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Big Sky

June 4 - 17, 2021
Volume 12 // Issue #12

**LPHS students present:
Legally Blonde**

Beloved librarian retires

Brad Niva takes the helm

**Man Therapy:
Ending stigma with stereotype**

Landscaping to protect the Gallatin



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ON THE COVER:

In LPHS' rendition of Legally Blonde: The Musical, Elle Woods, played by Emily Graham, lays surrounded by her Greek Chorus shortly after being dumped by her boyfriend Warner, played by Michael Romney. Woods goes on to enter Harvard Law School, win her first case and find a new love all without losing her pink-hued luster. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

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LPHS students present: Legally Blonde

The cast of Legally Blonde: The Musical brought a creative twist to a classic blockbuster with their dynamic performance. The production spanned four shows on May 25 and 26 and offered a perfect balance of humor, song and dance, all in a classic storyline of finding your worth.

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Beloved librarian retires

After 30 years teaching at LPHS and Ophir, Kathy House retires, leaving behind a substantial legacy. Serving as both the school librarian and the director of the Big Sky Community Library, House shaped many young readers and made lasting connections.

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Brad Niva takes the helm

The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky welcomed Brad Niva to his new role as CEO of both organizations on June 1. Niva plans to use his background in tourism and entrepreneurship to support local businesses and boost Big Sky's economy.

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Man Therapy: Ending stigma with stereotype

While the nationwide marketing campaign, Man Therapy, produces humorous content, the aim is to solve a sobering epidemic. In the U.S., men account for 78 percent of all suicides. Most of these deaths occur in men aged 25 to 65, a demographic commonly referred to as "working-aged men."

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Landscaping to protect the Gallatin

Last summer, the Gallatin River Task Force launched a program to promote trout-friendly landscaping practices that conserve water quality and quantity. Homeowners can follow a seven-step checklist to certify their properties and receive rebates from GRTF all while helping the environment we call home.

Opening Shot



The Big Sky Farmers Market kicked off on Wednesday, June 2. Every Wednesday through the summer, from 5 to 8 p.m., enjoy local food, artisans and other vendors in Big Sky Town Center. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

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



What are your plans for after graduation?



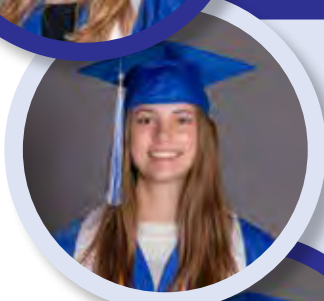
Hannah Dreisbach

"After I graduate, I plan to work over the summer at Big Sky Landscaping. After the summer comes to an end, I plan to start attending Chapman University in California. At Chapman I have been accepted to study Business with an emphasis on entrepreneurship."



Amelia Fischer

"I am planning to take a gap year to find where I can see myself being truly happy during my college career as I was not able to because of Covid. I plan to take time for myself away from school in order get a grasp on how the real world works and find where I fit in."



Ivy Hicks

"After graduation I look forward to attending Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. I am currently undecided on my major, but I am interested in studying biology and environmental science. I can't wait to try a ton of new things while I'm there!"



Chloe Hammond

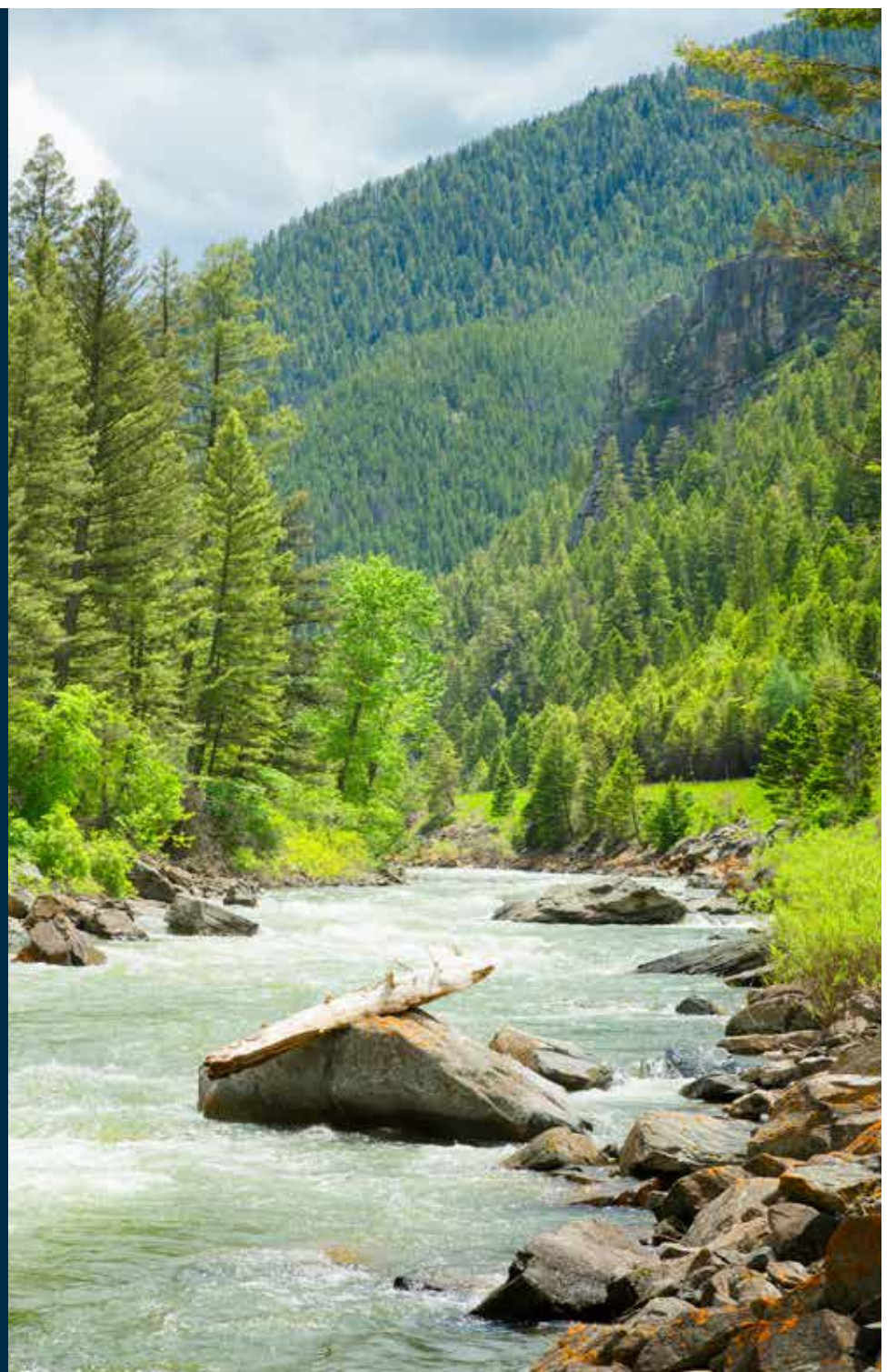
"I am attending Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado planning to major in business. I look forward to getting to know the area by exploring the San Juan Mountains and skiing at Purgatory Ski Resort. I also plan on playing club volleyball and getting more involved in the community!"

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BETTER TOGETHER

A biweekly District bulletin

Meet Your Board of Directors

The Big Sky Resort Area District (District) is governed by a Board of 5 locally elected Directors. Board members live within the boundaries of the District and serve a four-year term once elected in a May general election in even-numbered years, the most recent being in 2020. Registered voters who live within the District may vote in the election. Each year, the Board awards local government entities and non-profit organizations funding for community projects and programs that make Big Sky Better Together. As the Board prepares for the meetings on June 7th & 10th by reviewing this year's 49 project applications (available at: ResortTax.org/funding), we would like to invite you to 'meet' each member below and learn what they are looking for to help make the best decisions for our community.



KEVIN GERMAIN | *Chair*
2015 - PRESENT

Favorite Activities
Summer: Mountain Biking
Winter: Skiing

Reason for Serving: Kevin serves on the Board to make a difference in our community where he raises his family. He is proud of all the projects Resort Tax has funded.
Tips for New Residents: Get outside and get involved.
Tips for Public Comment: Share community priorities—we are a small community and every voice matters.



SARAH BLECHTA | *Vice Chair*
2018 - PRESENT

Favorite Activities
Summer: Golf
Winter: Sledding

Reason for Serving: Sarah, having lived in Big Sky since 1991, serves on the Board to be a voice for the community where she grew up. She is proud of funding the new community center as a safe space for adults and children alike. Sarah supports projects that are an overall positive change for the community.
Tips for New Residents: Get outside, enjoy trails and free events, and get to know the community.
Tips for Public Comment: In some way or another, each project has an effect on every person here, therefore involvement is extremely important.



STEVE JOHNSON | *Secretary & Treasurer*
2018 - PRESENT

Favorite Activities
Summer: Fly Fishing
Winter: Cross-Country Skiing

Reason for Serving: Steve cares about our community and serves on the Board to help respond to community needs and priorities. He encourages anyone interested in serving on the Board to review project applications to understand the considerable commitment Directors make.
Tips for New Residents: Get engaged—there is more to life in Big Sky than recreating and it requires engagement by everyone.
Tips for Public Comment: Review the new scoring system and share constructive feedback.



CIARA WOLFE | *Director*
2019 - PRESENT

Favorite Activities
Summer: Mountain Biking
Winter: Skiing

Reason for Serving: Ciara is committed to volunteerism and brings her experience and perspective of leading non-profits to the Board. She is proud of Big Sky Relief and the ability to partner with public and private entities to support our community over the past year.
Tips for New Residents: Attend community meetings, volunteer, and get involved.
Tips for Public Comment: Voice community priorities in a respectful, solution based manner.



GRACE YOUNG | *Director*
2020 - PRESENT

Favorite Activities
Summer: Camping, Hiking, Boating
Winter: Hibernating, Reading, Puzzles

Reason for Serving: Grace serves on the Board because she feels Resort Tax is essential to our community and it is important for community members to serve. She is proud of Resort Tax funded projects that keep our community healthy and safe, such as the wildland fire truck and mental healthcare.
Tips for New Residents: Remember why you moved here.
Tips for Public Comment: Use all opportunities to voice opinions (both for and against) as multiple perspectives are required to make good decisions.

Share public comment by emailing
Info@ResortTax.org
or by attending District meetings
via Zoom.
Visit **ResortTax.org**
for more info.



Application Review Meetings

Meeting #1*
@ 5:30 pm

Meeting #2*
@ 5:30 pm



*District Meetings are held via Zoom.



Water and sewer board approves rate increase

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – During a special meeting on June 1, the Big Sky County Water and Sewer board unanimously passed an ordinance approving a rate increase for both water and sewer service in Big Sky.

The rate increase will take effect July 1. All water and sewer user charges will increase by 5 percent, including the base rate as well as all tiers of variable use rates. The ordinance was approved upon a second reading following the first reading that occurred during a May 18 meeting.

Ron Edwards, executive director of the district, said the increase is in line with what the district's financial consultants came up with.

"As we continue to grow, the costs of operations get more expensive," Edwards said in an interview following the meeting. "We're moving more water around so we're paying a lot of power to do that." Edwards said that the trend is the same on the treatment end of things: greater usage requires more chemicals, power and other resources. He added that staffing is another cost the increased rates will help cover.

LPHS Welcomes new volleyball coach

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – After a successful 2020-2021 volleyball season with the Lone Peak High School Lady Bighorns, Missy Botha stepped down as head coach and Ellen Wolferman will be stepping up as the new head coach.

Wolferman grew up in Missoula and she started playing volleyball in high school. Wolferman continued her volleyball career for five years in college playing as a middle blocker and right-side hitter.

The first practice of the season for the Lady Bighorns took place on June 1. Wolferman said her plan is to take the team to a few different camps including one at Montana State University, one at Carroll College and potentially a camp at LPHS in late July.

"I want to win a lot so that's the goal right now to have a fun season and a winning season."

She will be supported by Bailey Dowd as well as team moms.

"I'm really excited," Wolferman said. "I'm really looking forward to this and I'm pumped about the opportunity to be involved in volleyball and coaching."

BSRAD to consider \$9M in resort tax applications

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Resort Area District board will hold meetings on June 7 and 10 to review applications for resort tax funding and announce final awards.

After implementing a biannual allocation process in 2020 to adjust to pandemic-affected economic conditions, the board will return to a single allocation cycle this year, responding to the \$9.2 million in total requests made by 26 organizations to fund 49 projects.

Collections from April are still being counted, but BSRAD Executive Director Daniel Bierschwale said the district estimates to have between \$6 and \$7 million available for appropriation.

The Big Sky community voted to impose a 3-percent resort tax, which took effect in 1992, to address pressure that growth was placing on local infrastructure and services. According to the district's website, more than \$70 million has been "collected and invested strategically in the community of Big Sky" since 1993.

BSRAD will accept public comment on applications until the June 7 and 10 review meetings. Find applications on resorttax.org and comment can be submitted to info@resorttax.org.

Local conservation groups celebrate National Trails Day

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – As Montana transitions into those long, summer days, the local trail systems will see a lot of use. Traditionally celebrated nationwide on the first Saturday of June, National Trails Day is a great way to celebrate these trails and give them a little extra love. Whether you're in Big Sky or Bozeman, there are tons of opportunities to pitch in.

On June 5, Big Sky Community Organization is hosting a trails day event, featuring family-friendly projects and trash picks ups along the BSCO trails. Volunteers should bring gloves, sunscreen, a water bottle, trail friendly clothing and footwear and meet at the River Pavilion in the Big Sky Community Park at 8:30 a.m. Those interested can contact volunteer@bscomt.org for more information.

The BSCO event schedule will be as follows:
8:30 to 9 a.m.—Volunteer Registration & Coffee
9:00 a.m.—Orientation
9:30 a.m.—Work Projects
11 a.m.—Volunteer Appreciation

Also on June 5, the Gallatin Valley Land Trust is hosting what is usually their largest event of the year. Since Tuckerman Park, on the south side of Bozeman, is turning 20 years old this year, GVLTL has identified some projects to help maintain this well-loved trail system. You can view a full list of projects and sign up ahead of time at signupgenius.com/go/5080e4aa4ac2ba4fe3-national or contact Matt Parsons, trails director at GVLTL, with further questions at matt@gvlt.org.

Also starting June 5 is the GVLTL Summer Trails Challenge, in which \$1 of every mile logged is donated to GVLTL's efforts across the Gallatin Valley and surrounding region. Whether you bike, walk, run or dog walk, participants can log miles up through July 25. Every mile counts!

Hannah Richardson joins SPCF as new community engagement director

SPANISH PEAKS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

BIG SKY – The Spanish Peaks Community Foundation is excited to announce that Hannah Richardson will be joining the organization as the Community Engagement Director. As the former Community Outreach Director for Big Sky Discovery Academy, Hannah has significant experience working with local organizations, managing grants, and leading fundraising efforts. She will be the first full-time director and sole employee of SPCF. In this role, her duties will span from administrative in nature to that of a visible community leader responsible for representing the SPCF and the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club Members, both independently and in conjunction with board members, in collaborative community projects, at public meetings and/or community events.

Hannah is passionate about supporting the Big Sky community through collaborative initiatives, community partnerships, and fundraising. She looks forward to this opportunity to better connect and support community projects collectively with the SPCF Board of Directors.

"The Spanish Peaks Community Foundation has a 10+ year history of community involvement and grant making in Big Sky, thanks to the incredible generosity of the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club Members. We are excited to welcome Hannah as our first full-time employee and look forward to introducing her to the Spanish Peaks and Big Sky communities," said Walker Jones, SPCF board president.

The SPCF aims to fund grants for local organizations and projects that deliver direct community services, educational support, affordable access to outdoor resources and recreation, and cultural opportunities that enrich the greater Big Sky community. Year-to-date, SPCF has awarded over \$190,000 to projects that align with the organization's mission to strategically direct the generous contributions from SP Members to support and enhance the quality of life for those living in the greater Big Sky area.

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Legally Blonde: The Musical

Lone Peak High School brings creative twist to classic blockbuster

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – If you're laughing during a scene where a woman is being dumped by her boyfriend in a restaurant, you're probably at Lone Peak High School's rendition of "Legally Blonde: The Musical." The production, which spanned four shows on May 25 and 26, perfectly balanced humor—even during life's unpleasant moments—song and dance, all in a classic storyline of finding your worth.

Elle Woods, played by Emily Graham (Grace Redmon on Tuesday) is a University of California, Los Angeles sorority queen who is motivated to apply for Harvard Law School after being dumped by her boyfriend, Warner (Michael Romney). Tired of her value resting only on her looks, Woods finds herself at Harvard and a new boyfriend, Emmett (John Chadwell).

LPHS's performance integrated lively musical numbers, various costume and set changes, and humor sprinkled throughout. Wood's obsession with her signature blonde locks, her Chihuahua Bruiser and the color pink is reflected in Graham's bubbly performance and throughout the musical, she is flanked by a Greek Chorus (Ruth Blodgett, Kassidy Boersma, Samantha Suazo, Jessica Bough and Sara Wilson).

Although the plotline of the musical is based on the 2001 movie starring Reese Witherspoon and Luke Wilson, LPHS offered their own flair—such as an entourage of frat boys singing a Jamaican-themed number while Woods desperately tries to meet Harvard's requirements. Or the classic "bend and snap" scene in which Woods teaches her hairdresser Paulette (Abby Meredith, Lyli McCarthy on Tuesday) how to snag an attractive UPS delivery man with the drop of a pen.

The entire LPHS cast shone, but some notables were Graham and Chadwell, particularly during their duets, Meredith, and Ace Beattie, who played Woods' pedantic professor, Callahan. Set changes and costume design were creative and seamless and the entirety of the show had audience members in stitches. Barbara Rowley produced and John Zirkle directed.

In the end, Woods wins her first case with the help of her peers and her fashion sense, gains a new love and overcomes the predefined definition of herself she had lived with so long, all without losing her pink-hued luster.

"You must always have faith in people," says Woods. "And, most importantly, you must always have faith in yourself."



Elle Woods (Emily Graham) is a University of California, Los Angeles sorority queen who is motivated to apply for Harvard Law School after a painful breakup. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



Paulette (Abby Meredith) performs a solo during the May 16 performance of "Legally Blonde: The Musical." PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



Elle Woods arrives at a party to confront her ex-boyfriend, Warner (Michael Romney). PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

PGA champs, NFL stars to compete at Moonlight for charity

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Moonlight Basin announced on May 26 that its golf course, The Reserve, will host The Match, an annual televised golf tournament that puts PGA and NFL stars head-to-head to raise money for rotating charities.

In this fourth iteration of The Match, scheduled for July 6, six-time major winner Phil Mickelson will pair with seven-time Superbowl champ and Match veteran Tom Brady to compete against 2020 U.S. Open champion Bryson DeChambeau and NFL MVP quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

Capital One and Turner Sports present this year's tournament, which TNT will cover exclusively.

This year, the tournament will benefit the national nonprofit Feeding America along with other charities, according to USA Today. Last year's event raised \$20 million for COVID-19 relief efforts, and previous tournaments raked in cash for causes like American Red Cross and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, among others.

The picturesque Reserve golf course, designed by Jack Nicklaus is listed by Golfweek as the third best private golf course in Montana, sits at about 7,500 feet of elevation. Nestled in the shadow of the iconic Lone Mountain, the course features dramatic elevation changes throughout the 18 holes.

The centerpiece is the 17th hole, a 777-yard-par-5, with a dramatic drop from the tee to the green. Greg Wagner, director of golf and club operations at Moonlight Basin, says The Reserve is "the best course you've probably never heard of," and he added that "everywhere you look is something pretty special."

According to Wagner, the creators of The Match reached out to Moonlight earlier this year to see if the club would be interested in hosting the event.

"Fourth of July is a beautiful time in Big Sky so it will be a great time of year for the event, and we are super excited to showcase Moonlight on national television," Wagner said. "It's not every day that this happens for a golf course."



The Reserve golf course at Moonlight Basin offers scenic views and large elevation changes throughout the picturesque course. PHOTO COURTESY OF MOONLIGHT BASIN

The tournament will exclusively occupy The Reserve course on July 6 and there will not be live fans, in keeping with the last three Matches that have occurred. Wagner explained that the players will each ride in their own golf carts and the pace of play will be such that a gallery could not keep up with them.

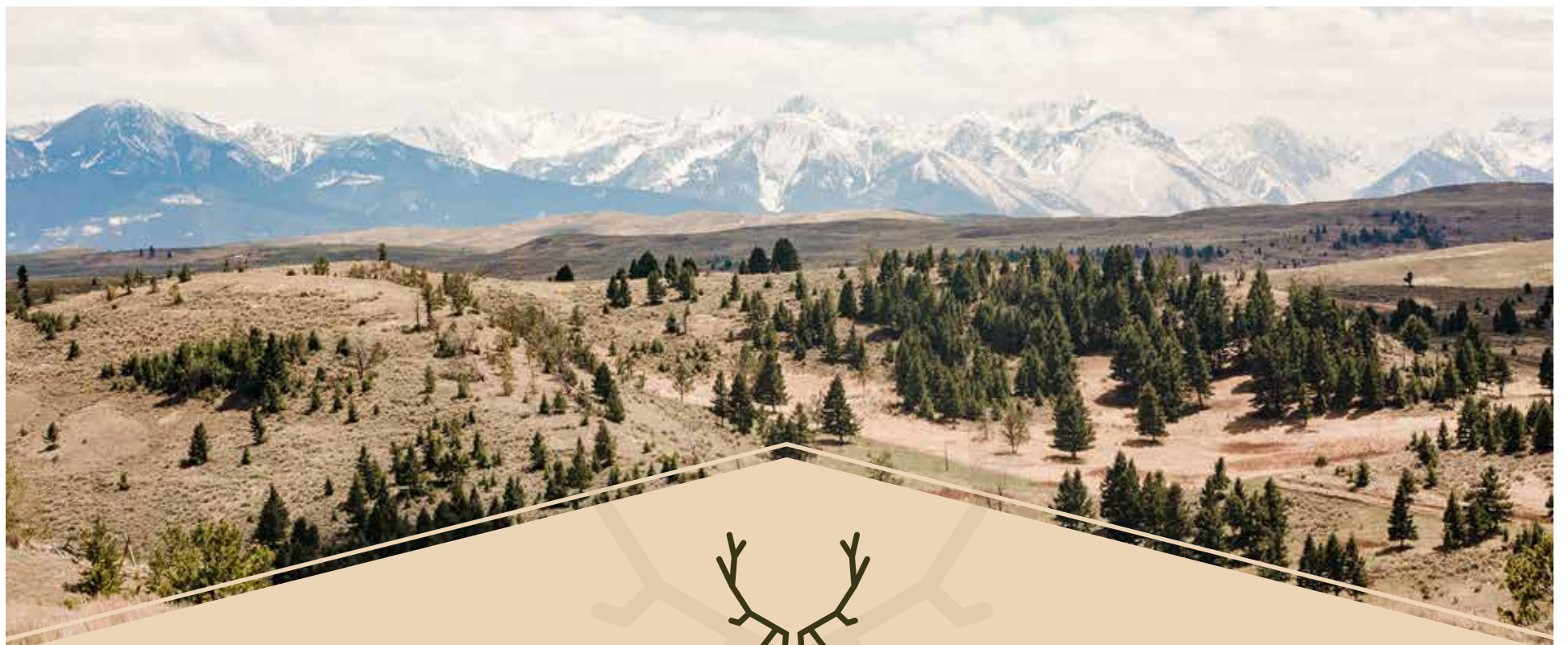
PGA champion Mickelson will again anchor the tournament, having played in all of the previous three. This Match will reunite him with Brady, his teammate from 2020, who was quick to congratulate him for his major win on Twitter writing, "That's my quarterback!!! LFG @PhilMickelson!" on May 23. Mickelson responded by foreshadowing the upcoming Match announcement writing back, "We have some unfinished business. Let's get another match and find a pair to give a beat down."

In 2020, Mickelson and Brady fell to opponents Tiger Woods and Peyton Manning. This year due to injuries, Woods has been replaced with DeChambeau.

Mickelson's May 23 victory makes him the oldest ever winner of a major championship at 50 years old. His recent win is his sixth major title of his career which came as a shock to the golf world. Leading up to the win, Mickelson hasn't snagged a top 10 spot in his last 16 starts and he has not been a contender for a major championship in the past four years.

Now, riding his victory, Mickelson is ready to throw down on July 6, tweeting at DeChambeau and Rodgers saying, "It's game time! My partner @tombrady and I are back and ready to settle some unfinished business. See you in Montana @AaronRodgers12 and @b_dechambeau."

Matt Kidd, managing director of CrossHarbor Capital Partners, who own Moonlight Basin, expressed his excitement that Moonlight Basin will be hosting the tournament. "We are thrilled that The Reserve at Moonlight Basin was chosen to host the fourth competition of The Match," Kidd said. "The course is spectacular and it will be fun to see it showcased in this way. We look forward to watching Brady, Rodgers, Mickelson, and DeChambeau hit the course."



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Beloved librarian begins a new chapter

Kathy House retires after 34 years of teaching



In 1997, Big Sky librarian Kathy House started the tradition of celebrating Read Across America Day, which included Cat in the Hat costumes for staff and cake and Seuss Juice for the kids. PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY HOUSE

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Twenty years ago, Kathy House placed an ad in the paper inviting the Big Sky community to a meeting about creating a community library. About seven people showed up and by the end of the meeting, each participant had pitched in \$20, marking the creation of the Big Sky Community Library.

House joined the team at the Big Sky School District in 1991, initially as a combination classroom teacher. In the school's early days, the library was a single small room with one bin of picture books and a couple shelves with books for older children.

Today, after House's 30 years of hard work, a school library now occupies the Ophir Elementary School building, and the Big Sky Community Library lives in the middle and high school building.

"Kathy was the person that saw the possibilities," said Sally Moskol, former library aide and volunteer with Friends of the Library, the group of community members who are instrumental in maintaining basic operations of the library. "So, if somebody suggested something and she thought it was a great idea, she would do it."

From starting the community library to organizing Read Across America festivities in 1997 and spreading a love of books to Big Sky children, House was a beloved fixture in the school and in the library throughout her career.

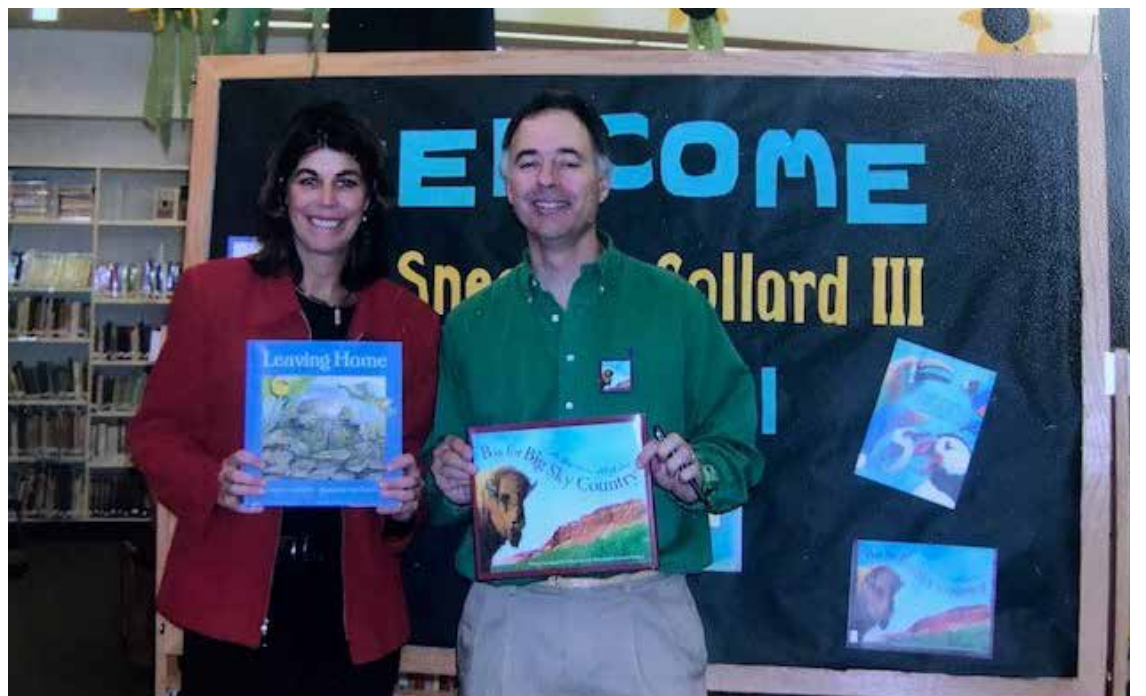
"I think one of my favorite memories of being the librarian is really turning kids on to reading and the love of literature," House said. "Watching them come in after you've suggested a book and they're so excited and can hardly wait to talk to you about it, that's been such a special thing for me."

House made reading fun for the kids at Ophir through various different programs that were creative and engaging.

Read Across America Day, otherwise known as Dr. Seuss Day, has been a much-anticipated event at the school for 24 years. Each year on March 2, House has organized a celebration of the children's author.

To mark the occasion, House set up a rotation of activities through each teacher's classroom, where kids would read some of Dr. Seuss' work, participate in arts and crafts, and, of course, have cake and "Seuss Juice." House, along with her colleagues, always sported Cat in the Hat outfits sewn by a Friends of the Library volunteer featuring the iconic red-and-white-striped hat.

"I will certainly miss her positive attitude and her love for the kids who visit the library," said Kay Reeves, president of FOL. "Her biggest achievement in 20 years is turning a bunch of kids who got to know her as their library teacher into lifelong readers because she made reading so engaging and fun."



Among other programming, House would arrange for authors to visit the library and give talks. PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY HOUSE



House has been at Ophir and LPHS for 30 years and she started the Big Sky Community Library in 2000. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

House certainly made the library into an inviting space with her creative arts and crafts projects. Big Sky students recall memories of the library's various programs she organized, her incredible reading voice and infectious laugh.

Most recently in the new elementary building, House created a maker's space, a place for kids to create crafts, dubbed the "House of Imagination" by her colleagues who surprised her with a dedication and sign. The space features cubbies with materials that kids can check out and let their imaginations run wild.

House's 30-year tenure at BSSD has been marked by substantial growth in the library along with broader community connection and involvement. Known as the "fearless leader" of the school and community libraries, according to Moskol, House was balancing a big load, working hard and raising three children.

"It was amazing what she could do," Moskol said. "She's just such a quick thinker and really intuitive, a good person and also very fun to know as a friend."

House said she'll miss the children the most. She explained that if you asked her students what her favorite books are, without hesitation they would reply: "Biographies."

While her personal reading taste falls more in the fiction realm, House said sharing and teaching biographies gives her the most pleasure because through them the kids can gain insights into the struggles and triumphs of others.

House's last day as librarian will be the last day of school, June 11, and her retirement party will take place on June 12 in the Big Sky Community Park.

Danielle Kabisch, former assistant librarian and House's former aide, is taking over the librarian's post at the community library and began her role on June 1. Kabisch has worked with House since 2008 and was inspired by House to pursue higher education.

"Kathy always went above and beyond what you would think a teacher or librarian would do for her kids," Kabisch said. "She loved books and loved reading to [the students] and loved teaching them about literature. In that, she inspired me to go back to school and become a librarian myself."

Ashley Jenks, the current first-grade teacher will step in to fill the role of school librarian. Kabisch and Jenks say they're up to the challenge, but that House's shoes will be tough to fill.

"I'll miss Kathy," Kabisch said. "I'll miss how funny she is and her stories and being able to sit and have a conversation with her on a regular basis. She has become a dear mentor and friend to me, and I will miss her greatly."

BSSD technology teacher Jeremy Harder also spoke of House's mentorship over his 21-year tenure.

"She still inspires me and guides me through difficult situations," Harder said. "Her positive energy and ... contagious laugh will still be heard in the hallways even after she has left the building."

"I have always loved listening to Kathy tell stories," said Stephanie Kissell, secretary of the Morningstar Learning Center board of directors and former coworker of House's. "She has this way of highlighting details in the most humorous way possible that gives a larger-than-life feel. She is wickedly funny, and I always anticipated her voice increasing an octave or so in pitch because I knew her punchline was coming ... I respect and admire Kathy as a teacher, colleague and community member, and I look forward to being captivated by her stories in her next life chapter."

After her retirement, House is taking a 14-day trip to Zermatt, Switzerland, where she and some friends will hike the Haute Trail to Chamonix, France.

"I felt like I'm ready and I feel like I had a very fulfilling career," she said. "Walking away feels very positive knowing what's all here for everyone because of what came of the Friends of the Library."

"The different people that I've crossed paths with was because of being here in this community and being in the library world," House added. "The friendships that you make are just so precious. I think of the Friends of the Library and how they supported me and everything that I did. I feel like I couldn't ever have done what I did without them and the support of the administration."

House said she'll miss the friends and coworkers she has met along the way but is also excited for the next chapter.

"It's bittersweet," she said. "I can hardly wait to go on to something new but yet feel like I'm leaving a whole piece of me. It's a new journey."



One of House's last projects as librarian was to create a maker's space dubbed The House of Imagination. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

Fatality markers serve as critical reminder

American Legion members refurbish white crosses along 191, urge motorists to drive safely

BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

BIG SKY – Kenny Alley stands along Highway 191 just north of Moose Flats wearing a neon green construction vest. He leans forward and carefully places a small American flag into a red fence post supporting a white cross 15 feet from the shoulder of the increasingly busy thoroughfare between Bozeman and Big Sky.

“This is one of the most dangerous highways in Montana,” says Alley, known to his many Big Sky friends as “Cuz.”

On this cool Saturday morning in late May, two days before Memorial Day, Alley is with a small group of Big Sky’s chapter of the American Legion honoring an annual tradition: refurbishing or replacing more than 100 white crosses along 191 between Indian Creek and the mouth of the Gallatin Canyon including Highway 64 to Big Sky Resort.

The crosses represent highway fatalities. The goal is to educate drivers and to memorialize the fallen along this stretch.

“A family from South Korea orphaned their kids here because the parents got killed,” says Alley, who serves as commander with the Big Sky American Legion Chapter known as Post 99. The incident occurred about a decade ago.

“They were watching the rafts [float the Gallatin River] and got distracted,” he says. “They crossed the yellow lines and a dump truck hit them. The kids lived.”

It’s a tragic story but one of many. And it’s one that members of Post 99 know is important to tell. In 2020, according to the Montana Department of Transportation website, Montana saw 212 highway fatalities statewide. So far, 2021 has seen 81 fatalities on Montana’s roads. At this time last year, the number was 41.

For nearly 70 years, the American Legion has placed white crosses along Montana’s highways marking the motorists who have perished on these roads. Known as the Montana American Legion White Cross Highway Fatality Marker Program, the effort began in 1953 when Legionnaire Floyd Eaheart of Missoula’s Hellgate Post No. 27 wanted to memorialize six fatalities that occurred in the vicinity over the Labor Day weekend of 1952.

Big Sky’s Post No. 99 members have been involved in the program since the post was chartered in 1991, says Capt. Jack Hudspeth, adjutant for



(L-R): Post 99 members Doug Suppes, Adjutant Capt. Jack Hudspeth, Seth Griggs-Ryan, Sam Wilson and Commander Kenny “Cuz” Alley replace four white crosses on Highway 191. PHOTO BY JOE O’CONNOR



Seth Griggs-Ryan of American Legion Post No. 99 refurbishes a white cross near the 35-mile-per-hour bridge on Highway 191. Each year, Post 99 members maintain more than 100 white crosses along “one of Montana’s most dangerous highways.” PHOTO BY JOE O’CONNOR

the chapter. Hudspeth is wearing an orange construction vest as he stands near the highway close to the mouth of Gallatin Canyon. It’s a particularly dangerous sweeping turn along the river that can regularly send southbound drivers into the field west of the highway.

“The department of transportation thought that by putting these crosses up, people would see the crosses along the highway and slow down and become safety conscious,” Hudspeth says.

Nearby, the small group of Post 99 members is constructing a frame of red fence posts that will hold four white crosses. It was here, Alley says, just beyond the Gallatin National Forest sign on 191, that four Hispanic workers slid off the road and perished half a dozen years ago. This will be the fourth time they’ve had to replace this particular memorial; vehicles continue sliding off the road here.

Alley holds a fence post as Post 99 member Seth Griggs-Ryan pounds it into the Montana soil. Members Sam Wilson and Doug Suppes line up bolts to mount the crosses. It’s a team effort, much like Highway 191 itself requires.

To keep the road safe, it’s the responsibility of every motorist to drive carefully and avoid passing other vehicles on blind corners, Alley says. Distractions abound and wildlife frequently cross the road. The 100-plus white crosses mark the alternative.

“There are some sad cases on this road,” Alley says. “It’s people pretty much not paying attention. They don’t realize how dangerous this road is.”

Housing project advances toward \$6.5M award

BY BELLA BUTLER

BIG SKY – The Montana Board of Housing advanced the Big Sky Community Housing Trust’s application for a nearly \$6.5 million award in federal tax credits at a May 25 meeting.

The Housing Trust, in collaboration with Lone Mountain Land Company, announced its new 24-unit workforce housing project, Riverview, on Jan. 19. LMLC purchased the future site of Riverview—the former American Bank building and adjacent lots that extend to the land across the road from Ace Hardware—and the housing trust is now seeking a 9 percent federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit award, distributed by the Montana Board of Housing, to fund approximately 65 percent of the project’s estimated budget of \$9.8 million.

Big Sky Resort Area District has awarded the project \$1.4 million of resort tax collections to the project. The Housing Trust has applied for a \$500,000 resort tax award for the project this year, and BSCHT Executive Director Laura Seyfang said forecasting indicates that they’ll ask for around \$200,000 next year. The trust hopes to fund the remainder through philanthropy.

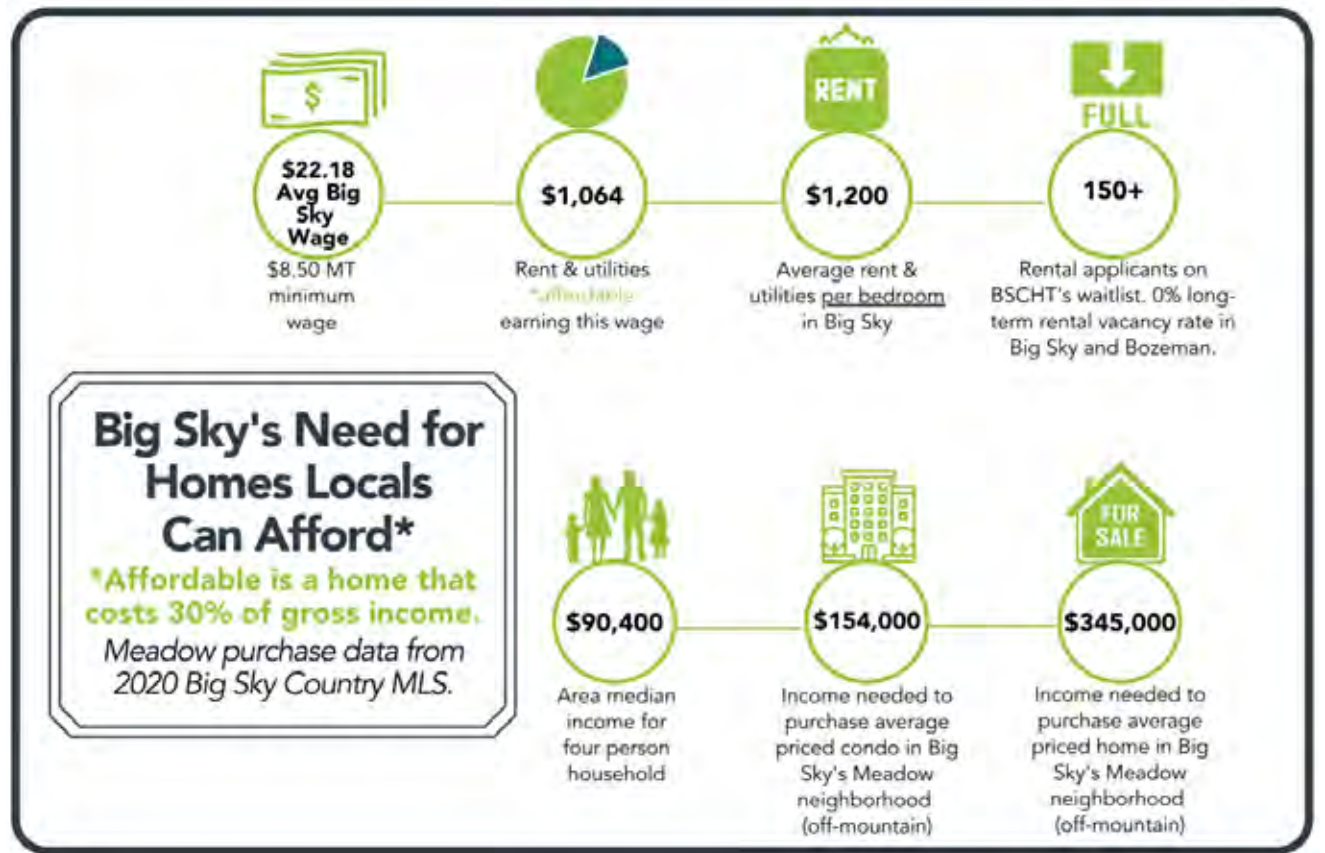
The Housing Trust’s portion of the project is funded independently from LMLC’s units, so the tax credit and resort tax funding applies exclusively to the trust’s 24 units. Seyfang said though the project is a collaboration, this distinction is a solution to an important question: “How can we best attract appropriate dollars, and use them appropriately, but still create the most housing for workforce?”

Seyfang presented the project to the housing board on May 24. The Riverview project was initially one of 12 projects seeking an invitation to apply. Following the presentations, the seven Montana Board of Housing directors narrowed the pool down to eight applicants, who will submit full applications to be considered for one of the five or six awards granted in late fall.

The five board directors that spoke favorably of the Riverview project said they were impressed with the project’s collaboration, strong community support, leveraging of many resources and comprehensive, well-planned solutions. One director ranked Riverview in her top eight in part because of Big Sky’s “desperate need” for such a development.

Two directors did not rank Riverview among their top eight projects. “I really lean heavily in my choices on those projects that serve the lowest income levels,” said board director Robert Gauthier of Ronan, one of the directors who left Riverview off his list.

According to the Tax Policy Center, LIHTC-assisted projects must meet one of three income requirements: At least 20 percent of the project’s units are occupied by tenants with an income 50 percent or less of the area median income; at least 40 percent of the units are occupied by tenants with an income 60 percent or less of AMI; or at least 40 percent of the units are occupied by tenants with income averaging no more than 60 percent of AMI and no units are occupied by tenants with income greater than 80 percent AMI.



A survey produced for the Housing Trust by an analyst out of Washington in January 2021 found that 124 households in the Big Sky area would be eligible for this LIHTC-regulated housing (Seyfang added that this number is likely higher as it doesn’t take into consideration commuters working in Big Sky). The analyst concluded that there is an annual need for 41 units for households with income at 50-80 percent AMI.

Riverview, along with projects in Billings, Dillon, Hardin, Kalispell, Libby and two in Great Falls, was invited to move forward with a full application for the award. The Housing Trust and its partner, BlueLine Development, will make another presentation to the state housing board on Oct. 18. Seyfang says BlueLine, a Missoula-based company that specializes in affordable housing consulting, will help guide the trust in how to use the tax credits and adhere to the regulations attached to them.

“These funds are crucial to the overall financial feasibility of the project ...” Seyfang wrote in an email to EBS on May 26. “As an unincorporated community, we have restricted options for ways to finance the critical and expensive problem of lacking workforce housing. If we are not awarded these funds, the project will likely be delayed or not possible, in this expensive construction climate.”

The Housing Trust’s 2020 report states that the average wage earned in Big Sky is \$17.83 an hour. Affordable rent and utilities earning this wage, or 30 percent of gross income before taxes, is \$892 per month, according to the report. The average monthly rent and utilities cost in Big Sky is \$1,050. Next to pricing, availability is a major issue. The same report shared that there are 145 rental applicants on the housing trust’s waitlist; in Big Sky and Bozeman, the trust reports 0 percent vacancy.

Seyfang said public comment on the project is encouraged.

Public comment on the Riverview project or other local housing issues can be sent to info@bigskyhousingtrust.com.



MT Kid Kits fosters connection, learning

BY BELLA BUTLER

BOZEMAN – This month, dozens of packages filled with a planting pot, pipe cleaners, paint and other crafty items, all tied neatly with a bow, will be the centerpieces to quality family interaction around the Gallatin Valley. Montana Kid Kits, founded by Bozeman mothers Lauren Hein and Shaye Erickson, started in fall 2020 to offer these monthly craft packages to a loyal customer base as well as to community nonprofits.

The two high school friends recently reunited after Lauren moved back to Bozeman, and they found as mothers, they shared in a common problem.

“Shaye and I were just talking and we’re both moms and both know how it’s just so hectic and you don’t want any additional hassle or things to add to your to-do list,” Hein said. “But at the same time you want to make sure that you’re teaching your kid and giving them activities and things to do that are really developmentally helpful and feel good about them.” True to the creative nature of the company that this gripe would later give birth to, Erickson and Hein innovated.

Erickson, who taught Kindergarten for nine years, and Hein, who has a marketing background, felt both their areas of expertise could be put to work for families in the community. They got “back to basics,” according to Hein, taking technology out of the mix, and developed a craft kit with ultimate ease in mind—start to finish, everything a parent would need was included. Around Thanksgiving, they piloted their idea by passing out a few kits to close friends. Soon after those first families were posting about the kits on social media, Erickson and Hein were shocked when orders started pouring in—and they haven’t stopped since.

The kits, geared toward kids ages 3 and up, are designed to be hands-on to support fine-motor skill development. “As a teacher I try to make them geared towards education, so we base them towards standards or learning skills,” Erickson said. The kits each come with three crafts or activities, instructions and a breakdown of what lessons or skills the kit promotes.

For June, Erickson developed The Garden Kit, which includes a pot to decorate and plant in, a sunflower puzzle kit and the fixings for a pipe-cleaner dragonfly. The Garden Kit helps develop fine motor skills, patterning, following directions and creative play, among other skills, according to the kit instructions.

Gallatin Valley mom Megan Lovgren has been using the kits with her two daughters since the beginning.

“I feel like Shaye and Lauren have done a really good job of coming up with activities that are engaging for both parents and kids which I really love,” she said.



A young crafter enjoys their Montana Kid Kit. PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTANA KID KITS

Lovgren is also a teacher and appreciates the educational component of the kits. She says usually she helps her kids get started and then leaves them to figure out most of the project on their own.

“I think from both a mom and an educator perspective it’s really good to let kids, you know, experience these things on their own, and still be able to do the activity with them if I so choose,” Lovgren said. Plus, she added, it provides for a bit of a break for tired parents.

Lovgren’s 5-year-old daughter, Finley, said she likes to share the kits with her younger sister. Last month, she really enjoyed tying the bows.

“I’d say one of our biggest hooks ... is we do have a pretty big giveback component,” Hein said. For each kit ordered, Montana Kid Kits donates a kit to one of their three local, family-based nonprofit partners including Thrive, Family Promise and the Boys and Girls Club of Southwestern Montana. Now, in their seventh month in business, Montana Kid Kits has donated 500 kits.

Vanessa Skelton, major gift officer for Thrive, a Bozeman-based nonprofit that provides mentoring and other resources to families, said the kits have been received with enthusiasm and gratitude. The Child Advanced Placement program, one of Thrive’s avenues of mentorship, pairs volunteer mentors with kids for one hour a week of interaction. CAP mentors have been able to use the donated kits to connect with kids. To a nonprofit, Skelton says, these donations are huge, especially during a pandemic when organizations have had to tighten their belts.

“We don’t always get to add in stuff like that, because we don’t always have the extra funds that it takes to purchase things like that even for CAP matches or for our families, so just having that at no cost means the world during a time where it was really hard to get the resources together to even pay for our programming,” Skelton said.

Lovgren said Montana Kid Kits’ connection to community causes “raises the hair on her arms.”

“I’m just so thankful that we know people in the community, like locals in the community, willing to give back to the community, they’re not just trying to make a buck,” she said.

Erickson and Hein operate Montana Kid Kits entirely on Instagram and say most of their business has come from social media and word of mouth. They said their business served a special purpose during the pandemic while families were at home together, but they also believe heightened values on family and spending time together will make their model relevant well beyond the pandemic.

Recently, they’ve been expanding their distribution of kits to bigger venues, like birthday parties, where the kits can be tailored to match the party theme.

“I think overall we’re just really excited about continuing to grow, which means we’re able to continue to donate more kids,” Hein said. “We’re just two moms who are trying to kind of put all this together and make sure that people can enjoy that time with their kids and also know feel good about when they buy, we’re giving on their behalf.”



Montana Kid Kits founders Shaye Erickson (left) and Lauren Hein (right) bring a donation of their craft kits to Thrive, one of three local, family-based nonprofits they’ve partnered with. For every kit sold, they donate one kit. PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTANA KID KITS

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 14 - SUNDAY, JULY 18

11am-6pm - 6th Annual Big Sky Art Auction

FRIDAY, JULY 16

6pm - Big Sky Community Rodeo at the Big Sky Events Arena

9pm - Community Street Dance featuring Dirtwire - Town Center Avenue

TUESDAY, JULY 20

10am-4pm - Western Sports Foundation/Big Sky Bravery - Black Bull Golf Tournament

6pm - Big Sky Bingo Night

9pm - Live Music featuring Dammit Lauren and The Well

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

3pm - Mutton Bustin Pre-Ride Competition at the Big Sky Events Arena

5pm - Farmers Market

THURSDAY, JULY 22

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet

4pm - Live Music

6pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 1 Bull Riding at the Big Sky Events Arena

8:30pm - Music in the Mountains Concert

FRIDAY, JULY 23

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet

4pm - Live Music

7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 2 Bull Riding at the Big Sky Events Arena

Live Music Following Bull Riding - Jason Boland & The Stragglers

SATURDAY, JULY 24

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet

4pm - Live Music

7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Championship Night 3 Bull Riding at the Big Sky Events Arena

Live Music Following Bull Riding - Robert Earl Keen

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OUTLAW
EVENTS

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

SECTION 2:

ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS, SPORTS AND MONTANA



Why your local fly shop is essential pg. 22



Big Sky Royals wrap winning season pg. 26



What's next for NorthWestern Energy? pg. 30

Trout-friendly landscaping aims to protect water

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – The typical American lawn is a lush, green mat of Kentucky Bluegrass, a grass that requires high water use, especially in drought-prone places like Big Sky. When considering resource expenditure, the nonnative grass is not well-suited for the high-elevation mountain environment.

Gallatin River Task Force has created a certification program that assesses Big Sky properties and helps homeowners to make the switch to drought-tolerant, native landscaping that local rivers smile upon. The Trout-friendly Landscape Certification program launched at the end of summer 2020, making this the first full summer that it is available.

The goal of the program is twofold, according to Emily O'Connor, conservation program manager with GRTF. "The trout friendly program encourages landscaping practices that protect water quality and quantity," she said in an interview with EBS.

The benefits from switching to trout-friendly landscaping are numerous. The landscaping is healthier for children and pets, saves homeowners money, creates habitat for local fauna, protects water quality and conserves water.

Water conservation is doubly important in this instance because not only was southwest Montana in a moderate drought for the entire summer last year, the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District recently raised their rates for water. On June 1 the board voted to pass an ordinance that



JeNelle Johnson has reduced her landscaping to be minimal and she has replaced a lot of her mulch with rock bark. PHOTO BY JENELLE JOHNSON

increases water rates by 5 percent for the base rate and rate user tiers. Conserving water will not only benefit the nearby Gallatin River, but it will also take a load off homeowners' wallets.

This water-wise landscaping also protects water quality from nonpoint source pollutants like fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides which can be replaced with organic options or are unnecessary for native plants. These



The Gardens at Crail Ranch are great demonstration gardens that have implemented native landscaping and use less water. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

chemicals can be a significant source of excess nitrogen and phosphorous, according to the GRTF's website. O'Connor said these excess nutrients enter streams and rivers and become food for the widespread algae blooms seen on the Gallatin in recent years which threaten riparian habitats and river health.

Getting your lawn certified is as simple as completing a seven-step checklist.

There are many resources on GRTF's website available to homeowners, including checklists for basic and gold certification. Steps include using native plants, reducing chemical use, improving soil and making irrigation practices efficient.

"Having a good soil base reduces the amount of water you need," O'Connor said. "We are encouraging practical lawn areas so limiting the size and how you maintain it, things like mowing at 3 inches or greater to conserve water."

Implementing efficient irrigation practices is an equally important part of certification. O'Connor referenced newer irrigation technology that has timers to automatically turn off water based on soil and weather conditions. Getting a new system will not break the bank for homeowners since the Task Force offers rebates on new irrigation equipment.

To help bolster the relatively new program, a conservation fellow from the Montana Conservation Corps, Mark Castaneda, has joined the Task Force team. Castaneda started in May and will be available through October to complete free property assessments and to connect homeowners with a variety of resources and ideas on how they can transform their landscaping.

The certification process is designed to be as easy as possible for homeowners. After scheduling a free assessment with Castaneda to go through the trout-friendly checklist and certification process, homeowners can make any necessary changes and receive any relevant rebates from the Task Force.

One Big Sky homeowner, JeNelle Johnson, shared her experience managing her landscaping. Johnson said she has owned her home in



Native plants are drought-tolerant and they create habitat for local wildlife. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

Big Sky for nine years and for the first several years, she spent a lot of time and money on landscaping that didn't do well.

"The past few years I have gone to a more minimalist approach," she said. "We have added boulders to our landscaping which look great and don't need water. We love our native grass and old growth trees. We have installed some drought-tolerant plants near our home that are on a drip system. I'm currently replacing mulch with rock bark for fire resistance. I add a splash of color by planting flowers in a few pots on our front porch and deck."

Another Big Sky local and the treasurer of the GRTF board of directors, Heather Budd, spoke to the importance of implementing trout-friendly landscaping.

"In our eyes, trout friendly equates to overall river health and overall river health affects everyone who connects with the Gallatin from fishermen and recreationists to downstream landowners and agriculture," Budd wrote in an email to EBS.

In addition to some Big Sky homeowners who have made the switch, O'Connor said the Town Center Owners Association and Hidden Village Owners Association are currently in the process of certifying. She also said that the Task Force is currently working with the Big Sky Owners Association to recommend updates to implement some trout-friendly and water conservation practices.

Moving forward, O'Connor said the program will split into two different tracks. There will be one for existing properties to certify and a new track for properties that are in the process of being designed and built, the latter of which has not yet been finalized.

She encouraged homeowners to visit the website and take advantage of the variety of information. "We are here as a resource," she said.

Visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org/trout-friendly for more information on trout-friendly landscaping.



Adding rocks to landscaping is an aesthetically pleasing way to reduce water use. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

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The Gallatin River Task Force, our board and staff team want to salute outgoing board members Ron Edwards and Mike Richter, for their incredible service to water and the Gallatin River. Combined, they have given over 30 years of service to our work. Their dedication is unparalleled, and their commitment to the Gallatin watershed is truly appreciated.

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You can explore the West and escape the crowds



BY MOLLY ABSOLON
WRITERS ON THE RANGE

Here's the dilemma: You want to explore the West's huge treasure of public land, but you don't want to be accompanied by crowds of people. How do you avoid places that wind up on everyone's bucket list or that have been Instagrammed and geo-tagged to death?

After a few decades of hiking and mountain biking the West, I've learned the trick is to search out the obscure, the not-quite-as-beautiful, the off-season or the remote. If I've chosen well, I may not see another human all day.

But this approach means you can't just plug into some top-10 list of must-see natural attractions. Instead, you need to study maps.

What you're looking for are blank spots — still-wild places whose names you don't recognize. There are lots of them. The National Park Service manages 423 units, totaling 84 million acres of land, but more than half of the system's total annual visitation takes place in just 20 of its most popular parks. That leaves a lot of less-visited destinations to explore.

Or broaden your horizons to consider national forest or Bureau of Land Management lands, and you will discover millions of acres that only locals are canny enough to visit.

I realize not everyone is as crowd-averse as I am. Linda Merigliano, wilderness program manager for the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Jackson, Wyoming, says most visitors — even those in busy places — enjoy their experiences despite lots of people.

That's a good thing, because scientific studies show that it doesn't take much for nature to work its magic. Spending as little as two hours a week in green spaces — even a crowded city park — has health benefits, from lowering blood pressure to improving self-esteem and mood.

I don't think about health outcomes when I plan my outdoor excursions, but I know I get antsy and grumpy if I don't get outside. A few quiet hours surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of the natural world are what I crave. But I've learned that if everyone is going to the latest hotspot, I'm itchy to go somewhere else.

One such place is Rawlins, Wyoming. For years, I've raced through Rawlins, noticing little more than a dusty stop for gas and gummy bears on I-80. But then I studied the map. A couple of hours southwest of town there's a wilderness study area called Adobe Town.

It features a maze of pinnacles, arches, buttes and craggy badlands. It also contains archaeological remains from 12,000 years of human habitation, and wild horses and pronghorn roam above the rim. Even better: Most people have probably never heard of Adobe Town.

This is blank spot nirvana.

Another gem is the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, which receives roughly 10 percent of Grand Canyon National Park's 5.9 million annual visitors. Ditto for the North Rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in western Colorado. It's just as spectacular as the South Rim, but with only a handful of tourists.

Or try starting at the edges of popular places like Arches National Park in Utah or Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming and checking out what's nearby. A national forest adjacent to a national park may share the

same landscape that a park boasts. Once there, you'll get a feel for the wonders protected by the park but you're likely to see a fraction of the people.

Above all, avoid sites featured in social media posts and skip the must-see view.

If you want personal opinions — and I tend to trust those in the know — check in with outdoor shops, public land managers or conservation nonprofits close to where you're headed. Often, a passionate local who knows the best hiking or mountain biking will be happy to talk to you. Chances are that they've explored it all and helped restore some trails to boot.

What's the big payoff when you get to be mostly by yourself in the backcountry? You swap out ringtones for the resonance of a true blank spot — the sound of birds and the feel of a brisk wind. No overheard conversation. And any number of insects will remind you that in this place you've entered nature's domain.

Molly Absolon is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about Western issues. A West Virginia native, she was drawn West more than 30 years ago to explore its wild places; she now lives in Victor, Idaho.



Molly Absolon shares the joys of solo travel through our nation's lesser-known outdoors spaces. PHOTO BY AARON THOMAS ON UNSPLASH

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Five reasons your local fly shop is essential

BY PATRICK STRAUB
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

I first visited a fly shop when I was 6 years old. My dad was taking me to fish the Yellowstone River during the salmon fly hatch. We were in a rush since we didn't want to waste time getting to the river, but we definitely had to stop at a fly shop—they would know the best float and exactly where the big bugs were last spotted.

We walked past the storefront where the owner's fly tying business was housed and took a few minutes to watch a handful of well-skilled women furiously tying flies. Once in the shop my dad headed straight to the large collection of fly bins, first asking which dry flies we should have. We paid cash and were out the door faster than you could say "two-fly nymph rig."

Today, with the abundance of digital media available anglers can order flies and have them delivered to their door, check reports from their couch and even book a vehicle shuttle while on the toilet. It is possible to spend a full day on the river without visiting a local fly shop...

But why in the heck would you want to do that?

Here are the top five reasons your local fly shop is essential.

Knowledge

This can never be understated. No better source for current information exists than from the crew standing behind the counter. Staff, guides and customers are on the water nearly every day, and providing accurate information is a key part of a fly shop's success. The savvy fly shops have plenty of ways to get information in front of their customers—video reports, email blasts and more. But for fly shops to provide that technology it costs them staff time, so if you are a regular viewer of their content, be sure to visit and buy some of the flies they are pitching in their videos. Don't just watch the video then go click on the online discount store; Visit a shop in person and spend a little money.

Local conservation projects

Whether they openly say it or not, your local fly shops are constantly involved in conservation projects that benefit your home waters. From donated items

to auctions to giving up staff and guides for donated trips, nearly every local fly shop in our area gives back to the resources that provide for them. Some definitely participate more than others, so learn which ones those are and support them.

River clean-up days

Most rivers in our area have organized "clean-up days," when people dedicate a day to pick up trash and other detritus from a local river. Fly shops play a large role in providing volunteer time or help with spreading the word. Some even offer prizes or gift cards for whomever picks up the most trash.

Try before you buy

When choosing to make a large purchase like waders or a fly rod, no better way exists than to try on waders or cast a wide array of fly rods. These purchases are investments in the future enjoyment of your fishing trips. With the selections available locally, you can probably try on or test-cast most every rod, wader or wading boot available today.

Dollars spent locally stay local

Since most, if not all, of our local fly shops are owned by people who live and work in the community, the money spent at their businesses gets put back into local economies—not shareholder accounts or board member slush funds.

The days of ladies tying flies in storefronts may be over, but if you can remember—and name that first fly shop I visited—you're probably one of those anglers who doesn't need to be reminded of the value of visiting a local fly shop.

If you don't know the name of that fly shop, log out of Tik-Tok and visit your local shop. And if still you don't want to visit a local fly shop you can always stay home and organize your collection of strike indicators.

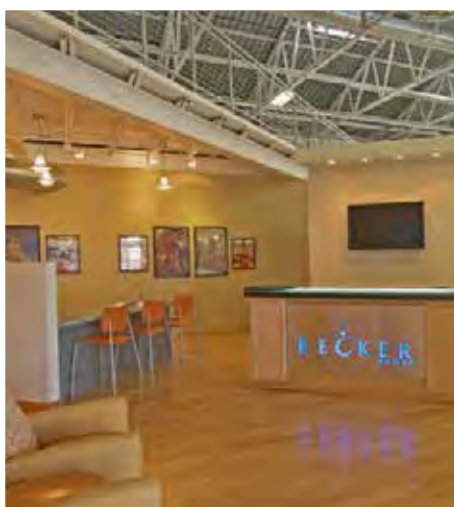
Patrick Straub has fished on five continents. He is the author of six books, including "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Fly Fishing" and has been writing the Eddy Line for nine years. He was one of the largest outfitters in Montana, but these days he now only guides anglers who value quality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



A packed parking lot at Gallatin River Guides, a fly shop and guide service off U.S. Highway 191, shows that despite a growing online marketplace, anglers still know the value of their local fly shops. PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK STRAUB



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THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON
EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Landscapes where gray wolves roam have fewer deer-human vehicle collisions on local highways.

That's the provocative finding of a new scientific analysis focusing on counties in northern Wisconsin, but it could hold implications for other wolf-inhabited parts of the Lower 48, one of the study's three authors said.

In fact, this revelation is among several insights featured in the peer-reviewed scientific paper published May 24 titled "Wolves make roadways safer, generating large economic returns to predator conservation."

The findings are timely, for they challenge many conventional negative portrayals of wolves used by states in 2021 to sanction a new era of mass wolf killings, often based upon claims that lobos represent only economic liabilities imposed on ranchers, farmers and hunters.

After crunching numbers available in different data sets, researchers say higher wolf presence translates, on average, into a 24-percent reduction in deer-vehicle collisions in Wisconsin counties. Even more poignant: the economic savings realized in deer-vehicle accident reduction is 63 times greater than the costs of verified wolf predation on livestock.

In blunt terms, the economic value of wolf existence vastly outweighs the economic costs to farmers when wolves kill cattle, sheep or other domestic animals.

Moreover, in the same North Woods of the Upper Midwest where white-tailed deer numbers have exploded in recent years and caused crop damage in farmer's fields, wolves help regulate deer overpopulation. In so doing, they may aid in controlling high deer numbers linked to spread of tick-spreading Lyme disease and other epizootic maladies.

The paper contains a lot to unpack, beginning with the correlation between wolves and collisions involving deer and vehicles. "Most of the reduction [in deer-vehicle collisions] is due to a behavior response of deer to wolves rather than through a deer population decline from wolf predation," write the paper's three authors, Jennifer L. Raynor and contributors Corbett A. Grainer and Dominic Parker.

"Our study suggests that systematic elimination of wolves from North America has also caused unintended damages," the paper states. In Wisconsin, wolf presence reduced deer-vehicle losses by an average of \$375,000 per county, per year and by \$10.9 million annually in aggregate across the 29 wolf counties.

"As a point of comparison, the state paid \$3.1 million in compensation to individuals for verified deaths or injuries caused by wolves of livestock, hunting dogs, and pets between 1985 and 2019 or an average of \$174,000 per year over the last five years" the paper continues. "The economic benefit of reduced deer-vehicle collisions exceeds the economic costs of verified wolf predation by a ratio of 63:1. This ratio is relevant because economics matters for listing, delisting, and management decisions for endangered species, is only as implicit considerations."

Study says wolves in Midwest help reduce deer-car collisions

Of note is that the reduction in collisions happens primarily in rural areas where livestock predation occurs. "This finding may help dampen political polarization around wolf reintroduction that generally pits rural and urban voters against one another, as was the case with the November 2020 vote on wolf reintroduction in Colorado." Coloradans narrowly passed the referendum calling upon state wildlife officials to bring wolves back to the Centennial State.

The authors also reference the widespread challenge of deer-vehicle collisions that occur because of where highways pass through habitat and that it's not an easy or inexpensive problem to fix. Having wolves could be a cheaper way to mitigate rather than having to employ costly engineering solutions.

Of interest to those familiar with wolf issues in the West, they allude to some pioneering findings in Yellowstone National Park showing that wolf presence creates a "landscape of fear" for ungulates like elk, keeping those prey species constantly on the move, reducing foraging pressure on aspen trees and yielding positive ecological ripple effects.



A wolf in Yellowstone. A new study says its cousins in the Upper Midwest are affecting the behavior of white-tailed deer and it's yielding fewer car wrecks. PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM PEACO/NPS

The authors also note that the beneficial effect of wolves in Wisconsin causing deer to avoid roadways where they're more vulnerable to wolf predation could not be achieved by hunters.

"[Our] finding supports ecological research emphasizing the role of predators in creating a 'landscape of fear,'" they note. "It suggests wolves control economic damages from overabundant deer in ways that human deer hunters cannot."

According to Parker, one of the authors, not only are hunter numbers falling but hunts occur only seasonally while wolves are active all year long. The same argument applies to the beneficial role wolves can play in slowing the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease in the West. While states employ hunter culling of ungulates in areas where CWD prevalence of deer family members is high, wolves actually have an ability to target animals that are sick and remove them, potentially helping to eliminate disease spreaders.

Regarding wolves as allies to farmers, when lobos reduce the size of deer populations it lessens their impact on crops. In Wisconsin, deer cause 90 percent of all wildlife-related damage to agriculture.

"The finding that wolves reduce deer-vehicle collisions primarily by changing deer behavior rather than by reducing deer abundance is likely good news for policymakers," the authors note. "It implies they do not need to choose between a \$20.6 billion nationwide recreational deer hunting industry and deer-vehicle benefits from wolves. At least in Wisconsin, it seems that wolves and deer hunters can coexist with safer roadways."

The paper's findings are especially timely given recent events in the Northern Rockies. This winter and spring, lawmakers in both Montana and Idaho passed legislation, signed into law by governors, that essentially greenlights action to re-eradicate recovered wolf populations.

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.

Big Sky Royals wrap winning season

PHOTOS BY DAVE PECUNIES

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – After a successful 2021 Big Sky Little League baseball season, the Big Sky Majors ended the regular season as number one ranked first seed with an 11-1 record. The post-season City Tournament was set to take place on May 26 but was cancelled due to bad weather. Now, AllStar play begins with nine Big Sky athletes qualified for the Belgrade League. Four players qualified from the Minors team, two qualified from the Majors team and three qualified from the Babe Ruth team.

The Big Sky Royals Baseball Organization started back in 2015 with one team of Tee ball aged kids. Since then, the organization has grown to 65 players on four different levels of baseball: Rookies aged 7 to 8, Minors aged 9 to 10, Majors aged 11 to 12 and Babe Ruth aged 13 to 15. There

are four Rookies teams that stay in Big Sky to compete and one team for each remaining age group. The Minors, Majors and Babe Ruth team mostly compete in the Belgrade Baseball league and host some home games at the Big Sky Community Park.

According to coach Matt Morris, this year was by far the largest in terms of number of players. Morris spearheads the Big Sky Royals and finds coaches and organizes teams. This year he coached the Majors, Vanessa Wilson coached the Rookies, Bart Mitchell coached the Minors and John McGuire coached Babe Ruth.

“It is truly an honor to teach baseball to the kids in Big Sky,” Morris said. “It is a game that teaches you failure, patience and humility. Baseball has always been a constant in my life, and I am grateful to be able to share what I have learned.”





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On the clock

BY AL MALINOWSKI
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The National Federation of State High School Association recently approved a proposal to allow the use of a 35-second shot clock in high school basketball. In rural Montana, where team depth varies school-to-school and year-to-year, the implementation of a shot clock may only emphasize inherent disadvantages.

The NFHS did not require the use of a shot clock and has instead left the decision up to each individual state. Currently, eight states use a shot clock for high school basketball, but those states had to previously resign from the NFHS rules committee to implement the shot clock.

Shot clocks have been used for years in professional and college basketball games. The NBA introduced a shot clock in 1954, revitalizing a game that was losing fan interest as some teams chose to utilize a stall tactic on offense. NCAA men's basketball added a shot clock to college play in 1985 after experiencing similar challenges with slower play which was likely impacting ratings. Professional and collegiate women's basketball leagues also employ shot clocks, though none of the leagues seem to agree on what is the optimum possession time—times currently vary from 24 to 35 seconds.

Proponents of a shot clock in high school point to its success in professional and college basketball when advocating for one. The shot clock has elevated the action both in college and professional basketball, which many would argue makes the games more exciting to watch. In a society that demands constant stimulation, basketball scores of 142-138 are more desirable than 42-38. Add to that equation revenue generated by television ratings, and it becomes easy to understand why the rules were changed to meet fan interest.

Some also might compare the shot clock proposal to the addition of the three-point line, which followed a similar progression through professional, then college, then high school and eventually middle school levels of basketball. I'm sure there are a few basketball purists out there, including John Wooden, who still think adding the three-point line was a bad decision, but most would agree that it changed the game for the better.

But besides adding excitement to the game with more scoring, the three-point line also enabled players or teams that weren't blessed with height to compete. No amount of time in the gym will make a player any taller, but a good shooter only needs to make two-thirds as many shots from behind the three-point line to be just as effective as a player who plays in the paint. The three-point line also increased the probability of those "Cinderella" upsets that basketball fans cherish so much during the NCAA tournament.

The shot clock proposal brings a variety of challenges. The technology to add the shot clocks is expensive, and many Montana small school athletic budgets are already spread thin. There is also the need to find another volunteer to operate the shot clock during games from a volunteer pool that is equally thin. Modern basketball is already played at a faster pace than when the NBA and NCAA decided it need to increase the speed of play, so it may be difficult to justify the added cost and volunteer time when that shot clock will likely impact very few possessions in most games.

The biggest disadvantage to a shot clock that I rarely hear mentioned is that it will benefit the larger schools with the deeper benches. High schools (mostly) don't recruit their players; a school's player pool is supposed to be limited to the students who live in their school district. Unlike the professional or college levels, where coaches can draft or recruit players who fit their system, high schools play with who they have. The talent level and number of interested players can vary year to year.

One of the great challenges in coaching Montana Class C basketball is determining the best strategy each season. I had great respect for the coaches that could adapt their approach to complement the strengths of their players rather than making their players fit into "their system". At Lone Peak, our strategy often varied from game to game and routinely considered a comparison of our depth versus our opponent's depth. In those early years of our program our depth rarely compared favorably, but I believed our starters could compete with anybody.

A shot clock will add to the advantage that the teams with more depth already have. More games will be impacted negatively with the deeper team having the ability to establish and maintain a faster pace. Forcing weaker teams to shoot the ball quicker will result in possessions that end in poor shots without the defensive team having to take risks. I'm not convinced these games will be any more entertaining to watch.

In evenly matched games, why shouldn't the team who establishes the lead get to dictate the pace? Shouldn't that be the reward for earning the lead in the early part of the game? That may mean the trailing team has to adjust their defense accordingly and experience what basketball teams from small schools do all the time.

If I were a representative of a small Class C school in Montana, I would vote against the implementation of a basketball shot clock when it gets proposed. Best case, the shot clock will have very little impact on most games, but worst case, it will emphasize the depth advantage some schools already have.



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What's next for NorthWestern Energy?

Montana's largest utility submits application for new natural gas plant, battery storage project

BY AMANDA EGGERT
MONTANA FREE PRESS

BUTTE, MT – NorthWestern Energy submitted an application to the Montana Public Service Commission Wednesday to build a new 175-megawatt natural gas plant and move forward with Montana's first utility-scale battery project.

NorthWestern's application asks for commission approval to recover \$54 million for the natural gas plant in the supply rates paid by its 700,000-plus customers in Montana. The company argues that the natural gas plant it proposes is the best and cheapest option for a new high-capacity resource that could be online by January 2024. The total cost of the plant, factoring in land, construction costs, property taxes and capitalized interest incurred during construction, is expected to top \$286 million, and NorthWestern is seeking a 10 percent return on equity for the project, for an overall rate of return of 7 percent.

The company is also seeking to enter a 20-year agreement with Beartooth Energy Storage, LLC, for a 50-megawatt energy storage project near Billings. Beartooth would build and own the facility, and NorthWestern would control its charging and discharging functions. The idea behind that project is to direct excess electrons on the grid to the battery when supply is high and demand and energy prices are down, and release electricity back onto transmission lines when demand surges and intermittent energy sources fall off. NorthWestern says this will keep the company from having to make more expensive market purchases for energy.

The company argues the acquisitions are in the public's best interest because they'll provide customers with reliable, cost-effective service and protect them from risks associated with volatility and unreliable service when demand for energy peaks. It says the portfolio it landed on through this process is the "least risk, most diverse, and most flexible option at a cost-effective price in comparison to the other evaluated portfolios."

According to NorthWestern's calculations, the average residential customer in Montana who consumes about 750 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month would see their monthly bill increase by \$6.64 if the PSC approves the application.

NorthWestern Energy spokesperson Jo Dee Black said the fuel portion of the equation, the price of natural gas, is evaluated through a different process that's not reflected in the application before the PSC.

Alan Olson, executive director of the Montana Petroleum Association, said natural gas is plentiful, and that's part of the reason it's been so cheap recently. He also said there's some uncertainty about the country's energy future that makes natural gas plants like the one NorthWestern is proposing particularly attractive to the oil refineries his group represents. A natural gas plant will introduce certainty to not just NorthWestern's portfolio, but to the Pacific Northwest's energy-thirsty grid more broadly, he said.

"The climate agenda, even before President Biden [entered office], is going to create some serious concerns on the ability to generate electricity," Olson said. "You look at the recent retirement of Colstrip Units 1 and 2. You look at the closure of the Boardman [coal-fired power plant] in Oregon and the upcoming closure of the Centralia Power Plant in Washington state. That's going to create a lot of unknowns and potential problems because we're losing that baseload generation. ... We're going to need natural gas generation to firm up the resource as more and more renewable resources come online."

According to the U.S. Energy Information Association's 2021 Annual Energy Outlook, natural gas consumption in the U.S. is expected to fall slightly in the near term and then climb steadily for three more decades.

A new natural gas plant has been on NorthWestern's forecast for a while. In its 2019 Electricity Supply Resource Procurement Plan, it indicated its interest in a natural gas plant and outlined the capacity and transmission ceiling it bumps up against when demand on the grid is high.

The company says the battery storage and natural gas plant are good complements to the wind and solar resources it's acquired in recent years. It also plans to secure 100 megawatts of capacity from primarily hydroelectric resources per a five-year agreement it signed with Powerex Corp. That agreement is not part of the application before the PSC, but it is referenced in the document as part of the overall portfolio the company is pursuing.

In the application, NorthWestern touched on the electricity challenges Texas faced during an unusually long cold snap this February that wreaked havoc on electricity demand and supply for millions of Texans and led to a fervor of political commentary on the country's energy dynamics.

"Recent events in Texas have tragically demonstrated the risk and consequences of over-reliance on generation in the market to meet customers' need for electric capacity especially at times of peak demand," NorthWestern Energy CEO Robert Rowe said in the application.

Rowe also notes that most of the company's recent acquisitions and agreements involve hydro, wind or solar energy, and that its last acquisition of a thermal asset like a coal-fired power plant or a natural gas plant was 10 years ago when it brought the Dave Gates Generating Station online. That facility is a 150-megawatt natural gas plant located near Anaconda that's owned by NorthWestern.

Several executives supplying testimony in the document echo Olson's statement that there's a need for more capacity in the Pacific Northwest generally, and that NorthWestern is an outlier among regional utility companies in its dependence on market purchases for power. While virtually all utility companies purchase energy from the grid at some point, NorthWestern does so more often than most utilities, Black said. During periods of peak demand, about 40-50 percent of the company's energy comes from market purchases.

Colstrip's coal-fired power plant is by far the company's largest existing capacity resource, providing up to 222 megawatts of energy. Second is the Dave Gates Generating Station, followed by the Judith Gap Wind Station with 135 megawatts.

THE LAUREL GENERATING STATION PROPOSAL

If the application is approved by the PSC, the Laurel Generating Station natural gas plant would be built by Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, operated by Caterpillar Power Generation Systems, LLC, and owned by NorthWestern Energy. At peak construction, between 250 and 300 jobs would be created, Black said. Once built, about 10 workers would be required to run the plant.

The plant itself would use 18 reciprocating internal combustion engine, or RICE, units. Black said there's a fair bit of flexibility created by this model: the units could be turned off when wind and solar energy production is up and toggled back on as those resources fall off and demand spikes.

The company said it landed on the Laurel location due to its proximity to both natural gas and uncongested transmission lines. It anticipates using a similar process it already employs to acquire natural gas for customers to procure supply for the plant. It will use a combination of daily, monthly and fixed-price natural gas purchases to mitigate market volatility. If the plant is approved, a new pipeline to service the Laurel Generating Station would need to be constructed.

The application also includes plans for carbon offsets, as required by a law passed by the Montana Legislature in 2007. To meet that need, NorthWestern would make a one-time investment of \$327,000 in a carbon offset plan focused on carbon reduction and absorption to be implemented by nonprofit The Climate Trust, which acquires and manages carbon offset programs. Investment preference would be given to Montana-based projects.



PHOTO BY NIKOLA JOHNNY MIRKOVIC VIA UNSPLASH

THE BIDDING PROCESS

As part of the request-for-proposal process the company launched last January, 21 bidders offered more than 180 proposals to contribute capacity to NorthWestern. Most of those proposals were for energy storage systems—batteries—or a battery storage system paired with a solar project.

Monica Tranel, a former staff attorney for the PSC and Montana Consumer Counsel who has worked in the energy industry for 20 years, said she's glad that NorthWestern is pursuing energy storage, but doesn't think a natural gas plant is in Montana's best interest.

"I think those resources have significant risk in terms of carbon emission pricing, cost of gas and stranded costs," she said. "I would hope that ... careful thought is given to long-term ownership and the potential stranded costs [so] those risks aren't offloaded to customers."

She said she'd rather see more investment in renewable energy projects like wind, solar and hydroelectric—"not just the typical run-of-the-mill hydro, but both pumped hydro at the large level like the Gordon Butte project, but also micro pumped storage all over Montana."

The Gordon Butte project was first proposed more than a decade ago. If built, it would create a large energy storage system in Meagher County. It would pull energy from the grid when supply exceeds demand to pump water to a reservoir on Gordon Butte, a geographic feature near Martinsdale. When demand for energy trends upward, the water would be released through turbines into a lower reservoir, generating up to 400 megawatts of electricity.

Black said NorthWestern couldn't offer comment on the project proposals it received that it decided not to move forward with, but said that the RFP did give the company a good sampling of the proposals that are out there and the technology that's being developed. Even if all three projects it's planning to move forward with are given a green light, she said, NorthWestern anticipates that it will need to secure additional capacity in the not-too-distant future.

"Now we have an idea what's out there. It's exciting. The energy industry is transitioning," she said, "We're looking forward to working with some

technology we haven't worked with before and meeting our customers' desires and needs while continuing to provide service that's reliable and affordable."

In addition to Gordon Butte, bids came in for several other high-capacity projects, according to reporting by the Billings Gazette. Those include proposals from NextEra, which is developing a 750-megawatt wind farm for a three-county area in eastern Montana; Broadview Solar II, a 300-megawatt solar farm planned west of Billings; and Mitsubishi Power America, which proposed building a green hydrogen production and storage facility that would incorporate solar power, a gas-fired peaking power plant and a combined cycle gas generator.

The future of Colstrip is still one of the big unknowns hanging over the company's future. In a recent call with NorthWestern shareholders Rowe said that without some key pieces of legislation passing this session, the company doesn't plan to acquire additional shares in Colstrip.

There's also some question as to whether renewable energy advocates will intervene on the application and ask for a more careful consideration of projects that NorthWestern opted not to pursue.

"The application certainly brings up questions about resource selection," NW Energy Coalition senior policy associate Diego Rivas wrote in an email to Montana Free Press. "The NW Energy Coalition will be digging through the filing to determine if a 175 MW gas plant is the right option to meet customers' needs. Serious questions remain regarding the risk of gas, including price spikes of the volatile commodity, the ability to transport gas to the plant during critical peak times due to lack of pipeline transmission availability, and potential carbon regulation. While NorthWestern may have some capacity needs, the utility has not been aggressive at addressing demand through energy efficiency and conservation, or looking to demand response, all of which address capacity issues at a fraction of the cost."

The Public Service Commission has 270 days to evaluate the application. That process includes opportunities for public comment.

This article was originally published by Montana Free Press on May 21, 2021. You can find the full story, as well as others, at montanafreepress.org.

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DINING & FUNMIBS: Canyon Auto
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Ending stigma with stereotype

Man Therapy campaign aims to save lives, treat behavioral health issues

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Behind a video clip of a mustachioed gentleman chuckling at a chainsaw operator's manual, a headline on mantherapy.org reads, "According to science, bad things can happen to men too." He's using a leaf blower to clear his desk and lifting a bowling ball like a barbell.

The content is a part of a national marketing campaign called Man Therapy and while the humor is intentional, the aim is to solve a sobering epidemic.

In the U.S., men account for 78 percent of all suicides. Most of these deaths occur in men aged 25 to 65, a demographic commonly referred to as "working-aged men."

To increase awareness about mental health and establish a more targeted approach to saving lives, Cactus, a Denver, Colorado-based advertising agency, in partnership with the Office of Suicide Prevention at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, came up with Man Therapy in 2007. It has since been adopted by partners nationwide. One such partner, the Elevating Behavioral Health Consortium, includes regional institutions like Bozeman Health, Greater Gallatin United Way, the Help Center, Gallatin County and Park County.

According to a 2019 report in the National Vital Statistics Report, Montana has the third highest rate of suicide in the nation. This is due a multitude of factors, discusses Martin, including high altitude; dark, long and cold winters; its high population of veterans and American Indians; and Montana's "tough" culture that perpetuates a stigma against getting help. The rural nature of the state doesn't help—even if a man gets to the point of asking for help, oftentimes it isn't available.

"We live in the Intermountain West where rugged individualism is touted as a strength, which means you don't often ask for help," said Ellie Martin, a licensed clinical social worker with Routefinder Consulting and Greater Gallatin United Way. "We're a frontier environment for behavioral health access."

Although women attempt suicide three times more often than men, men are four times more likely to succeed, according to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Access to lethal means also plays a big role. Martin says 65 percent of men in Montana die by suicide by way of firearm. She added that most have had undiagnosed or untreated behavioral health issues as well as drug abuse issues in the past.

Professional policies and related stigma, like limited paternity leave at jobs, perpetuate the idea that men don't experience the same emotional capacity as women.

"One goal was to think about how we can be strategic to decrease stigma," said Christopher Coburn, Bozeman Health's system manager of community benefits and partnerships. "We wanted it to be the most impactful. We looked at those people who were dying by suicide by the highest rates, and it was the working aged men, so we thought this was a really good fit to reach that goal."

Man Therapy offers resources, such as therapist referrals and free coping techniques, for men suffering from behavioral health or substance abuse episodes using humor as a way to normalize and dispel the stigma. A mustache infographic explains, "1 in 10 men suffer from rage," while another quips, "sometimes a man needs a pork shoulder to cry on." These tactics aren't just humorous—they've produced results. Website analytics gathered in the first five years of the program revealed that 79 percent of the site's visitors were male, 79 percent were between the ages of 25 and 64 and 10 percent were military.

Although the stressors of the pandemic have increased the need for mental health services—the Help Center in Bozeman reported seeing a 50 percent increase in



Man Therapy is a part of an effort to address the demographic most acutely affected by suicide: men between the ages of 25 and 65. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOZEMAN HEALTH

calls since March of 2020 – Martin says a silver lining of the pandemic is that it has normalized getting help. Even though sometimes you can do everything to take care of yourself, she explains, it's alright that sometimes it isn't enough.

Man Therapy also offers resources such as communication tips and hotlines to call, to those who think a loved one might be struggling. Both Martin and Coburn say that signs to keep an eye out for in others are changes in mood, a deeper sense of hopelessness and signs of withdrawal. As a friend or family member, the best thing you can do is to voice those observations and concerns aloud.

"One thing that I've been doing recently, if someone is asking, 'hey how are you doing today?' Don't just say 'fine.' Tell them," said Coburn. "Be honest about your feelings.

It's okay to have feelings other than good, great or amazing. There's perfection in the full range of feelings that you have."

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

Depression is treatable, suicide is preventable. Whether you yourself are struggling, or you are worried about a loved one, there is always help available. Here are some resources to start.

Man Therapy

"Because life throws you curveballs, sometimes right at your manhood."

mantherapy.org/about

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

The state of Montana has a crisis hotline available 24/7 via voice call or text.

dphhs.mt.gov/suicideprevention/suicideresources

Know the Signs

How to reach out, and what to say if you feel a loved one is struggling.

suicideispreventable.org

Yours in Health

Flower essence therapy

BY DR. ANDREA WICK

Flower essences therapy is used for emotional, mental and energetic health and is based on the theory that specific flowers hold healing vibrations. Flower essences are made by boiling down specific flowers and adding a preservative agent such as alcohol or vegetable glycerin. They are then taken as a medicinal tincture.

A British physician, Dr. Edward Bach, M.D., founded the first flower remedy in 1930. If you have ever heard of Rescue Remedy, it's one of his patented formulas. Bach was a surgeon who specialized as a bacteriologist and pathologist. In turn, much of his research and study was with vaccines and through his research was inspired to approach medicine holistically through the practice of homeopathy.

In my practice, I have experienced profound healing using flower remedies, both through my personal use and prescription to patients. Many patients state that it helps with physical pain, trauma, anxiety, depression, anger and grief.

Flower remedies are usually prescribed through a practitioner interviewing a patient and listening to their specific needs and wants. It can also be done through kinesiology or muscle testing.

Flower essence therapy also helps animals who are anxious or who have abandonment trauma. When selecting a flower essence for animals, the owner's feelings are taken into consideration, since his or her own stress can greatly impact the animal. Flower essence therapy is also a great therapy for children due to its gentle effect with little to no side effects.



Dr. Andrea Wick, a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist, recommends using flower essence therapy as a homeopathic solution to ailments like stress and physical and emotional imbalance. PHOTO BY STEFAN RODRIGUEZ

Dr. Bach took a leap into holistic medicine and decided to use his intuitive healing abilities with plants. Through trial and error, he found that certain flowers helped to calm physical and emotional distress in patients. To this day, his work is still held in high regard by traditional and holistic physicians.

Dr. Jeffrey Cram, Ph. D., a clinical psychologist, carried out research on the effects of flower essence therapy and stress. His research showed that individuals using remedies in an induced stress situation had reduced levels of emotional reactivity in the brain that was measured with EEG and EMG. EEG and EMG are used to measure muscle activity and brain wave activity.

Flower essences help to realign the physical body with the soul body and help to change negative thought patterns and challenges. They help us to learn to become more connected to our physical bodies, and connect how stress impacts our physiology.

Overall, flower essence therapy can help you to live a more soulful, balanced life, help you to gain more confidence and self-esteem and bring you more clarity and insight into your emotional habits. It can help prepare you for life transitions such as birth, puberty and menopause.

It is important to remember that flower essences are not meant to replace talking with a mental health professional or counseling. This therapy is meant to complement and enhance traditional therapies through the healing properties of plants.

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 drandrearwick.com to learn more.



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Making it in Big Sky: Canyon Auto Repair and Towing

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – After flying up to Big Sky for a friend’s wedding in 1978, Ken Morton wasted no time and moved out here permanently two weeks later. He resigned his position as supervisor of the city of San Diego’s equipment division, packed his bags and bought a house out West, where he’d eventually open the town’s go-to auto repair shop, Canyon Auto Repair and Towing.

He said a big part of his decision to move to Big Sky was the better quality of life and he thought it would be a better place to raise a family.

Morton said that he was lucky to snag the 4 acres that his business, Canyon Auto Repair and Towing, currently resides on. It was rough going in the beginning, he recalled, since there weren’t many people in Big Sky.

Forty-two years later, Canyon Auto is still serving the Big Sky community. Currently, the business has four employees including Morton and the business is a family affair. Morton’s son, Andy, works for him as a mechanic and Andy’s wife, Amber, serves as the secretary. Amber’s brother rounds out the mechanic team and Morton also uses his experience as a Chevrolet master technician and his degree in electronics to help with automotive repair work.

“We’ve saved thousands of vacations for people by getting them back on the road again.”

Canyon Auto provides a wide range of services, most notably towing, as well as help with jump starts, lockouts and auto repairs. They are a NAPA Auto Care Center, and all their work is guaranteed nationwide.

Explore Big Sky sat down with Morton to learn more about Canyon Auto Repair and Towing and how the business has grown and changed over the years. His answers are below.

Some answers have been edited for brevity.

Explore Big Sky: Tell me about how you started Canyon Auto?

Ken Morton: Well, the main problem was finding real estate to start a commercial business like this, and I was lucky to find the 4 acres that I have here. The area had not been discovered yet and there were very few people here, so it was extremely difficult to make a living here for the first 12 to 14 years and then it got better as it got busier. We are a NAPA Auto Care Center, and we have a contract for AAA Roadside Assistance and Highway Patrol for towing and emergency road service.

EBS: What services do you provide?

K.M.: We provide general automotive repair. We have a lot of people traveling through. ... We end up with a lot of people on vacation, broke down in a hurry to get to their campsite or wherever they’re going on their once-in-a-lifetime trip to Yellowstone [National] Park and so we end up doing a lot of emergency, on-the-double repairs and we’ve saved thousands of vacations for people by getting them back on the road again. We also have a contract for towing with Big Sky Resort and Moonlight [Basin]. Tons of people slide off the road at all



Canyon Auto Repair and Towing has been serving the Big Sky community for 42 years. Ken Morton started the business when he moved to Big Sky in 1978 and today his three employees are all family members born and raised in Big Sky. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

hours of the day and night so we have seven tow trucks, each one for different kinds of work. We have big trucks for big wrecks and little trucks for little cars and four-wheel drives and specialized recovery stuff. That’s not normal in a city. We run around all hours of the day and night, pulling people out that go off the road.

EBS: What would you say is the most frequent call that you respond to?

K.M.: Our most frequent calls would be AAA, and that would be on locked cars, jumpstarts, if they slide off the road pulling them back on the road again. If they want to be taken to a shop in town, then we take them into a shop in town. If the vehicle is still under warranty we go to the dealer. That would be the work that we do. The highway patrol calls us from their wrecks on the highway. When the highway is closed or partially closed, we do a lot, especially in the winter.

EBS: How has your business fared through COVID-19?

K.M.: We’ve fared fairly well. We were down 23 percent gross income for 2020 over the previous year due to COVID. But our biggest problem here is finding talented employees, because there’s no place to live up here, nobody can afford the rent up here.

EBS: What is your favorite part of working at Canyon Auto?

K.M.: In this line of work, you get the satisfaction when you go home every day of saving someone from missing their vacation. And you got somebody’s car running or you pull somebody out of the ditch who was in a bad way or out of the river, it’s just generally helping people. It is one of the reasons why we do this. If somebody is locked out of their car and their baby is in the car, to unlock the car and everybody is happy and it’s a feeling that you don’t get in a lot of businesses.

EBS: What is the most memorable call you have ever responded to?

K.M.: We do thousands of calls every year. So, the most memorable calls that stick with me, because there’s so many, is so far with a tow truck, I’ve saved three lives of people that would have certainly been dead. They were accidents and people were trapped in a vehicle, one of them was on fire.

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

K.M.: I don’t remember getting any good business advice from anybody I just saw the need for automotive service in Big Sky and started a business.

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Brad Niva looks to support Big Sky businesses, boost economy

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Flying into Rogue Valley International Airport, there is a good chance that you will be greeted by an almost 10-foot-tall mural of Brad Niva welcoming small businesses to the area. While Niva is primarily a businessman and was most recently hired as the CEO of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky following his post as the executive director of Travel Southern Oregon, his prowess was born from his recognition as a top business leader in southern Oregon.

From pharmaceuticals in corporate America to a rafting company in southern Oregon, Niva has a wide range of experience in both the business world and the tourism and outdoors industry. He has won a number of awards including the Oregon Governor's Tourism Award, the Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Commission Top Business Leader and the Goldman Sachs 10K Small Business Scholar Award. Now, Niva will be using that expertise to guide Big Sky through its next chapter of development.

“Our new CEO Brad Niva brings a wealth of Mountain/Outdoor business and tourism experience to Big Sky,” wrote the Chamber board's Scott Johnson in an email to EBS. Johnson was also chair of the hiring committee. “It was evident from our first conversations that he has the skill set and passion to represent our Big Sky Business Community.”

As the new CEO of both the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky, he will certainly need to be prepared to fill the dynamic role. Niva will have two different boards of directors to answer to and two different sets of goals to pursue. Luckily, he is well versed in both aspects of his new position.

“The focus of my career for many years has been in the outdoor recreation field as well as the tourism economy,” Niva said in a May 24 interview.

In addition to his corporate experience, business acumen and knowledge of tourism economies, Niva also worked in the ski industry for 20 years and is excited to live in a ski town again.

Niva met his wife, Babs, on the ski slopes of Mount Bachelor, Oregon, in the early '90s and they both love the sport. Niva described how he initially researched Big Sky after hearing of the position and was excited to discover the size of Big Sky Resort.

He said his 12-year-old son, Riley, and 15-year-old daughter, Piper, are a tad hesitant about the move but feels like he and Babs are able to give their kids the gift of growing up in a ski town.

“We see Big Sky as a neat opportunity for us as a family to get back to basics,” Niva said.

He originally visited Big Sky for the first time early on in the interview process and said he was able to meet some great community members who impressed him with their passion for the community.

“I found myself wanting to be a part of it,” he said.

Niva noted some of the unique challenges that Big Sky faces, specifically referring to the growing pains that come with being discovered and the community's lack of central government. Despite those challenges, Niva said he is a huge fan of the new BASE community center and pointed out that

Big Sky Community Organization has done some great work with the parks and recreation opportunities here.

“I see these different pieces of this system and it naturally just makes me go ‘I want to be a part of this, this is so neat to see a community buy in,’” he said.

Niva has worked for 20 years in the tourism industry and owned multiple businesses, including Rogue Wilderness Adventures, a rafting company he purchased and grew almost 300 percent in 10 years.

He feels that his diverse background makes him well-suited to handle the business and tourism aspects of his new role with the Chamber and Visit Big Sky.

“I come with a good set of tools that I can offer to businesses and the community,” Niva said. “I also come with this mentality of being of service.”

Johnson concurred, writing, “His proven leadership will be an asset to our community now and into the future.”

Niva's goals for the Chamber and VBS are numerous and ambitious.

On the Chamber side of things, he expressed a desire to support the business community in Big Sky and said he is approaching that part of the role as a business owner. He offered ideas like monthly small business gatherings, coming up with solutions to solve staffing problems and making Big Sky a more viable destination year-round to ensure more constant revenue streams.

“I understand the challenges of a tourism economy and what it does to a business,” Niva said. “You have a huge influx of cash flow and revenue; you make hay when you can make it and then you ride it out the rest of the year.”

On the VBS and tourism side of the coin, Niva said his goal is to make sure that Big Sky is competitive in the marketplace and is drawing visitors to support Resort Tax. In November of 2020, the VBS board hired Karsh Hagan, a marketing agency that will help to market Big Sky as a year-round destination to tourists.

Niva said he wants to continue that effort to mitigate the seasonal nature of Big Sky. He offered suggestions like a winter carnival or bringing in national races in the spring and fall as ways to accomplish that goal.

“That's not an easy fix, that's going to be a 10-to-15-year project to round out our tourism economy but it's something that can be done by introducing new products and new events to our area,” he said.

In order to keep up with the increased visitation, Niva also emphasized the importance of laying down infrastructure and improving on or expanding what already exists in Big Sky.

Niva officially started his new role on June 1, and he said he is excited to get to work and move forward.

“I look at what my resume has to offer, and I really feel like this is a great opportunity to make a good fit with Big Sky and it sounds like Big Sky needs someone like me as well to walk you through the next chapter of what this community has to offer,” Niva said.



Brad Niva has extensive experience in the tourism and outdoors industry. He hopes to use his dynamic background in his new role as CEO of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky.
PHOTO BY JIM CRAVEN PHOTOGRAPHY



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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, June 4 – Thursday, June 17

If your event falls between June 18 and July 1, please submit it by June 9 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, June 4

BPS Ghost Walking Tour

Gallatin County Court House, 1 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Live Music: Kevin Pillsbury Duo

Tips Up, 10 p.m.

Saturday, June 5

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

National Trails Day

Big Sky Community Park, 8:30 – 11 a.m.

LPHS Graduation

Bough-Dolan Athletic Center, 1 p.m.

Sunday, June 6

Historic Main Street Walking Tour

Bozeman, 1 p.m.

Live Music: Fountain Street Theater

Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

Monday, June 7

Social Tennis Group

Big Sky Community Park, 6 p.m.

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Sunrise Karaoke

American Legion, 9 p.m.

Tuesday, June 8

Small Business Virtual Roundtable

Big Sky Chamber Facebook Live, 2 – 3 p.m.

Trivia Night

Café 191, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 9

Big Sky Farmers Market

Town Center, 5 p.m.

Trivia Night

ACRE Kitchen, 6 – 8 p.m.

Live Music: Mathias

Tips Up, 8 p.m.

Thursday, June 10

New Moon Women's Circle

Santosha Wellness Center, 7 p.m.

Launch Party

Arts Council of Big Sky

Live Music: Mathias

Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

Friday, June 11

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Live Music: Cole Thorne Duo

Tips Up, 10 p.m.

Facial Gua Sha Class

Santosha Wellness Center, 6 p.m.

Saturday, June 12

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Gallatin River Weed Pull

Portal Creek Flats, Gallatin Canyon, 9 – 11 a.m.

Mountain to Meadow Trail Workday

Poop Chute Trailhead, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Live Music: Ticketsauce

Tips Up, 10 p.m.

Sunday, June 13

Brunch

Mountains Walking Brewery, Bozeman, 10 a.m.

Historic Sunset Hills Cemetery Walking Tour

Sunset Hills Cemetery, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

Monday, June 14

Trivia Night

Wildrye Distilling, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 15

Bozeman Farmers' Market

Lindley Park, 5 p.m.

Trivia Night

Café 191, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 16

Total Archery Challenge

Big Sky Resort, 7:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Bear Safety Training Day

Big Sky Community Park, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Big Sky Farmers Market

Town Center, 5 p.m.

Trivia Night

ACRE Kitchen, 6 – 8 p.m.

Live Music: Chandler Huntley

Tips Up, 8 p.m.

Thursday, June 17

Total Archery Challenge

Big Sky Resort, 7:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Shakespeare in the Parks: "Cymbeline"

MSU Grove, 8 p.m.

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Musician Spotlight: Kylie Spence

Post international tour, Spence focuses on songwriting career ahead

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – At 12 years old Kylie Spence was determined to play music. With a few years of piano and musical theater behind her and some money she had saved herself, Spence bought a guitar at the local music store, took it home, and started teaching herself Taylor Swift covers. She then moved on to writing her own songs on top of the chords she learned on her own. She released her first single, “Lying Eyes,” in 2017 and is working on a second EP she hopes to release by the end of this year.

Today, the 20-year-old is studying music at Montana State University part time and is spending the rest of her energy on building her already strong music career. Originally from Illinois, Spence moved around a lot with her parents until they settled in Big Sky in 2017.

“To be honest I associate Montana with my home,” Spence said, who, prior to moving here with her parents, had been visiting since she was 6. “It’s really the only place I’ve ever felt I’ve connected with on a spiritual level.”

Spence performs locally, but her big break was opening for Dennis Loyd on his tour through Europe and Israel.

“Touring internationally was something I was never expecting to do,” Spence said. “But it was one of the coolest experiences I’ve ever had in my life and probably will ever have.”



With a European tour behind her, Kylie Spence is focusing on honing her musical skills and building her career right here in the Big Sky and Bozeman area. PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLIE SPENCE

Spence plays guitar, ukulele and bass, paired with her strong vocals, and writes most of her own songs. Although a lot of her songs are about love and heartbreaks, she revels in the evolution songwriting brings and embraces new muses as they come. She has been inspired by Swift’s last two albums, “evermore” and “folklore,” particularly by the storytelling and poetic aspects of her work.

“Honestly it’s changing,” Spence says of her writing voice. “It used to be inspired by love and the sad part of love—it’s very easy for me to write sad love songs. But [I’ve been] trying to write from different angles and perspectives. I write the best songs when I don’t even expect to write a song that day ... I know it’s going to come when it’s meant to come.”

On top of school, Spence manages her music career—the marketing and social media aspects of it—on her own and names her parents as her biggest supporters. She records all her songs with her Los Angeles-based producer in her home studio in Big Sky. When she’s not immersed in her music, she enjoys camping and rock climbing and enjoying the outdoor lifestyle Montana offers.

She’ll be playing at Lone Mountain Ranch most Thursdays this summer, with Desperate Electric in the Cannery District in Bozeman on June 19 and she is working on a new single called “River” to be released in July.

Artist Spotlight: Jill Garber Couture

Locally featured designer presents wearable art

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – When you’re trying on one of Jill Garber’s jewelry pieces, you’re most likely wearing more than a bracelet, earrings or necklace. You’re wearing a piece of history. Garber founded Jill Garber Couture in 2008, drawing inspiration from artistic periods of history, antique jewelry and objects d’art design, a style dating back to the 17th century.

Garber grew up in Saginaw, Michigan, and Sarasota, Florida, and moved to New York, New York, to attend Parsons School of Design in 1972, and then Los Angeles, California where she lived until 2004. Her educational background is in jewelry, fashion and product design as well as design licensing. She also credits her parents for inspiration and encouragement through her career—her father was an entrepreneur and her mother, an artist.

Garber’s works can be viewed and tried on at the Courtney Collins Fine Art gallery in the Big Sky Town Center Tuesday through Saturday from 12 to 5 p.m. Gallery owner Courtney Collins can help you select, and try on a piece.

“I am touched and somewhat humbled when I interface with admirers of my work,” Garber told EBS in an email. “I consider it an honor and privilege to create beautiful things, as well as to have led my entire life working in the arts and design—it is a joy to discuss the many details and stories that surround my work with those who are interested.”

Garber channels her unique artistic perspective into her creations, which is why they have evolved over the years. She hopes her pieces instill in their

wearers those same creative powers. Garber has participated in the Big Sky Arts Auction in previous years through Courtney Collins, an event she sees as an opportunity to connect with other artists and patrons.

“I think it is important to encourage and enlighten people as to what is taking place in the arts, and support these efforts in every community,” Garber said. “I also believe it is important to provide a professional platform that is involved in communities throughout the world, for artists to display their works and engage with others in their field.”

Garber has been the recipient of the State of Michigan Artists Award for Excellence in Jewelry and Sculpture and the Mademoiselle Magazine College Competition Award. Her work has been featured in magazines including Romantic Homes, Romantic Country, Vintage and Victorian and Cowboys & Indians.

From grand cuff bracelets, to festoon necklaces, chokers, drop earrings, rings and bolos, Garber crafts each piece with her hands and no two are alike. In them she utilizes elements such as gemstones from around the world, 19th century hand carved

Venetian cameos, floral Micro Mosaics, 18th century portraits, hand painted fine porcelain, sacred French medals and other treasures. Antique story is an intrinsic component to all her pieces.

To peer into history, or perhaps to even try it on, stop into Courtney Collins gallery enjoy Garber’s work and watch out for her at the Big Sky Art Auction July 14-18.



Jill Garber crafts artistic, wearable pieces of jewelry, each unique and that tell a story. PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL GARBER



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AMUSE-BOUCHE

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

Anatomy of a piece of meat



BY SCOTT MECHURA
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

With a few exceptions, beef is consumed throughout the entire world, and every bit of a cow is eaten or utilized amongst the six continents that enjoy it. For the most part, humans enjoy the primal cuts of beef, or in other words, what we simply refer to as steak.

But just what is a “steak” anyway?

At its simplest and most basic, steak is muscle. Muscle from a cow to be exact. But from there, it gets a bit more technical.

Muscles are made of bundles of cells, called fibers. And then each of these fibers is made up of additional proteins.

As we know, a muscle’s job is to expand and contract—this is how movement is generated. This requires a tremendous amount of energy and the energy source for this is oxygen, which comes from blood circulation in arteries throughout the muscle. When an animal is slaughtered, the arteries and veins in the carcass are drained of blood. This is why you have liquid and proteins on your plate, not blood.

A carcass that is frozen too slowly or quickly can affect the lactic acid in the fibers, which can either make the muscle mushy and watery, or tough and dry.

Not only does a muscle expand and contract when it is used by a living thing, but this also happens when it is cooked.

As heat is applied to a muscle, or “steak”, many things can happen, and all in a particular sequence. The quality and time of these sequences can change but the order in which they happen never does.

This process, called denaturation, begins precisely at 105°F. At this temperature you can’t visibly see physical changes, but things are starting to happen to the structure of the fibers and water content. Calcium proteins are beginning to lose integrity and this goes until 122°F. Enzyme activity is also high within this temperature range.

I find it fascinating that malted barley, a primary ingredient in beer, has the same things happen as it passes through these same temperatures. Barley has a 102°F to 105°F acid rest, then a 122°F protein rest.

At 122°F meat reaches what we know as rare. There is some browning, texture change and moisture loss on the outside, but inside the meat is still red and barely warm as the above effects have not yet penetrated any farther.

At 125°F red meat begins to turn pink and fat and collagen begin to coagulate. In other words, it begins to turn white and firm up respectively.

This continues through until about 140°F. This roughly 15-degree range is where this process continues. Red meat becomes pink, pink meat becomes gray, and grey meat loses substantial moisture and structure. This color and moisture loss is due to iron and myoglobin breakdown (the red juice you see on your plate).

This is also where individual taste and preference comes into play. Some like their steak at this stage, while others prefer barely warm and red inside. This transition, from rare to well done, can happen very quickly as moisture eliminating heat works exponentially inside the muscle.

Ask most chefs and they will tell you on most steaks, medium rare is the sweet spot. Enough cooked crust on the exterior to balance the perfect amount of warmth and flavor changes on the interior.

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

Sometimes defining what we mean by love causes us to fumble around, until we find the right language, or, as in this case, the perfect lived image that captures it all. Tyree Daye does this here in his poem, "Ode to the Common Clothes Moth", which is truly an elegant ode to his love for De Lissa.

Ode to the Common Clothes Moth

BY TYREE DAYE

In these days of less and less sun your love points and I follow
like the blind moths you beg me not to kill
half-asleep and the sun lesser than a minute before
I'll let you go into the night and you say and I follow your love
of winged things to the back door
watch you empty your hands into the sky

In the morning you will wake before me
and walk out into the yard
the sun acts like a father as if it never left
moths sing of you from wherever
moths go to sing

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Federal Communications Commission (abbr.)
4 Indo-Chin. language
8 Atomic physicists
12 Hole-in-one
13 Son of Ruth
14 Portent
15 Berne's river
16 Aeolian
18 Barren land
20 Love (Lat.)
21 Physician
23 Diaper
25 Brain layer
26 Without (Ger.)
27 Before common era (abbr.)
30 To be announced (abbr.)
31 Decorate
32 Rhine tributary
33 Yangtze

tributary
34 Olive color
35 Look at
36 Heb. patriarch's title
37 Delibes opera
38 Move to and fro
40 Honey possum
41 Lumen (2 words)
44 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
47 Outer (pref.)
48 Powdered pumice
49 Pounds (abbr.)
50 Wild goat
51 Balt
52 "The Jungle Book" python

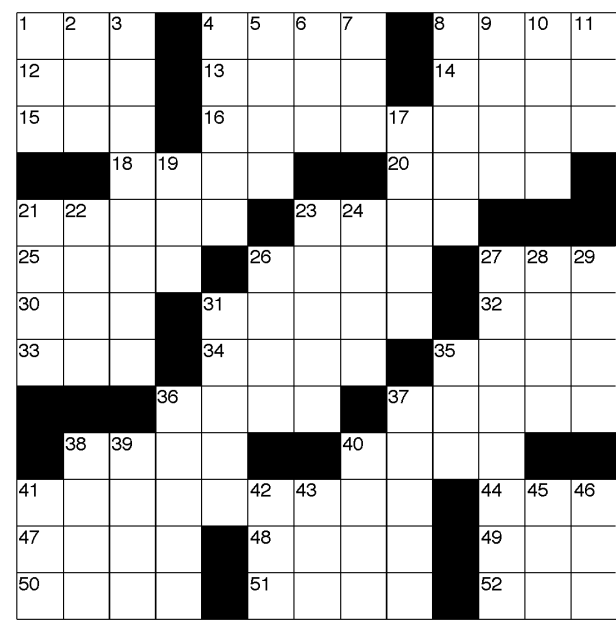
ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

P	R	O	A	C	B	C	S	W	A	B
I	E	R	I	E	R	A	E	I	N	E
M	A	N	D	O	L	I	N	A	L	B
A	D	E	D	E	M	I	T	D	A	D
L	E	S	O	V	A	L				
R	A	D	I	A	T	E	A	G	I	L
D	I	E	B	A	G	A	A	M	A	S
A	N	S	E	R	O	C	Y	P	E	T
C	R	A	T	C	U	E				
G	A	R	T	A	B	O	R	T	O	P
A	C	I	D	P	L	U	T	A	R	C
G	A	B	I	E	E	N	A	A	U	T
A	D	E	N	R	U	T	A	E	O	N

DOWN

1 Federal Aviation Admin. (abbr.)
2 Circuit Court of Appeals (abbr.)
3 Azure
4 English daisy
5 Indian red powder
6 Kidney (pref.)
7 Unmatched
8 Wide

9 W. Indian hog plum
10 Aptitude
11 Feminine (suf.)
17 Ger. spa
19 Gender
21 Teutonic barbarian
22 Father: Hebrew
23 Ceylonese fishing boat
24 Concerning (2 words)
26 Animal teeth (suf.)
27 Guff (2 words)
28 Heddles of a loom
29 Bird
31 Fit
35 Monkey
36 Brother of Abraham
37 Fastening
38 Federal Insurance Contributions Act (abbr.)
39 Length (abbr.)
40 Roll
41 Suffer
42 Shoshonean
43 Nose (pref.)
45 Amateur Boxing Assn. (abbr.)
46 Son of Abijah



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Corner Quote

“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”

-F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

BIG SKY BEATS

“Songs for Sunshine” BY JULIA BARTON

Memorial Day weekend has come and gone and Montana has finally gifted us with some warmer temps. Whether you enjoy soaking up the sun floating down the Gallatin River or sitting on the porch after work, here is a summertime playlist for your outdoor listening pleasure.



1. “Sunbleached Girl” by Shag Rock
2. “Guru” by Coast Modern
3. “The Boys of Summer” by Don Henley
4. “Saturday Sun” by Vance Joy
5. “Amber” by 311
6. “Hey Raoul” by Bamily
7. “In The Sun” by Blondie
8. “slow summer” by Zachary Knowles
9. “Cruel Summer” by Bananarama
10. “Wasted” by Rainbow Kitten Surprise

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BACK 40

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”

The Way it Used to Be

Discovering Argentina’s Patagonia region through its rivers and estancias

BY ERIC LADD

“This place reminds me of stories of the American West 100 years ago,” I commented, gazing across a vast landscape toward the Andes and nearby Chilean border. Crouched under a willow tree ablaze with fall colors, second-generation fly-fishing guide Peter Treichel peered into a deep, clear pool on the Malleo River and smiled.

“Si, si, I hear that all the time,” Treichel said. “Now cast your line towards that big rock and give it a good mend, there’s a nice fish feeding there.”



Outlaw Partners Photo

With endless similarities to the western U.S., Argentina is home to sweeping horizons like those seen in Montana, dramatic volcanoes reminiscent of those found in Oregon and Washington, remote river canyons like Idaho’s, and immense wild spaces characteristic of Alaska. The country’s raw beauty inspires photographers, writers and painters to travel here from around the world.

Argentines have a proud culture—they sing out loud, aren’t shy about public displays of affection and can easily lose track of time on the riverbanks. Late nights, slow mornings and time for yerba mate tea accentuate most days. Patagonia is a land of rooted traditions, indigenous people and gauchos, and an identity increasingly associated with ecotourism and boundless outdoor resources.

The word Patagonia comes from “Patagones,” the name Portuguese explorer Fernando Magellan gave to the native people he purportedly found there during his 1520 expedition. A mythical race of giants, Patagones were believed to be at least double normal human height, with some early European accounts describing natives as tall as 12 to 15 feet.

Many inflection points have led rural Argentina, and especially the Patagonia region, to seem trapped in time. The nine national parks and three national monuments in the region have protected its sense of vastness and secured nature’s importance in Patagonia’s culture. Cultural anthropologist Francisco Moreno, as well as a series of supportive governments, led the efforts of incorporating large parts of Patagonia into natural reserves.

Moreno was a prominent naturalist and explorer, and for his efforts was given large tracts of land in Patagonia, which he subsequently donated back to the government in 1903, as a precursor to the country’s land preservation efforts. In 1934, a federal law was passed making Argentina the third country in the Americas, after the United States and Canada, to establish a national parks system.

To discover Patagonia through its remote rivers, ditch the guidebooks and choose an authentic experience with a guide company like Montana-born Patagonia River Guides. Fly fishing in this part of the world is a dream trip fueled by legendary tales of 30-inch fish, gin-clear waters and iconic lodges and estancias. The introduction of trout to Argentine Patagonia began in 1904, and they have flourished ever since.

Twenty years ago, Montana natives Travis Smith and Rance Rathie came to Argentina to work as seasonal guides and after a few seasons they returned to Big Sky Country. During a year off from guiding, Rathie married his Argentine sweetheart and he and Smith decided to finally act on all of the big talk about owning their own company.

“Long story, but we started as the smallest outfitting business in the country and grew into the largest,” Smith said about PRG’s two-decade history.

PRG has become an industry leader in high quality, inclusive and personalized trips at over 50 different locations. Fishing nearly 1 million acres of privately leased waters, in three different Patagonia regions, they also offer accommodations at 12 different lodges.

“Our approach to guiding is to always have the best guides, on the best water, at the best times, with the best equipment humanly possible to give our guests the best chance to catch fish in any situation,” Smith said.

The lodges are handpicked for quality and aesthetics, with front-end travel planning provided by a partner company, LOL Argentina, based in the capital Buenos Aires. Good food and comfortable beds are a must, as days are long, with many river and road miles, and some fishing days ending in the dark.

PRG’s northern operation has an adventurous and pioneering feel to its daily operations. PRG North manager and partner Alex Knull helps organize guest journeys through his hometown region with anglers typically moving river locations daily, and new lodging every couple of nights. Knull and his guides grew up fishing this region together, and a trip with them is like having a good friend show you his secret fishing holes, taking all of the back roads to get there.

PRG North is based out of San Martín de los Andes, an area rich with history, towering volcanoes, vast open landscapes and massive estancias. Locals have a passion for the outdoors—summers and falls are spent chasing fish or hunting, and winter months revolve around the ski mountains.

Anglers quickly find that a trip to northern Patagonia is much more than a fishing adventure, it’s an experience where you’ll share fields with red deer stags, learn the ways of the gaucho lifestyle and cultivate a deep respect for the land. Though initially we wondered how we would fare on a 10-day fly-fishing intensive, we soon learned it was just enough time to start to feel the pulse of the culture and perfect our casts.

A typical day on the river includes wading or floating in the clear waters of rivers like the Malleo, Chimehuin or Calefufu, with the 12,388-foot snow-capped Lanín volcano



An asado is a quintessential Argentina dining experience. PHOTO BY ISAIAS MICIU NICOLAEVICI.



Llao Llao Hotel and Resort. PHOTO BY ISAIAS MICIU NICOLAEVICI.

hovering over you. It's easy to get spoiled fishing these rivers, as trout average 16 inches in length, with most hard-fighting rainbows approaching 20 inches. The elusive Patagonia brown trout is what legends are made of, and one perfect cast can turn a good trip into an unforgettable one.

Elaborate riverside lunches are an Argentine tradition, with a gourmet spread of homemade breads, salamis and "vino tinto" as guests swap stories with guides. You won't go hungry in Argentina, I promise.

Our first stop was at the relatively new and cozy Northern Patagonia Lodge, overlooking the Chimehuin River. With a large deck and wood-fired hot tub, the off-grid lodge is a perfect place to begin planning your adventures. Treichel tied on the famous Patagonia "bicho" dry fly and within minutes a beautiful brown trout shattered the surface of the water. The lodge also offers non-fishing activities, including an hour walk to the breathtaking Lago Huechulafquen, which is more than 19 miles long and one of the birthplaces of Argentina fly fishing.

Moving on to an estancia called Quemquemtreu—a working ranch of nearly 200,000 acres—homemade jams, breads and farm-fresh milk and yogurts greeted us each morning. Quemquemtreu is located deep in a pristine countryside, at the end of a long dirt road lined with tall poplar trees that leads to a compound of cabins and barns built in the 1920s.

In the mornings, guests move slowly while shaking off the late-night dinners of ranch-raised beef and empanadas, paired with endless bottles of regional malbecs. Guides gather on the tailgates of their Toyota Hilux diesel trucks, sipping yerba mate and divvying up the endless river miles that flank three sides of the historic estancia. Ranch managers Paula and Mauricio Zimmerman, have an elegant efficiency that has earned them a nearly 90-percent return guest ratio.

Our guide Hernan Zorzit led a hunt-and-stalk fishing expedition at Quemquemtreu, taking us on side channels of the Collón Curá River, where brown trout get trapped in seasonal pools and become desperately hungry. Hernan introduced us to the downstream stripping technique of fishing minnow patterns, which are prevalent on this river in the fall. With one good cast, a 6-pound brown burst from a shady patch in a coffee-table-sized pool, and the hunt was a success.

A signature offering of PRG North is their "unplugged trip," where guests are driven two hours from the Andes to the open expanses of the Limay River Valley, to float and camp for three days. The Limay is a wide river with a character reminiscent of Montana's Yellowstone. The deep runs are lined with red sandstone cliffs and the night sky is a planetarium of unfamiliar constellations.

Flowing between two large reservoirs, which provide most of the region's power, this stretch of the Limay promises some of the best chances of hooking a trophy brown over 10 pounds, while enjoying a safari-like camping experience.

Waking up riverside in a spacious tent, wrapped in a down comforter on top of a padded cot is a great way to slow down time and immerse yourself in this landscape. PRG provides all the amenities a guest might want, including hot showers, and steak dinners cooked by chef and retired extreme skier, Estanislao "Tato" Vasiuk.

Sunrise on the Limay can be a living work of art, the sky painted red and orange, while birds and fish frolic in the eddy lines. Our days began with the PRG crew waking us up by singing along with their favorite Cuban music while rigging rods and loading up boats. The riffles regularly produced 18-inch rainbows and kept anglers busy between working the deeper channels for larger browns.

The next stop on our journey found us at Tres Rios Lodge under a full moon with red stags bugling in the surrounding fields. Tres Rios has embraced the green-energy movement in Argentina, and use wind and solar power to run the quaint and elegant

lodge. The chef's homemade lamb ravioli helped fuel dinner table stories from Oklahoma anglers and longtime friends Mark DeHart and Larry Brown. Tres Rios is a great location to attack a few different rivers, including the Chimeuin and Collón Curá. Both can yield great dry-fly hatches with endless beds, pools and riffles to court trout.

Patagonia has attracted top anglers from around the world, as well as visits from dignitaries like President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Estancia Arroyo Verde was one stop for the former president, and its 20,000 acres of property is stunning, with towering stone outcroppings flanking both sides of its valleys.

For 80 years, the Larivière family have owned and operated this ranch within Nahuel Huapi National Park, and it offers polished European hospitality and more than 10 miles of exclusive access to the Traful River. Our guide Alex stalked fish by scaling boulders and climbing to ledges 30 feet above the clear pools to sight cast for trophies. Savvy salmon and large trout inhabit these waters and anglers with a polished cast and patience will love this river.

During our final day of fishing, I ventured off with guide Peter Treichel for a float on the Chimeuin River, a stream similar in size to my hometown Gallatin River in Montana. At the put-in, Treichel peered over the river and noticed a small mayfly hatch beginning. He tied on a size-20 dry fly, and we slowly approached each pool and riffle.

"Moving slow will pay off on days like today," Treichel said. We let a few other anxious anglers get ahead of us, which is usually taboo on stateside rivers, as more fishermen downstream disturbing the waters often results in fewer fish. Patience paid off—as we inched our way down the stream nearly every seam produced some action.

On the final bend we encountered our Oklahoma friends, and Larry instantly hooked into the fish of the day, a beautiful 20-inch rainbow. It just happened to be his birthday, and as he fought the fish both boats broke into song, with a Spanish and English blend of "Happy Birthday" filling the canyon air.

While the fly fishing in Patagonia is world class, it's the people you meet along the way, the history you experience at the estancias and lodges, and the unspoiled landscapes that make the journey unforgettable.

"We want everyone who leaves to go home and tell their friends that Argentina is an easy country to travel to, and to travel in," said PRG co-owner Travis Smith. "That it is safe, the food is great, the wine is fantastic, the fishing is amazing, the scenery is unparalleled and that the people are friendly."

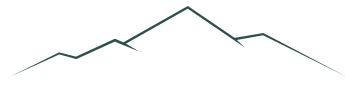
There is a lifetime of travel opportunities in Argentina, from wine country in Mendoza and tango lessons in Buenos Aires, to visiting Tierra del Fuego at the far southern reaches of the continent. And the visual beauty of this country's rivers, mountains and pampas is only rivaled by the grace, humility and good nature of the people who call it home.

Occasionally travel can be distilled into just a few unforgettable moments, like that blood orange sunrise over the Limay River. The 8-pound brown trout I lost at the net the day prior, well, that was pretty amazing too, and will likely haunt me for years. Since I didn't get a photo, it will have to be a fish tale, until my return.

A version of this story was first published in the Summer 2018 edition of Mountain Outlaw magazine.



Stretches of the Futaleufú River evoke comparisons to scenes found in the Greater Yellowstone. PHOTO BY ISAIAS MICIU NICOLAEVICI.



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