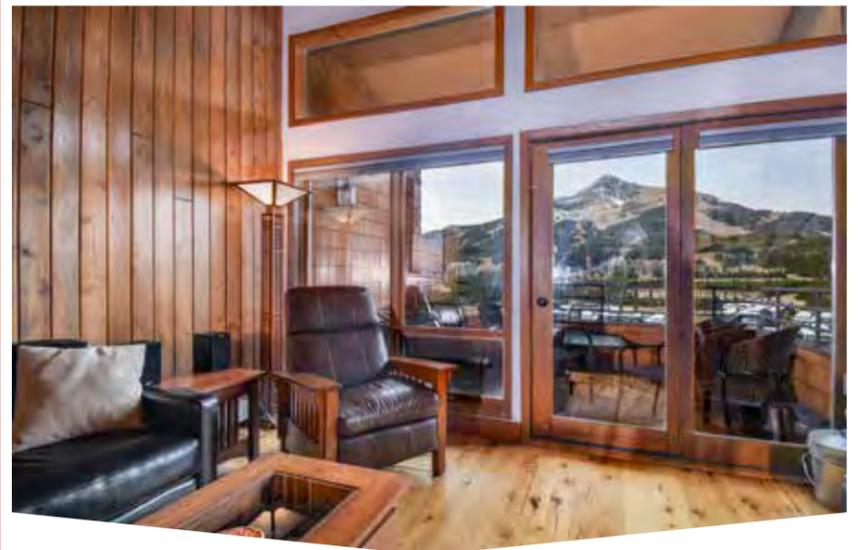
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Big Sky Virtual Kitchen launches new Wine Series

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – Gathering around a table laden with food and wine with your loved ones is as much a part of being human as eating itself. When the pandemic stripped such comfort away and dining tables lost their social splendor, the Big Sky Community Organization's Richard Sandza brought forth the Big Sky Virtual Kitchen as a way to connect the community and advocate for local restaurateurs. Now Sandza, his business partner Andrew Robin and the Hungry Moose Market & Deli's wine expert, Ben MacKall, have partnered to launch the first-ever BSVK Wine Series, starting in April.

The virtual food and wine pairing class will kick off April 14 and members will meet the second Wednesday of each month. The first class will focus on South African wines, and feature three different bottles and a deep-dive into the unique elements of each. It's a fun way to gather with household members, enjoy good wine and food and learn something new along the way.

"The reason I'm so happy to be involved in wine is that it is something that sparks conversation," MacKall said. "My passion is for teaching and introducing people to new things and the wine world is such an exciting way to do that."

Sandza, camp manager for the Big Sky Community Organization, is no stranger to organizing social events—in fact, summer camps are why he moved to Big Sky in the first place, and he is now entering his third season with BSCO. When lockdown began, he started BSVK as a way to keep people busy and mentally healthy by offering free cooking and baking classes virtually over Facebook Live.

"We realized that when the weather isn't great there isn't a whole lot else to do," Sandza said. "It's really the mid-20s population—they only have so many resources available: you either go skiing or your go drink. So we wanted to create another place, and an outlet for that demographic."

Today the BSVK Facebook group has nearly 1,000 members. Sandza and Robin have registered BSVK as an LLC and hope to keep growing and offering this creative outlet to the community as well as a venue for local business owners and restaurateurs to connect. The Wine Series will mark the first wine-specific class.

"The Wine Wednesdays is kind of the perfect thing to get us to pre-launch the virtual kitchen [again]," Sandza said. "We wanted to keep this going because we were really passionate about how it connects the community as well as partnerships with local business owners."

Though cooking classes have been on pause since around December, local Ashley Dodd has been hosting weekly baking classes through the year.

"I've worked in kitchens before and at the Hungry Moose," Sandza added. "Food has always been a gathering point for me and that's a good way to show you care—cooking a meal for someone else."

MacKall says some of his favorite wines right now are out of South Africa, and he also appreciates smaller, domestic wineries that are practicing natural winemaking, which involves responsible, organic farming methods. He believes Big Sky, alongside its growth, is experiencing a new appreciation for wine.

"Because we're a tourist-driven town, we have all these people coming in from the cities [that] are driving this progress in this interest in new and different things," MacKall said.

Wine Series members will receive a list of ingredients and recipe for the night's meal pairing so attendees can shop beforehand. The series will utilize EventBrite as a way for members to sign up for each session. Night-of, viewers can ask questions live engage with other participants from Big Sky and beyond—Sandza and Robin say they've had attendees as far as Salt Lake City.

"What I really love about this idea is how many aspects of the community it hit on," Robin said. "You're working with local restaurants and chefs, you're working with community members ... and then on top of that working with the Hungry Moose—pretty much everyone involved has been someone local."

Check out the Wine Series on April 14 at the rate of \$70 per household, or \$60 for Hungry Moose Wine Club members, and join in as BSVK and MacKall present the exciting wine scene in South Africa, covering a couple of the country's most important varietals. Visit Big Sky Virtual Kitchen's Facebook page for more information and EventBrite for tickets.

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The Big Sky Virtual Kitchen Wine Series starts. Join in as BSVK and Hungry Moose wine expert Ben Mackall present the exciting wine scene in South Africa and cover a couple of the country's most important varietals. PHOTO COURTESY OF BSVK

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.

Will every kitchen become a ghost kitchen?



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

Just what is a Ghost Kitchen anyway?

This term refers to a commercial kitchen that is used for delivery food only and isn’t connected to a brick and mortar brand. A ghost kitchen can often be used for more than one concept or by more than one brand.

Not to be confused with a commissary kitchen, in which food is prepped in a (typically) centralized location for distribution and sale in a brand’s commercial locations.

And though ghost kitchens have existed in some form or another for decades, they are more prevalent now than ever.

Founded in 2012, Blue Apron has seen incredible success with the pre-prepped, cook at home meal delivery concept. Since their inception in 2012, the number of meals they’ve delivered is in the neighborhood of 20 million. A similar meal prep company based out of Berlin Germany, Hello Fresh delivers meals to several countries in North America and Europe.

They make sense. After all, how often do you either hear someone say, or think to yourself “who has time to shop and cook anymore?”

They inherently eliminate one key aspect of the commercial restaurant, which is the social interaction factor.

And unfortunately, they now have more competition than they probably ever imagined.

I say unfortunately not because these two companies literally have more competition, but rather because their new competition comes to them by way of thousands of restaurants across America duplicating this concept in order to stay alive, or they have been financially reduced to only being able to provide their product to the consumer this way.

But a question my colleagues and I have asked, is are these ghost kitchens our future?

It is being reported that over 60 percent of restaurants in Los Angeles will not reopen after being forced to close in 2020. To me, statistics like this often need vetting, but I don’t believe it could be that far off, given what I know about our industry and California’s restrictions.

Closer to home, not everyone in the Gallatin Valley survived 2020, including one of my personal favorite restaurants in town, Saffron Table. My friend Roth, managing partner of Montana Ale Works, tells me he has had many sleepless nights, wondering if they could keep their lights on going forward—an unthinkable question for what has been a Bozeman institution since 1999 and unofficially, Montana’s highest-grossing restaurant.

From Bozeman to Los Angeles, all across the country, thousands of restaurants have been forced to move to this concept or close up shop altogether. Few things make me sadder in an industry I have bled, sweated and cried with for decades.

How many chefs figuratively weep when they put their culinary creations meant for beautiful plates and serving vessels, dishes that are temperature and time sensitive, into Styrofoam, cardboard or plastic? Only to have the recipient eat said dish sometimes up to an hour later and judge this chef and restaurant’s product as only being “fine” when it was never meant for this application in the first place.

And all the while, these hardworking businesses are simply trying to keep their doors open.

Though not entirely accurate, the term ghost kitchen also goes by many other names, such as virtual kitchen, delivery-only restaurants, commissary kitchens, dark kitchens and shadow kitchens. And unfortunately, I fear shadow kitchen may turn out to be the most accurate name, given that many restaurants across America have already become shadows of their former selves.

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 based restaurant group.

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American Life in Poetry

BY KWAME DAWES

I have heard so many poets say that they feel like outcasts, until they meet other outcasts and dreamers, people who seem to feel like them, and suddenly they feel affirmed in their difference, and, as it turns out, their place in community. It is likely what Safiya Sinclair means in her elegant poem, "The Ragged and the Beautiful" published in the always engaging "immigrant and refugee" journal, *The Bare Life Review*, when she declares being "strange/ and unbelonging" as, being, at the same time, "perfectly" beautiful.

The Ragged and the Beautiful

By Safiya Sinclair

Doubt is a storming bull, crashing through the blue-wide windows of myself. Here in the heart of my heart where it never stops raining,

I am an outsider looking in. But in the garden of my good days, no body is wrong. Here every flower grows ragged and sideways and always

beautiful. We bloom with the outcasts, our soon-to-be sunlit, we dreamers. We are strange and unbelonging. Yes. We are just enough

of ourselves to catch the wind in our feathers, and fly so perfectly away.

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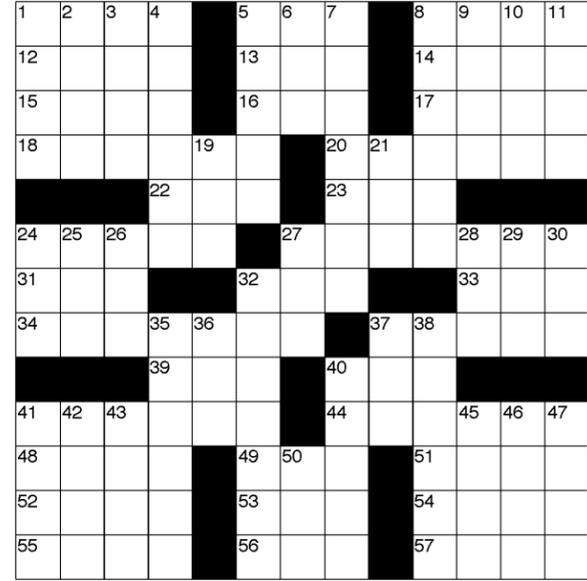
Corner Quote

“She was not a slowpoke grownup. She was a girl who could not wait. Life was so interesting she had to find out what happened next.”

- Beverly Cleary, "Ramona the Pest"

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BIG SKY BEATS

Songs for your next road trip BY GABRIELLE GASSER

The last time I went on a road trip with friends was in pre-pandemic times, and I miss it. I miss driving through wide-open fields, over mountain passes and towards what promises to be a great adventure. A large component of the road trip mood is, of course, the tunes you jam to on the way. In a fit of nostalgia, I gathered together a collection of songs that are best heard with the windows rolled down driving in the middle of nowhere. Or, if you prefer to stay stationary, they are a great relaxation playlist for lying outside and appreciating the great views.

1. "Blame it on the Tetons" by Modest Mouse
2. "Mountain Sound" by Of Monsters and Men
3. "Blue Ridge Mountains" by Fleet Foxes
4. "Colorado" by Sam Burchfield
5. "As We Ran" by The National Parks
6. "All The Debts I Owe" by Caamp
7. "Morning Light" by Wilderado
8. "Rivers and Roads" by The Head and the Heart
9. "Ends of the Earth" by Lord Huron
10. "Walden Pond" by Atta Boy
11. "Humbug Mountain Song" by The Fruit Bats
12. "Rainbows and Ridges" by Whitney
13. "Dead Sea" by the Lumineers
14. "Tomorrow" by Shakey Graves
15. "June" by Briston Maroney



PHOTO BY EBERHARD GROSSGASTEIGER ON UNSPLASH

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”



Future farmers learn regenerative organic practices in a training program at Rodale Institute in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. PHOTO COURTESY OF RODALE INSTITUTE

Yvon Chouinard thinks food could save the planet

BY EMILY STIFLER WOLFE

With hands thick and weathered from decades of rock climbing and blacksmithing, Yvon Chouinard piles veggies onto a plate for lunch. Focused on the organic salad bar at Patagonia’s Ventura, California, headquarters, he selects spinach, kale, romaine, edamame, radishes, fennel, quinoa, cashews. By the end he’s got a bit of everything. Literally.

In flip-flops, a short-sleeved button-down and what he told me earlier are 20-year old pants (all Patagonia), Chouinard shuffles over to the hot bar where an employee serves us mashed sweet potatoes and black bean patties (“These are really good,” he says, grinning.), and then to the checkout counter. As founder and owner of the leading outdoor clothing and gear retailer Patagonia, Chouinard pays for his food in the company’s subsidized cafeteria, just like everyone else.

Seated at one of the long tables, we hunch together to hear each other as employees pass us on their way to eat outside. “What’s important is a varied diet,” he says, “as many different things as you can get.” He’s referring to the unique nutrients of each veggie on his own lunch plate, but also to eating foods like eggs from free-range chickens, which themselves consume a wide range of plants and insects.

Now 80, Chouinard is all of 5 feet 4 inches tall but remains a giant in the world of rock climbing and conservation. He established cutting-edge climbs in the U.S. and Canada during the sport’s 1960s and ‘70s golden age and got his start in business by forging steel climbing gear in the late 1950s, which he sold out of the back of his car to fund outdoor adventures. Patagonia is now a billion-dollar company that’s donated more than \$100 million to grassroots environmental causes. It has long been an innovator in

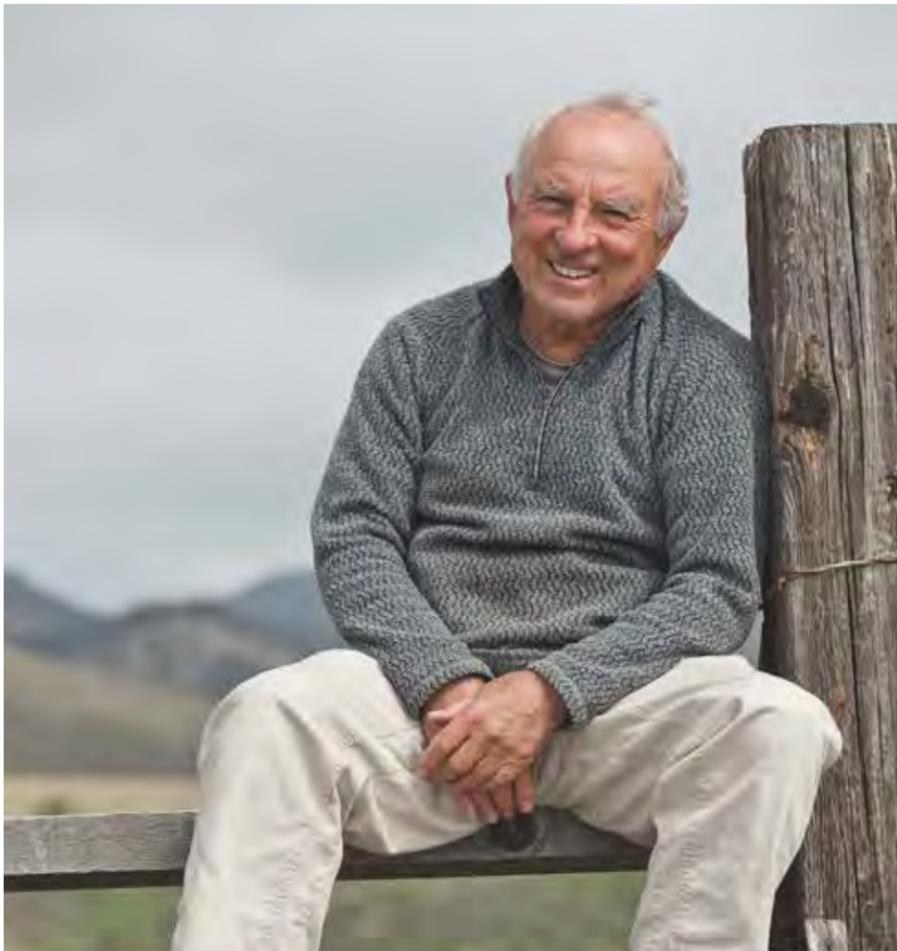
apparel, visual storytelling and activism. A diehard outdoorsman, Chouinard spends around half his time fly fishing and surfing, and half at work. But he’s not sitting at a desk trying to sell more clothes. He’s out to stop the climate crisis, and he wants to do it through agriculture.

“We’re losing the planet. We really are,” he told me earlier that morning in his office upstairs, his voice gravelly. “And I’m not going to let it go without fighting, so we have to try harder.”

Chouinard, who is sometimes compared to conservation greats John Muir and David Brower before him, has become increasingly vocal about the role of private business in protecting the environment and public land. Maybe you’ve read how the company’s philanthropic giving has benefited the bottom line, how it sued the Trump administration for rescinding a million acres of southern Utah’s Bears Ears National Monument, or how it backed Senatorial candidates including Montana Democrat Jon Tester, a conservationist and public lands advocate. Both Chouinard and Patagonia will likely become even louder as they try living up to the company’s new mission: “We’re in business to save our home planet.”

For Patagonia, that means going carbon neutral and non-extractive by 2025, getting deeper into politics, and boosting support for conservation work — Chouinard estimates within five years they’ll be giving \$50 million annually to grassroots environmental groups. And in 2012, he started Patagonia Provisions, a separate division of the company that sells sustainably produced and harvested foods like organic grains and responsibly caught salmon. Its goal is to create a market for climate-friendly foods.

If this seems a far cry from outdoor clothing, think again. Patagonia has woven its interest in agriculture into textiles since switching to organic



Yvon Chouinard at his ranch in Wyoming. PHOTO BY JEFF JOHNSON/COURTESY OF PATAGONIA

cotton in the 1990s after new T-shirt shipments made staff sick at a Boston retail store. Treated with formaldehyde like many garments, the shirts woke Chouinard to the toxic nature of conventionally grown cotton. But, with little industry demand, Patagonia had to create its own supply chain, something it's since done with hemp, wool, Yulex (a wetsuit fabric made from tree rubber instead of the petroleum-based neoprene), and now food.

"Agriculture as it relates to food is one of the biggest contributors to climate change," said Birgit Cameron, managing director for Patagonia Provisions. Indeed, agriculture and associated land-use account for a third of global greenhouse gas emissions and 70 percent of water consumption, according to research conducted by the World Bank. But, Cameron says, through regenerative organic agriculture, food may also offer solutions.

This style of land management uses a combination of older farming techniques including crop rotation, reduced tillage, cover crops and livestock integration. The practice can increase yields, reduce costs, improve water and soil quality, and sequester carbon. The idea is to have the water, nutrient and energy cycles mimic those occurring in nature, says Dwayne Beck, research manager at the Dakota Lakes Research Farm in Pierre, South Dakota, and a leader in the field.

"If you don't do that, then the ecosystem collapses. You're mining," said Beck, also a Ph.D. professor in South Dakota State University's Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science Department.

The field is growing quickly and studies show it could help solve some of the world's most pressing problems, among them hunger and climate change. Project Drawdown, a science-based proposal to roll back greenhouse gas emissions within 30 years, rates regenerative agriculture as number 11 in the top 100 existing solutions. Beck cautions we need more peer-reviewed science to define which techniques are truly regenerative. Organic production, for example, can be unhealthy for the environment and humans because it's difficult to accomplish without tillage, and organic pesticides aren't regulated or tested at the same level as commercial ones. Practice standards are

also needed, and those should be defined with input from consumers and farmers, Beck says, not big business.

But none of that is stopping Patagonia. "We know enough to run down this road as fast as we can," Cameron said. "If we wait for perfection, it'll be too late." This has meant supporting producers, educating consumers and joining partners, including the Rodale Institute, a research and educational nonprofit, and the soap company Dr. Bronner's, in creating an independent Regenerative Organic Certification. On the clothing side, Patagonia this past year started a pilot program with 166 farmers in India to grow organic cotton using regenerative practices on two- to five-acre plots. The farmers also turned a profit with their cover crop, turmeric. Next year, the pilot will include around 475 farmers, proving that the industry can create jobs.

One of the challenges for the regenerative agriculture movement will be large-scale adoption, although there's momentum there, too: In early 2019, General Mills, one of the country's largest food manufacturers and producer of Cheerios, Annie's and Yoplait, pledged to advance regenerative agricultural practices on a million acres by 2030.

For Chouinard, Patagonia Provisions has shown that business is capable of doing more good than harm, for both the planet and for humanity. That's why he wants to prove that the better something tastes — like a tiny wild strawberry compared to a big store-bought organic one — the more nutritious it is. People will pay for that, he says, and it's the key to success.

During our time together at the Patagonia headquarters, he brings nearly every conversation back to food. I hear how he finally got worms in his home garden (filtering out chlorine from his hose water), about the cancer-reducing properties in wild-grazed bison meat, and about the effects of industrial agriculture on the human microbiome and the environment. I even score his sourdough pancake recipe. In Chouinard's view, all these things are connected. We are all connected. But he knows efforts like Patagonia's would have to gain traction worldwide to make a difference.

"Every business needs to change their mission statement to saving the planet," he says. "I really believe we need a revolution, [and] the only revolution we're likely to have is in agriculture. It solves a tremendous number of the world's problems."

Modifying business objectives may be a tall order in the profit-driven world of modern capitalism but it's critical, and like all lasting change, Chouinard says, it can only start small.

A version of this story was first published in the Summer 2019 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.



Yvon Chouinard in his original blacksmithing shop at the Patagonia headquarters in Ventura, California. PHOTO BY TIM DAVIS / COURTESY OF PATAGONIA



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