

March 15-28, 2019 Volume 10 // Issue #6

Inside REACH's medivac heli

FREE

Ikon Pass: A letter, a history and a community response

Big Sky's turmoil in traffic

The economy of local events

First spring grizzly

sighted in Yellowstone

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MARKETING MANAGER

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Inside REACH's medivac heli

EBS's Michael Somerby takes flight with REACH Air Medical Services to learn the ins and outs of a medivac helicopter from a crew that can save your tail.



Ikon Pass: A letter, a history and a community response

6, 7 & 15 We received and published a letter from Big Sky Resort's Taylor Middleton about the Ikon Pass. The responses flowed in. See a timeline and letters inside.



Big Sky's turmoil in traffic

Accidents and bumper-to-bumper vehicles seem a daily occurance in Big Sky. What will it take to alleviate the traffic?



The economy of local events

Local leaders discuss the pros and cons of community events.



First spring grizzly sighted in Yellowstone

They're emerging from their dens. Keep a sharp eye and bear spray handy.



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ON THE COVER: A REACH Air Medical Services A-Star helicopter cruises in for a landing at Bozeman Health's **Big Sky Medical Center. PHOTO BY SAM BROOKS**

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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Letters to the editor allow EBS readers to express views and share how they would like to effect change. These are not Thank You notes. Letters should be 250 words or less, respectful, ethical, accurate, and proofread for grammar and content. We reserve the right to edit letters and will not publish individual grievances about specific businesses or letters that are abusive, malicious or potentially libelous. Include: full name, address, phone number and title. Submit to media@outlaw.partners.

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For the March 29, 2019 issue: March 20, 2019

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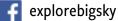
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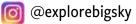
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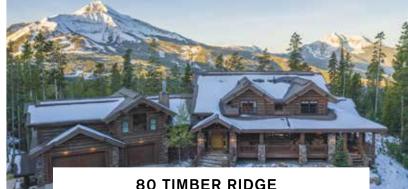
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Martha is ranked the #1 producing broker in the State of Montana. Contact her for a copy of the year-end Big Sky Market Analysis Report and to discuss the best strategy for you to Buy or Sell your real estate.



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Lewis River Bridge in Yellowstone to be replaced

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

In 2018, Kate Hammond, the National Park Service Acting Intermountain Regional Director, approved an environmental assessment that claimed replacing the Lewis River Bridge in Yellowstone National Park would not have significant environmental impacts. The bridge is located south of the Lewis Lake Campground on the South Entrance Road.

The replacement will be built on a new alignment directly east of the existing bridge. Parking and pedestrian areas located north and south of the existing bridge will be redesigned and reconstructed.

Depending upon funding, roadwork could begin as early as spring of 2020 and last for two consecutive years followed by the spring of a third year. Construction delays would normally be limited to thirty minutes and there may be up to six temporary road closures of up to six hours each to set bridge girders.

MSU roofs collapse

EBS STAFF

BOZEMAN – The roof of Montana State University's South Gym collapsed on the morning of March 7. Two days later, the North Gym's roof collapsed, as well.

According to an email from the president to the MSU community, there was neither fire nor any explosions, and no injuries were reported.

The causes of the roof failures have yet to be determined. The gyms are part of the original Marga Hosaeus center, which opened in the 1970s and was constructed with flat roofs. Students have reported leaks in the past, particularly around the time snow begins to thaw.

"This has been an unusual winter, and it is not over yet," said University officials in a letter to students. "We cannot predict what other storms may arrive in coming weeks, and we want to be prepared."

MSU scientist develops tools for managing pandemics

MSU NEWS SERVICE

DEQ issues reminders for open burning season

STATE OF MONTANA

HELENA – Montana's spring and summer burning season began March 1, and the Department of Environmental Quality reminds Montanans that only clean, untreated wood and plant material can be burned.

Materials prohibited from open burning include but are not limited to: food waste; plastic; wood that has been coated, painted, stained or treated; dead animals or animal droppings; chemicals; rubber materials; and asphalt shingles and tarpaper.

Before ignition, always check for county-level burn restrictions as a result of cold weather inversions, summer wildfires or other air-quality impacts.

Burners also should contact local fire control authorities – regardless of weather conditions – to learn local fire safety requirements and report the timeframe and location of their planned burn.

Stephens Creek area closure

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, WY – Beginning Thursday, March 7, a temporary area closure around the Stephens Creek administrative area will go into effect.

Located in the northern section of the park near Gardiner, Montana, the Stephens Creek administrative area includes corral operations, equipment storage, a native plant nursery, a firing range, and, during, the winter, a facility that is used to capture, sort, test, and temporarily hold bison. The administrative area is closed to the public year-round. During bison operations, the park enacts an additional temporary area closure around the facility for safety.

BOZEMAN – As a research scientist in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Montana State University, Alex Washburne and his collaborators from MSU, Duke University and the University of California San Diego developed a novel mathematical tool to better understand disease and manage pandemics.

They explained it in February in Ecological Monographs, a scientific journal of the Ecological Society of America. The paper, on which Washburne is lead author, is titled, "Phylofactorization: A Graph Partitioning Algorithm to Identify Phylogenetic Scales of Ecological Data."

The tool they developed combines computer modeling and Darwin's tree of life to help researchers simplify and focus their work.

"By identifying groups of organisms that are associated with disease and share common ancestors millions of years ago, researchers can target these organisms and their relatives for future studies," said Washburne. Bison operations at the creek happen on behalf of all Interagency Bison Management Plan partners, which includes federal, state and tribal groups. In 2018, IBMP partners agreed to reduce Yellowstone's current population of 4,500 bison through hunting, capturing or relocation.

OPINION



March 20 marks the Spring Equinox, when the sun is positioned directly above the equator, making day and night approximately the same length. Given its arrival, which divides the winter and summer seasons, which season do you like better and why?



Nicolas Carmona Big Sky

"I like the summer more. I hate the cold. The snow is pretty new for me—it's actually the first time I've ever lived with snow. The heat, the hot weather, going to the pool...I miss that. They remind me of home in Lima, Peru."



José Valle Big Sky

"I really love the winter and the snow. Now that the snow is beginning to melt, I don't really like it so much."



Jzendra Cozzens Bozeman

"I like the in-between season period, when there's snow on the ground, but there's still some warm sunshine during the day. I love it."



Stephanie Fisher Saratoga Springs, New York

"I would say my favorite season is summer, mostly for the extra added daylight hours. I feel like you can get a lot more activities in after work like summer grilling, running and golf."



Guest Editorial: Be kind to Ikon Pass holders

On March 6, EBS received this letter from Big Sky Resort General Manager Taylor Middleton, which asks community members and resort goers to welcome Ikon Pass holders with open arms—as he says many in the community were in the past. See page 15 for a timeline breaking down the history of collective resort passes, including Epic, Ikon and Mountain Collective leading up to the letters from Big Sky Resort and Jackson Hole Mountain Resort.

Dear Big Sky Community,

When I first came to Big Sky almost 40 years ago I was embraced by the community. Thanks Pirate, Betsy, Kelly, Curly, John, Tim, Sally, Mike, Dan, Jodean, Doug, Chris, Walter and countless others for making me feel so welcome back then. That same welcome has awaited most everyone coming since, whether we arrived five years ago or 50. Big Sky is a welcoming place.

Recently, local social media channels are revealing a rash of really negative postings, shunning new visitors and treating new arrivals differently than we were treated ourselves. Sadly, I just read this message from a recent guest:

"... We're from the UK and have been skiing in North America every year for the past 15 years. We've had epic passes, mountain collective, and this year we bought the Ikon base pass. We usually make 2 three week ski trips each season and love the freedom to travel and explore that the multi-centre passes give us. We've never encountered any negative reaction to us as holders of these sort of passes- until this year! At Big Sky they were selling bumper stickers saying 'IKON [not] wait for you to leave'..."

That note made me really sad because this guest did not experience the warm welcoming culture that our broad community has historically offered. A few people have been targeting these new guests with mean messages phrased around a concept that Big Sky is becoming too busy and newcomers are to blame.

Most everyone knows that Big Sky Resort recently joined two national season ski pass programs, Ikon and Mountain Collective. This move is enhancing the Big Sky brand and showcasing our community to new guests who pour spending into our community. These programs are just another piece in the long-term strategy to move Big Sky into a league of America's best resorts, right where we belong. Our community is growing as our guests discover and fall in love with Big Sky, just like each of us have.

It's busier now than it used to be. Is it too busy? The facts say Big Sky is one of the least crowded ski destinations offering more acres per skier than any major resort. In three years, we've constructed four modern lifts, adding quality and increasing uphill capacity by 1,600 skiers per hour. We've made no secret that more on-mountain upgrades are planned.

Many of us know it can be hard to make it in a small resort town. Individuals can struggle. Small businesses can struggle. Big businesses can struggle. Not too long ago, many businesses here, small and large, were going broke and residents were moving away because we did not have enough guests to support the town. The good news is that today Big Sky is thriving. Striking the right balance between prosperity and broke can be complicated. I'll tell you from personal experience, it's a lot more fun to be managing success than downsizing.



Ikon Passes have spurred resentment in Big Sky, and backlash amongst locals has manifested in anti-Ikon imagery in many circles. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

My life here, our lives here, are made possible by visitors. Big Sky's culture is friendly and welcoming. We were all new at some point; these guests are our newest visitors.

So here we are: We want a thriving economy without falling into that old ski town trap of not wanting others to come after we arrived. We want more and faster lifts but don't like anyone else skiing our favorite line. The conundrum, of course, is that our community is stronger with many guests and the services they help us afford. I'm not just talking about ski lifts either. Banks, schools, grocery stores, a hospital and a theater make Big Sky more livable and fun.

I don't enjoy traffic or lift lines either. I get it. Still, my personal experience is that Big Sky is a more livable place today than it was 40, or 20 or 10 years ago, and that's because so many people have found our good town and our good people, and their visits have helped us afford these improvements.

I'm committed to working hard to help Big Sky grow better, and I know countless others that are too. I'm also committed to keeping this a fun place, with loads of fun people, who do fun stuff, and I know a boatload of you feel the same way. We're a friendly and welcoming bunch. Please keep sharing that, continue paying it forward, just like that group of pals did with me 40 years ago.

Taylor Middleton, Big Sky Resort General Manager

From Facebook:

After EBS posted Middleton's letter on our Facebook page, responses came flooding in. The post was shared by dozens of people and media outlets, and saw more than 70 comments. Here are a few, edited only for AP style:

Lynn Kinnison Taylor Middleton, I think you are missing the point. I understand communities grow and change. Over the years there have been a lot of good changes in Big Sky. Unfortunately, I cannot say that about this season. We chose Big Sky because it is not like resorts in Colorado or Utah. I would hope Big Sky management sees the value in that. If Boyne continues to push their current vision of being like all the other big resorts in the U.S., I don't know that there will be much of a local community left. A resort town cannot run without the locals. Taylor Middleton, you could start this change by listening to the locals that keep this community alive. Mark T. Sullivan Mr. Middleton, I will leave the behavior issue aside other than to say I have experienced extreme rudeness by Ikon visitors, something I have not seen in my 20 years skiing here. My main beef, however, is that Ikon Pass holders get access to the tram. My wife has a Sapphire Pass, which gives her the lower mountain not the peak. If she wants to go up she has to buy a full day pass. It should be the same with discount passes such as the Ikon. Otherwise, my supposed premium Gold level season's pass is devalued because I can't get up the tram without an hour-plus wait because of the glut of discount passes. It seems to me it would be a win-win: An easing of pressure on the peak and another revenue source for the mountain from those Ikon holders who chose to buy full price day passes when they want to access the tram. Thanks for your time.

As a matter of ethical practice, EBS will only publish social media comments in the paper that we've received consent from the author to publish.

Guest Editorial: In response to Taylor Middleton's letter

On March 6, EBS published a letter on explorebigsky.com from Big Sky Resort General Manager Taylor Middleton that urged Big Sky locals to be kind to Ikon Pass holders. The result was an onslaught of Facebook comments from locals defending themselves, criticisms of the resort, and various snowsports-related news outlets picking up the story.

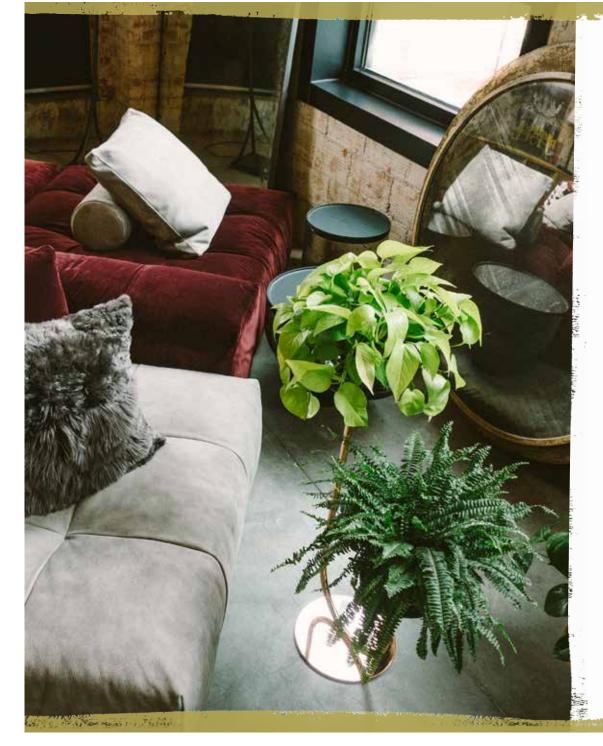
In Mr. Middleton's letter, he states that Big Sky is a welcoming place. I certainly felt embraced by the community when I came here, and it seems that he did, too. In my eyes, that sense of embrace by locals hasn't changed. What has changed is how the community has been treated in the wake of change. I think that the mistake Mr. Middleton makes in his letter is in thinking that the problem locals have with the Ikon Pass is that it's making the mountain "too busy." On the surface that may be true, but it's dismissive to state that the community is only upset about tracked-out snow.

When I moved to Big Sky, rent for a two-bedroom condo was \$900 per month. Now, eight years later, you're lucky if you can find the same accommodation for less than a 60-percent increase of that. Prices for basic goods and services have increased while wages have stayed relatively stagnant. Members of the community are working multiple jobs or commuting three or more hours per day from Bozeman to work in the area. Mr. Middleton is right: businesses were going broke not too long ago, but not solely because of dwindling visitor numbers. I don't know if you remember, but we had a little recession in 2008. Thankfully, Big Sky is indeed thriving today. But at what cost? Some have said that we're putting the cart before the horse, and I must agree. Is our infrastructure up to the task of supporting such a large influx of visitors? Reports on our water and sewer challenges say no. Reports on traffic in the canyon and in the meadow say no. These things are being addressed, but not quickly enough to avoid problems in the short-term.

The bottom line is that respect is a two-way street. Show respect for the local community that is continually helping build this area into a worldclass destination and they may feel better about showing respect toward tourists that are currently making their day-to-day lives a bit harder. Sure, we could all move if we don't like it, but we'd just be replaced by others raising the same hell.

In my opinion, it's better to face the issues head on and find a solution rather than implying to locals that if you don't like it, you can leave. Let's get locals on board by supporting them so that Big Sky is a more habitable and hospitable place for all.

Ashleigh Van Roy Livingston, Montana, former Big Sky resident



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News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

'Hear ye, hear ye!' New EBS newsletter brings back Town Crier, local, regional content



BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

One might hear the ancient cry in town centers around Medieval England: "Hear ye, hear ye!" In those days, the ability to read was a luxury, so the spread of important information relied primarily on interpersonal communication. Often, this responsibility fell, professionally speaking, on the shoulders of a celebrated individual: the town crier.

His job, a role that persisted in North America as recently as 1904 in Los Angeles, was to gather a crowd, sometimes with the assistance of a gong or bell, and yell breaking news to onlookers.

Several centuries later, Explore Big Sky is excited to announce the launch of our "EBS: Town Crier" newsletter, the latest rollout in an ongoing effort to enhance digital engagement and stay current with emerging digital trends.

The latter is a partial mischaracterization—newsletters have existed since the advent of the printing press, but are increasing both in number and variety from news provider's worldwide, a testament to their lasting power.

In 2013, now-Editor-in-Chief Joseph T. O'Connor would take to YouTube weekly, announcing news, events and general tomfoolery as the Big Sky Town Crier, a character he invented for the medium. Coming full circle, the EBS editorial team is looking to enhance the frequency and timeliness of the news you seek.

"We played around with some fun names but kept returning to the Town Crier," O'Connor said. "Honestly, I miss him. This is a way to bring back timelier content into the EBS fold."

Launched March 15 and slotted for a three-times-weekly release each Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning, the "EBS: Town Crier" boasts a myriad of subject matter, sources and content mediums you'll wake up to and want to check out.

Regular features will include daily weather forecasts, EBS articles, inspiring and educational quotes, staff-selected songs and music videos, compelling images from our social media accounts, staff-created polls and aggregated news briefs from around the region. We aim to provide subscribers with an informative and entertaining platform where you can start your day.

For "EBS: Town Crier" seekers, a subscribe function has been added to the explorebigsky.com homepage, making it easier than ever to bring EBS into a daily news feed.

Visit explorebigsky.com to sign up for the "EBS: Town Crier" newsletter, a new, informative and entertaining way to start your day.

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LOCAL

Obituary: Dr. Francis W. Balice, 1921 - 2019



The oldest resident of Big Sky, Dr. Francis W. Balice, passed away on March 7, 2019.

Dr. Balice was born in Ionia, Michigan, in 1921. He graduated from the University of Michigan in Chemistry in 1942. It was there that he met and married Jean Coffelt. They had four children, Judy, Randy, Bill and Janet. Bill passed away in 2005.

After the end of World War II, Fran-as he was affectionately called-went back to the University of Michigan to obtain his medical degree. He established his first medical practice in West Branch, Michigan, where, in his 30s, he discovered skiing.

He subsequently opened another medical practice in Adrian, Michigan, which was interrupted by two years in the US Army.

He loved skiing from his very first run, and it became an important part of his life, as well as the impetus for many of his travels. He even won a national slalom championship in his age group when he was 85 years old. He and Everett Kircher knew each other well in Michigan, and both moved to Montana around the same time.

In the mid-70s he married Grace Velandra, and they lived first in Switzerland, then Boise, Idaho, and finally Bozeman. Fran and Grace loved Big Sky, so eventually they moved fulltime to the base of Big Sky Resort, where he was a part-time ski patrolman and mountain host. He said that he never wanted to leave, "until the good Lord takes me away."

The Balices loved tennis and were also members of the hiking club; Dr. Balice also became an avid Montana fisherman. He spoke four languages and was a lifelong Michigan Wolverine football fan.

In 1999, Grace passed. In addition to his three children, Dr. Balice is survived by 4 grandchildren and two great-grand-children.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Dr. Balice may be made to Eagle Mount or your choice of charity.

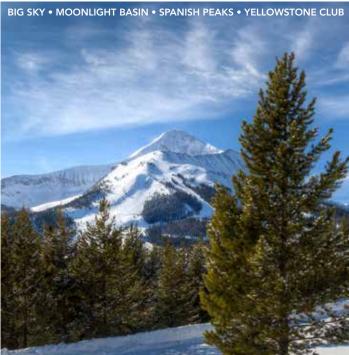
At the end of his life, he wanted us to say, "It was a good ride."

Please join the family for a celebration of life at Buck's T4 Sunday, March 17 from 2:30-4:30 p.m.



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Big Sky's economy of events Area leaders discuss successes and shortcomings

BY BAY STEPHENS

BIG SKY – On a scale of 1-10, several major players on the events scene in Big Sky rank events a 10, or of utmost importance. Others agree they are significant but add that timing and the right kinds of events are where the goose lays its golden egg.

From concerts to conferences, events help drive the local economy alongside the area's outdoor recreation, benefiting small businesses as well as locals and visitors. These local events garner resort tax, influence the time of year people visit, and create an opportunity for the area's private club members and local community to connect.

Economic impact studies reveal that events organized by the Arts Council of Big Sky—such as the Thursday night Music in the Mountains during the summer—and the Outlaw Partners-organized Big Sky Professional Bull Riders Tour event in July spur an influx of millions of dollars to the Gallatin County economy.

In 2017, these events resulted in a combined \$6.3 million dollars in economic impact according studies conducted by Circle Analytics of Bozeman. When an extra day of bull riding was added to PBR in 2018, it sent an additional \$800,000 spinning through Big Sky's economy.

Many businesses see these impacts. Rhinestone Cowgirl owner Amy Langmaid said her sales increase noticeably due to large events in Town Center.

"[PBR] brings tons of people to town," Langmaid said. "Obviously, my store is called Rhinestone Cowgirl, so people are coming in to look for Western gear." The Arts Council's Fourth of July Concert was another event that boosted sales, she noted.

For groceries like The Hungry Moose Market and Deli, weekly events are beneficial along with larger ones.

"The ever-increasing [number of] events in Big Sky is always good for local businesses," said Hungry Moose founder Jackie Robin, who is especially a fan of enriching arts events Big Sky sees thanks to the work of John Zirkle of Warren Miller Performing Arts Center and Brian Hurlbut, executive director of the Arts Council. "The more cool the things we do, the better for our local community," Robin added.

Nonprofits heavily rely on events, many of which act as important fundraisers for the organizations that fill the gaps a town government



From left to right, Bayard Dominick, Eric Ladd, Erik Morrison, Stacie Mesuda and Candace Carr Strauss participated in the events roundtable discussion on events in Big Sky. PHOTO BY JENNINGS BARMORE

An events discussion

To delve into what events mean to the Big Sky community, EBS gathered some of the area's key players for a roundtable discussion on March 7. Included in the discussion were Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky CEO Candace Carr Straus, Outlaw Partners CEO Eric Ladd (publisher of EBS), Lone Mountain Land Company Vice President of Planning and Development Bayard Dominick, Love Street Media owner Erik Morrison, and Big Sky Resort Public Relations Manager Stacie Mesuda.

"To me, it's as much about bringing our community together as it is about creating an event for outsiders," Dominick said. "The more our community ... gathers together, it'll be a place that visitors want to visit."

Although events serve as a boon to the area's economy, they prove challenging to pull off in the young and unincorporated Big Sky for a number of reasons.

Infrastructure lags behind the area's growth and recent "discovery" by the rest of the world. Lodging and parking are limited and traffic painfully slow during rush hours. Public transit is underfunded to the point where Lone Mountain Land Company chartered all available buses in the area to transport visitors to and from last year's Moonlight MusicFest, according to Bayard Dominick.

would otherwise occupy in Big Sky. Events also offer a platform of giving to these organizations: In 2017, the Gallatin River Task Force received \$10,500 from the PBR Calcutta auction, according to the economic impact study.

Tim Drain, General Manager of Natural Retreats Big Sky, has seen certain events heavily influence when second homeowners choose to occupy their properties, and added that he's beginning to see weekend bookings tied to concerts such as Moonlight MusicFest.

Public events also seem to offer an opportunity to bring neighbors together, according to Brandon Bang, director of member services for the Yellowstone Club.

"I actually think events, and stuff like PBR, are one of the best ways that YC members can join the community and interact with the rest of the community and be a part of Big Sky," Bang said. "[Events are] a great chance for them to get to know people and meet folks here.... It's integrating them into the community." Additionally, scarce land contributes to limited venue options, which are either small indoor spaces or at the mercy of the weather. Inadequate facilities were a shared frustration among those at the table.

"We've outgrown everything we've created," Ladd said, adding that he'd like to see a permanent arena and events barn to host world class events. Ladd pointed to Ketchum, Idaho and Jackson Hole, Wyoming as models with large spaces for events that Big Sky could replicate.

Scant housing—also a land-related issue—restricts the size and quality of events, as well, resulting in a small, year-round population living in Big Sky that can support events.

"Seventy percent of our homeowners are second homeowners, spending one to two weeks here a year," Carr Strauss said.

The housing shortage contributes to the hurdle staffing any event too, Carr Strauss pointed out, a challenge for big events and a serious crux for nonprofit-run events. When it comes to funding events, both Ladd and Brian Hurlbut, executive director of the Arts Council of Big Sky who could not attend the roundtable but was interviewed before the discussion, agreed that resort tax should play a role considering events induce people to spend money that filters back into resort tax, similar to investing in stock.

Big Sky's 3-percent resort tax on designated "luxury" goods, which aims to help the small local population shoulder the infrastructural impact of tourists, also benefits from the local revenue events generate, according to Hurlbut.

"Events can bring a large number of people into town, which translates into people spending money at the hotels and the restaurants, and that in turn gets pumped back into resort tax, so it's a circular thing," he said.

Erik Morrison, who runs Town Center events such as the Big Sky Farmers Market, said a mechanism is necessary to track how funds spent on events benefit the community to justify whether resort tax pays in.

"We just need to be able to show [return on investment] of our efforts, the money we're putting into these events, [and] how they come back to the community," Morrison said.

No mechanism currently tracks how much resort tax an event spurs, but the Circle Analytics economic impact studies estimated that, between the Arts Council's various 2017 events and the 2017 and 2018 PBRs, \$718,000 in taxes were collected at the county level.

Any claims on how the tax ought to be spent were illegitimate, Carr Strauss said, adding that the Big Sky Resort Area District's strategic visioning process called "Our Big Sky" being carried out by Logan Simpson through the end of this year will reveal the priorities for spending Big Sky's limited resort tax.

"We have to make due, and I think to Eric [Ladd's] point of being entrepreneurial, that's how we've been successful to this point," Carr Strauss said. "We've bootstrapped a lot of things and made it happen because we willed it so, but again if we want to become world class and be grand and have larger-scale events, we need to be more thoughtful."

Carr Strauss said more of Big Sky's events ought to prompt visitors to leave something behind economically, rather than drawing drive-in crowds that leave without contributing to the local economy.

She estimated that large business conference meetings, of which only Big Sky Resort is in the market, offer up to five fold the local spending



Big Sky PBR held in July has rapidly become a popular event to the point where an extra night of bull riding was added in 2018 to accommodate more fans. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

than consumer events like concerts because attendees often stay in the area for nearly a week and bring family along to recreate outside of meeting times.

Ensuring the locals aren't left behind as community events grow was a point of agreement between roundtable attendees, and also occupies the minds of local business owners.

"I think it's really important for Big Sky to continue developing a community spirit," said Rhinestone Cowgirl's Langmaid. "I like that locals are able to do these activities and they're not just for visitors, and I think that that's a really important part ... I like the PBR, but it's getting harder and harder for Big Sky people to participate in."

Outlaw Partners added a night to PBR last year to better accommodate locals, which holds true for the upcoming event as well, but Ladd said the current arena isn't large enough to host everyone who wants to partake.

Despite the additional economic benefits, Robin of the Hungry Moose said concerts can be difficult especially when visitation is already high in the summer, straining her staff. However, if strategically scheduled, events could be a tool to stimulate Big Sky's sleepier shoulder seasons.

"I think we need to focus on building more events outside of our highvisitation time periods so we're not overloading the destination but instead separating and flattening out that visitation to where it can be handled," Carr Strauss said.

In 2018, Visit Big Sky chartered an events committee to examine this issue and others related to events.



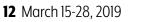
The Big Sky Farmers Market, held on Wednesday afternoons throughout the summer, allows locals and visitors to mingle. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

By bringing event hosters together for regular meetings, the committee stands to put the area's multitude of organizations on the same page when it comes to events, formalizing a universal calendar, supporting existing Big Sky "signature events" and strategically implementing additional events in the future.

Big Sky Resort is already taking steps to lessen the spring slowdown by scheduling events like the Big Sky Big Grass music festival and a free Galactic concert in April, according to Mesuda. On the other side of the year, Visit Big Sky is considering hosting an Oktoberfest.

Events, as with many of Big Sky's challenges, will require a concerted effort to make this place a balanced and enriching locale to live and visit. As Erik Morrison put it: "One of the most important things I can say about the events here in Big Sky is ... that they represent the Big Sky community."

Visit explorebigsky.com for video and podcast recordings of the full events roundtable discussion.

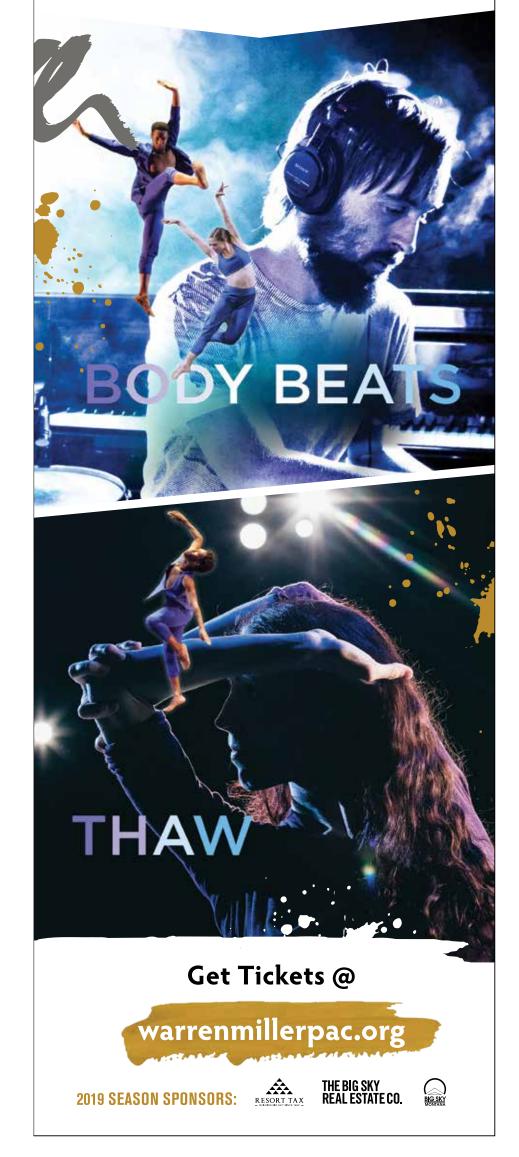




JAMES SEWELL BALLET & MARTIN DOSH

SAT, MARCH 23 - 7:30PM

"One of American Ballet's most inventive choreographers." -THE NEW YORK TIMES



BSRAD discusses next steps for SB 241, resort tax compliance

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – The Big Sky Resort Area District tax board met March 13 in the Resort Tax Office for an open board meeting to discuss agenda items including updates on the Big Sky Community Strategic Plan, the legislative session in Helena, and resort tax compliance within the Big Sky community, among other topics.

On March 12, Senate Bill 241, which would give 10 resort communities around the state the option to levy an additional 1 percent resort tax, passed the Montana Senate Taxation Committee in a 10-2 vote. Next, the bill goes to the Senate floor at a date to be determined.

With five out of seven Republicans on the Senate Taxation Committee voting in favor of the bill, the BSRAD board is positive about the bill's next stage, considering members of the party tend to seek reductions in taxation rather than adding new forms. Every taxation committee Democrat voted in favor of the bill.

One of the persistent difficulties in taxing businesses in an unincorporated community like Big Sky pertains to compliance and standardizing taxation practices. BSRAD audits 10 tax-collecting businesses each year as a matter of routine, but seeks to rewrite Legal Ordinance No. 98-01-ORD which currently "denotes the details of goods and services subject to and exempted from the resort tax," in order to leave nothing to subjective interpretation.

The discrepancy over taxation levied on the sale of alcohol in a bar versus alcoholic beverages sold in a convenience store or grocery store was used as representative of the necessity in clarifying the ordinance.

"The number one thing on my list right now is compliance," said board Chairperson Kevin Germain.

As a continuation from the Feb. 13 open board meeting, board Vice Chair Steve Johnson expressed interest in furthering the prospect of a tax-free timeframe, designated for local community members.

"We talked about the idea of potentially having some tax-free period where the tax is forgiven ... The general thing we've talked about is that it would be done in the shoulder season so there's no question about visitors being here," Johnson said. "We should probably bake that into the ordinance on how the provisions work for that."

During the March 13 meeting, the board also discussed the Community Visioning Strategy, called "Our Big Sky," which launched in late February with noted success, according to BSRAD Secretary Buz Davis.

"People were happy and appreciative," Davis said. "I think it went really well with no glitches."

Johnson echoed Davis, adding a note on the popularity of the oneon-one interviews with representatives from the commissioned Logan Simpson consulting firm and the "Polaroid's and Pints" events held at Gallatin Riverhouse Grill and Beehive Basin Brewery.

"This was the launch week, and I think [Logan Simpson] achieved liftoff," Johnson said. "In previous engagements like this, they never filled up the one-on-one schedule."

"I think it's a testament to this community, how passionate the citizens are," Germain added.

Sent from above Inside REACH Air Medical Services

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – A two-tone siren sounds through the crisp winter air, trailed by a location and a patient's weight in kilos. The team clad in black jumpsuits with thin red stripes down the sides and black leather boots shuffles briskly from the tarmac and into the REACH Air Medical Services office at Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport.

Inside the understated office, a conspicuous map covered in shorthand, figures, charted courses and concentric circles denotes distance from REACH's hangar in nautical miles.

Two data points—location and the physical weight of a respective patient—are weighed against current and projected weather conditions. Using those three immediate pieces of information, the flight nurse, flight paramedic and pilot that comprise the on-duty REACH crew come to a crossroads: Does the team launch its medically equipped helicopter and personnel services to potentially save a life?

"We make sure everyone going on the flight is comfortable with the known conditions. If they aren't, we don't go. It's that simple," says Greg Kellogg, who has been flying helicopters commercially since 2006, flying Emergency Medical Services for REACH since 2018. "That's why the information we get initially is so limited ... we want to take all the personal emotion out of the equation."

"It's no good if we show up dead," adds Jared Sibbitt, a flight nurse who's been with REACH for a year and half on a part-time basis, but whose career as a nurse spans nine years. "Everything we do prioritizes the safety of everyone involved."

When a REACH team decides to accept a dispatch, another pilot at a remote Operational Control Center, who also reviews the available information, sets a series of events into motion.

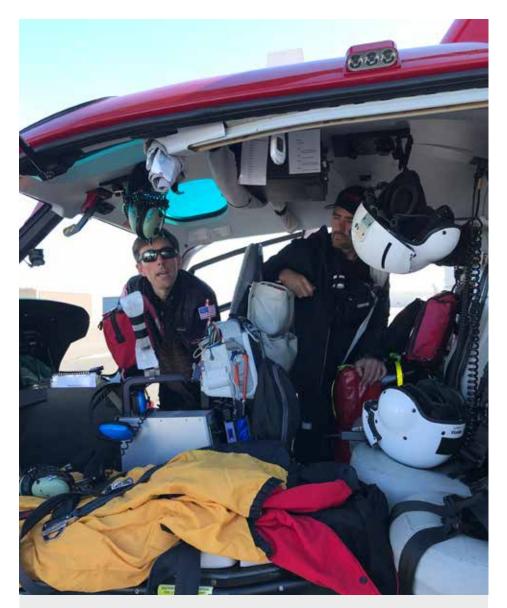
Typically, while the pilot undergoes the flight-planning process with his dispatch center, the rest of the team makes their way into an adjoining hangar concealed by a nondescript door. There, they wheel a candy-red Airbus AS350B3E single-engine helicopter, known by those in the industry as the A-Star, from beyond the enormous hangar doors and onto the tarmac, stocking it with additional supplies.

Just before liftoff, the crew circles the A-Star ensuring every hatch is sealed and bolt is in place. Once confirmed, they climb into the cabin and don their mic'd helmets while the pilot notifies Bozeman airport's flight tower of impending liftoff.

In warmer months, the process can take as little as six minutes; the team shoots for 10 minutes or less in inclement conditions.

Once airborne, the pilot works in harmony with the French-made aircraft, known for its performance capabilities and proven record in high altitudes and extreme conditions, charting the safest and fastest course to the patient.

"The norm is that the group is so well trained and rehearsed, the entire process from liftoff to securing the patient goes perfectly," said Clayton Scotson, a former REACH pilot now serving as program director for REACH's Montana division.



REACH pilot Gregg Kellogg and flight nurse Jared Sibbitt prepare for a repositioning flight to Big Sky Medical Center. PHOTO BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

Operating 24-7, REACH pilots work a 12-hours-on, 12-hours-off shift schedule, and REACH medical professionals on grueling 24-hour stints, keeping medics and pilots available around the clock for the local service area, a radius of 140 kilometers and roughly an hour flight time in ideal conditions. A team may operate beyond this service area, however, taking on dispatches anywhere in the state and Yellowstone National Park at the discretion of the team and within the limits of the A-Star's fuel capacity.

With an ability to reach Big Sky in less than 20 minutes, REACH's Bozeman location routinely flies to Big Sky Medical Center four times a week in what's called a "day basing operation."

While not exclusive or contracted this intimate cooperation has led to a sense of camaraderie and team cohesion.

In July 2018, Scotson coordinated an ongoing "bi-directional educational effort" with Big Sky Medical Center Nurse Manager Jason Buchovecky, through which REACH team members enhance the knowledge of hospital staff, drawing upon their medical expertise. In return, Big Sky Medical Center nurses share insights into the mindset necessary for lower-intensity care needs.

The privately owned air medical service, with locations in California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon and Montana, operates on a single mission: "In every situation, do what is right for the patient."

The rewarding and adrenaline-pumping nature of REACH's work attracts only the most experienced and highly-qualified personnel, requiring pilots to have a minimum 2,500 hours of professional helicopter flight experience, and requiring medical personnel to have a minimum of 3-5 years of experience in their respective medical field, preferably at a higher level hospital or busy EMS system, along with myriad certifications of training.

"It's a super competitive position at the pinnacle of the EMS world," said Ryan Merrit, the Bozeman operation's rookie flight paramedic with more than 10 years experience as a medic under his belt. "The challenge of it, the nonstop training and learning, the cutting-edge medical work [is] incredibly attractive for people in our field."

These rigid qualifications are what make REACH particularly valuable. When REACH responds to a dispatch, it brings this high level of expertise, experience and medical equipment that immediately upgrades a patient's level of care from that provided by many first responders and smaller hospital's services.

"An ER gets exposed to a wider variety of medical needs," said Travis Weiss, who's worked as a flight nurse for REACH for the past three years, and over 16 in EMS service. "We appreciate the opportunity to actually to be with the hospital's care providers and gain exposure as to how the providers sort through the differential diagnoses, which is much more difficult in the environment that we work in."

Dealing in low frequency, high demand needs means many days can go by without a dispatch, so idle moments are spent religiously training for future emergencies. Yet it's those emergency-free repositioning days between Bozeman and Big Sky that afford REACH teams a beautiful vantage most will never experience.

"I used to be a raft guide in Idaho, and one day while on the river I saw this very model [A-Star] in a fire relief effort," Kellogg said, "and I knew right then that's what I wanted to do: fly those."

Big Sky traffic crawls along in face of growth Public transportation and carpooling compelling options

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY - What characteristics define the typical Big Sky vehicle? Perhaps cracked windshields from stones flung backward from the tires of other vehicles; or back seats stuffed with an assortment of outdoor sporting gear; or, as residents will say, the near-impossible task of keeping a car's exterior grime free.

What defines Big Sky's Lone Mountain Trail, however, is another story, one where cleanliness, cargo space and chipped glass pale in comparison.

Projected growth

Traffic volumes on Lone Mountain Trail, otherwise known as Highway 64, increased by an average of 9.2 percent annually between 2011 and 2016, with average annual daily traffic (AADT) figures surpassing pre-

recession peak traffic volumes for the first time in 2015, according to the 2017 Big Sky Transportation Study Report prepared for the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce by Bozeman-based civil engineering company Sanderson Stewart.

For 2016, the average number of vehicles on the road on any given day came in at a historic 7,500.

By 2037, that number could reach a staggering 18,000 vehicles per day if AADT volume increases at the projected year-over-year rate of 4.34 percent over the next 18 years, according to the same study.

Byproducts of such volume increases are easy to imagine and already occur to some degree, such as longer waits to access the resort or various commerce areas said Chief William Farhat of the Big Sky Fire Department.

"We've begun to see unheard of non-accident related traffic in Big Sky," said Farhat, adding that other consequences, like spikes in vehicular accidents, are also rearing their heads with no signs of slowing. "It's really simple: More vehicles mean more accidents."

One such accident recently underscored the reality of the situation.

At approximately 8:51 a.m. on Feb. 22, a flatbed truck laden with a 25-ton load of boulders careened into a Skyline passenger bus at the intersection of Lone Mountain Trail and Little Coyote Road in Big Sky, injuring seven.

Miraculously, the only reported passenger injuries were minor, with the most severe being a few broken bones.

Yet, the sheer number of people involved coupled with the potentially devastating alternatives and strain placed on morning commuter traffic, spurred fresh public outcry over traffic conditions in Big Sky.

"There are short-term, medium-term, and long-term solutions to this problem," Farhat said. "Simply slowing down speeds along [Highway] 64 is short-term, installing more turn lanes is medium-term, and seeing the rest of the projects mapped out by the TIGER grant is long-term."

The TIGER vision

In March 2018, U.S. Sen. Steve Daines announced that a \$10.3 million Transportation



On Feb. 22, a flatbed truck carrying a load of boulders collided with a Skyline passenger bus, injuring seven and raising ire in the community. PHOTO BY BAY STEPHENS

from major U.S. cities in recent years and plans to add an additional 70,000 square feet of concourse to existing facilities solidifies the urgent need for improvements.

Fifty percent of employees in Big Sky commute to work, including 33 percent coming from Bozeman alone, according to the 2018 Human Resource and Development Council's Big Sky Housing Assessment Update and Action Plan. This figure does not include "trade traffic" statistics, which in the 2014 Big Sky Transportation Review prepared by Kack, had 83 percent of Big Sky's employees commuting from another Gallatin County community.

In greater Gallatin County, where nearly 80 percent of people commute, according to Data USA and the American Community Survey, traffic issues along Lone Mountain Trail could persist as Big Sky grows

and sees natural increases in labor and employment needs.

While projects set out by the TIGER grant stand to alleviate those pressures, there is no assurance they will suffice in perpetuity given the steady rates of growth cited by the chamber's Big Sky Transportation Study Report.

Although it's easy to suggest, expanding the number of lanes on both U.S. 191 and Lone Mountain Trail isn't financially feasible, says Kack.

According to Kack, it costs nearly \$2 million per lane mile to build a road in a relatively flat area, with that number increasing more than six-fold for stretches such as Gallatin Canyon.

"It really isn't an option," Kack said.

The TIGER grant is technically an agreement between Gallatin County and the U.S. Department of Transportation, which will eventually reimburse the county for each measure of infrastructural upgrade set out by the TIGER grant proposal.

All forward progress is pending a vote from the county commissioners to authorize the chairman to sign the agreement, which is currently scheduled to happen March 19.

"The thought is that in the summer of 2020 they will have hired a construction firm to start building these additions," Kack said.

A simple but effective concept

The keystone to Big Sky's traffic dilemma might not require upgrades to roadways or buses, but a shift in behavior on the part of commuters.

According to Kack, an integral piece of WTI's vision is to convert workers driving solo to work into staunch carpoolers and public transit users. His battle is an uphill one, considering the percentage of "drive alone" commuters in Gallatin County, and the icon status of the car to American—and especially American West—culture.

While modern European communities grew within a historically developed space, the U.S.'s fledgling communities spread westward on the premise that long stints of travel in between is nothing to raise an eyebrow at. Eventually, the advent of the motor vehicle cemented the principle.

Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant was awarded to Big Sky.

The proposal for the grant, written via a combined effort of the Western Transportation Institute and Sanderson Stewart, and submitted by Gallatin County on behalf of Big Sky in October 2017, was a direct result of the Chamber's 2017 Big Sky Transportation Study Report.

Funds provided through the grant will be allocated for the construction of a pedestrian tunnel beneath Lone Mountain Trail, approximately seven left-turn lanes, and nearly \$2.5 million for the Skyline Bus system, adding four buses and six vans to the existing fleet that serves commuters traveling from Big Sky to Bozeman, among several other improvements.

The need for these improvements is paramount, with rapid and expansive developments underway in every corner of Big Sky, increases in wealthy homebuyers seeking footing in the fledgling community, and an influx of visitors from around the country and globe pursuing the winter and summer experiences boasted by Big Sky Resort.

"I don't think we would have received the TIGER grant money the federal government not looked at those technical pieces, and said 'you've cleared that hurdle for a need," said David Kack, director of the Western Transportation Institute.

Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport's increasing number of nonstop flights

We Americans have a love for our cars," Kack said. "One thing that is telling is how many people actually have a name for their car. They don't typically name their house, which costs a lot more, and where they spend a lot more time, but somehow there is this emotional attachment to their car."

The cost of commuting is the second highest financial sink in a family after housing, Kack said, and average costs for operating a car hover somewhere between \$8,000 and \$8,500 annually.

Through educating people on the annual cost of their car and commute, and incentivizing carpoolers and public transit goers, Kack and WTI hope to reduce the total number of cars on the roads to and in Big Sky-at least where workforce, community members, and local recreation-seekers are concerned.

"What we see in big cities, large urban areas, is that paid parking is a massive incentive in driving people to public transit," Kack said. "For example, the lots for Big Sky's free skier parking is really good land, and eventually someone will have an eye to turn those into housing. One day, we might see the resort charging for parking, and that should incentivize people to carpool and share those costs."

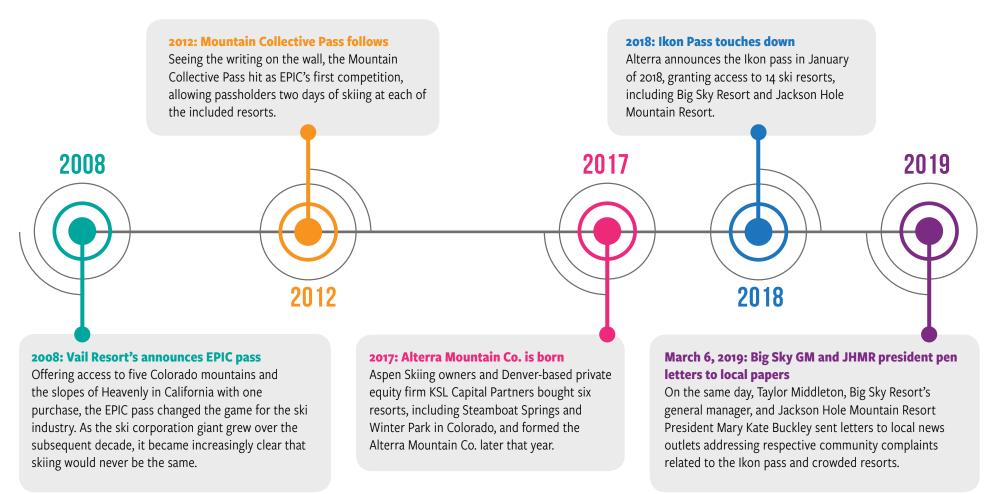
Combatting the mounting pressures of traffic in Big Sky has no simple answer. Funding from the TIGER grant will allow for much-needed capital improvements, but it's unclear of what the impact ramping tourism will bring to Big Sky; commuters and locals will be faced with a decision on their role in the equation.

The Ikon timeline

On March 6, Big Sky Resort General Manager Taylor Middleton sent EBS a letter published in print (see page 6) and online asking locals to welcome Ikon passholders the same way that he and other Big Sky residents had been welcomed in the past. Shared on the EBS Facebook page, the letter was met with a storm of comments on social media from Big Sky skiers. The resort shared the post on Facebook the same day and it has since gone viral as Unofficial Networks reposted to their pages, while Snow Brains, the Colorado Sun and others have linked to the letter in stories on their websites.

The same day, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort President Mary Kate Buckley wrote a letter published on Jackson Hole News & Guide's website admitting that record snow had attracted crowds which were "straining our infrastructure, employees and locals."

EBS made this timeline of events to give context to the issue.



An in-depth story on factors contributing to Big Sky Resort's visitation growth and the Ikon and Mountain Collective passes role within it will be published online at explorebigsky.com and in the March 29 print edition of EBS.

Pow Wow

b2Cares.com

Ow.?

Take a tumble? Find us at our slope-side location to get back on your feet in no time.



Find your on-mountain resource for everything from sniffles to sutures at b2Cares.com

UrgentCare

Convenient care for injuries and ailments.

Medicaid expansion, infrastructure focus for second half of legislative session

BY SHAYLEE RAGAR UM LEGISLATIVE NEWS SERVICE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

HELENA – Montana's Legislature has passed the halfway mark in the 90-day biennial session and some of the most controversial debates, like Medicaid expansion and infrastructure funding, are yet to come.

The halfway mark also signifies a deadline for policy bills to be transmitted from one chamber to another. If transmission fails before the 46th day, the bills are dead. More than 240 bills have been killed either by missing the deadline or by lawmakers voting them down.

Gov. Steve Bullock has signed 56 bills into law so far. That includes House Bill 159, which implemented legally required inflationary adjustments to public school funding, and House Bill 20, which aims to streamline missing person reports.

Sen. Fred Thomas, R-Stevensville, said in a press conference he's optimistic the Legislature will be able to close up shop before May 1. He said he's pleased with the legislation that's moved through the body.

"This is one of the more innovative sessions I think we've seen in a long time," Thomas said.

While some bills have passed by relatively large margins, others have ended on tight votes and sparked fiery debates among lawmakers.

Two legislators proposed constitutional amendments that proved particularly controversial. Rep. Derek Skees, R-Kalispell, introduced House Bill 269 which would have limited the number of taxes the state can implement to only two at a time. It split the Republican party and failed 38-62 to pass the House.

Rep. Greg DeVries, R-Jefferson City, is sponsoring House Bill 302. It would define personhood in Montana's Constitution as beginning at conception. The House endorsed the legislation 56-43 and it will move forward to the Senate.

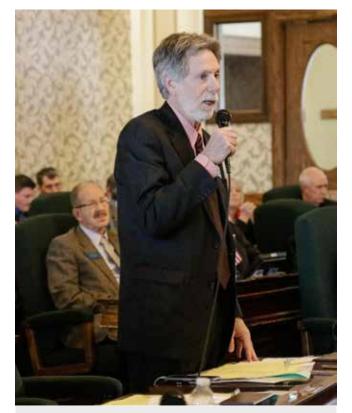
Because HB 302 is a constitutional amendment, it could bypass the governor's desk, and his veto power, and be put to Montana voters. However, it will need 100 votes from the entire Legislature to get on the ballot, so the Senate would need 44 yes votes out of 50 members to move it forward.

As they start the second half of the session, lawmakers are now gearing up to tackle two of the biggest issues of this Legislature: Medicaid expansion and fixing and maintaining the state's infrastructure.

Dueling Medicaid Expansion Bills

The debate over Medicaid expansion is scheduled for Saturday, March 16 with public hearings for dueling bills that would expand the subsidized healthcare program. If lawmakers can't decide on a solution, the expansion of the program will expire in June.

Medicaid is a federal-state partnership that offers health insurance to low-income



Sen. Jon Sesso, D-Butte, says he's ready to look at all proposals to renew Medicaid expansion, but that the current program is working well and should be continued. PHOTO BY SHAYLEE RAGAR / UM LEGISLATIVE NEWS SERVICE work and "community engagement" requirements for recipients of Medicaid expansion. The requirements aim to regulate how many enrollees are eligible for the program, and removing those who are able-bodied but don't work from the program.

Rep. Eric Moore, R-Miles City, said this bill has the best chance to pass between the two because it "reserves resources for those who need it most."

Moore, who said he strongly opposed Medicaid expansion four years ago, said Montanans need consistency in government.

"I don't think it's good policy to put 100,000 people on a program and then take it away four years later," Moore said.

Sen. Jon Sesso, D-Butte, said he felt the 2015 Medicaid expansion debate centered around getting enrollees to work, and that the current program has been successful on that front.

The 2015 legislation contained the HELP-Link program, which offers voluntary workforce development and is administered by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. That department and the Montana Department of Revenue released a joint study in January that found 7 out of 10 Medicaid expansion recipients are working.

For this reason, Sesso said he is "bullish" in support for Caferro's bill.

Infrastructure Funding

Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock has been pushing for a comprehensive infrastructure package to fund public works projects across the state since he took office, but has yet to see one pass. However, lawmakers seem to be making headway this session.

The most contentious part of the infrastructure debate between the parties is how the state will pay for the projects. The governor's office says bonding, or borrowing money, is the way to go. Republicans have fought this method for years.

Moore said Republican hesitation comes from the uncertainty of bonding, and that the process to allocate infrastructure funding has been too arbitrary. The Miles City representative introduced a bill to address that problem.

House Bill 553 would implement a structure that provides clear guidelines for how the state pays for public works projects, while a different bill will include the actual funding. Moore's bill passed the House 99-0 just before the halfway break.

Lawmakers like Moore and Sesso are hopeful HB 553 will help the actual bonding bill pass more easily. Moore said the funding legislation will likely be introduced before the end of the month, and that his bill will give the Legislature a clear target to hit.

Sen. Cary Smith, R-Billings, said he thinks his party understands there is a place for bonding in state funding, and that HB 553 will help keep debate on track.

adults and families, and disabled individuals. Requirements are different in each state, but generally, Medicaid is only offered to those who are low-income and have a disability or condition that prevents them from working. The expansion program's eligibility is based on income alone.

The federal government's match rate for expansion is slowly decreasing -- it was a 100 percent match rate in 2015-2016 and will be 90 percent in 2020 and beyond. This means the state will need to pay more into the program going forward.

Both Democrats and Republicans are proposing bills to renew the program. Medicaid expansion first passed in 2015 with bipartisan support. Nearly 100,000 Montanans are now enrolled in the program, which is greater than expected.

Rep. Mary Caferro, D-Helena, is carrying House Bill 425, which would end the program's expiration date and add some fees for hospitals that benefit from Medicaid payments. The eligibility requirements and healthcare coverage would stay the same.

When expansion passed in 2015, the bill was carried by Republican Rep. Ed Buttrey from Great Falls. It revealed a rift in the Republican party and passed on a tight margin.

Buttrey is carrying the Republican-backed expansion bill again and although a draft of the bill has not yet been released, MTN News reported Buttrey's bill will include

"What we're really trying to do is take the emotion out of it," Smith said.

Emotions have run high in the past when lawmakers debate projects other than roads and bridges, like funding for renovations to MSU's Romney Hall or the Historical Society's museum. Generally, these projects get lumped together in one bill. This time, they'll be split up.

Both Sesso and Thomas said the Historical Society will be included in a separate upcoming bill to address needed renovations at museums around the state. It has not been introduced yet.

As the Legislature continues to race to the finish line, the urgency to pass bills will intensify. For Sesso, the plan is simple.

"Let's extend what we're doing well."

Shaylee Ragar is a reporter with the UM Legislative News Service, a partnership of the University of Montana School of Journalism, the Montana Newspaper Association, the Montana Broadcasters Association and the Greater Montana Foundation. Shaylee can be reached at shaylee.ragar@umontana.edu.

ENVIRONMENT

Explore Big Sky

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT, OUTDOORS, & HEALTH

The New West: Questions for our time



BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Climate change. More people flooding into our region and exacting a larger human footprint on the land. Soaring visitation to national parks and developed parts of national forests. Rising impacts from outdoor recreation. The arrival of chronic wasting disease.

What does it say about us to see the changes coming and yet we behave as if, just by ignoring them, things will always be the same? Or worse, what if we relegate them into a category called "inevitable" which lets us off the hook of responsibility?

What does it say about us when we have elected officials too afraid to say the obvious, based on the argument that if they do, they can never get elected in the first place?

What does it say about us to have politicians continue to defend the continued burning of coal by trying to glibly deny the evidence of climate change documented by the most distinguished scientists in the world?

What does it say about us when the top manager of the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole—overseeing the most famous elk herd on Earth— faces certain professional reprisal for warning that artificially feeding thousands of elk are setting us up for a disease disaster?

What does it say about the credibility of the U.S. Forest Service when it approves the continued operation of state feedgrounds in Wyoming with CWD literally on its doorstep?

What does it say about us when commissioners from the 20 counties and mayors and council members from the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem fail to get together on a regional level and instead remain stuck in their silos?

What does it say about us when the promotion of conservation, in many places, only exacerbates the social and economic inequity for working class people?

What does it say about us when we frame the cause of affordable housing mostly within the context of giving worker bees a place to lodge so that they can be maids, teachers, firefighters, police officers, etc., and not because it's really a fundamental matter of dignity?

What does it say about us when we disparage coal miners and loggers and ranchers for engaging in resource extraction and yet, in many ways, we're supplanting those users with industrial strength outdoor recreation whose impacts in many cases may be more permanent and landscape transforming?



A lone bison in Yellowstone's Hayden Valley. Among all the wonders of Greater Yellowstone, wildlife is what sets our ecosystem apart. Seldom, however, do we reflect on the reasons why the diversity and health of charismatic megafauna still is able to persist here. NPS PHOTO

What is it saying about us when a state—Montana—chooses to deliberately ignore a report prepared by the National Academy of Sciences that says elk, not bison, represent the most eminent threat of brucellosis transmission to cattle and yet we slaughter bison anyway?

What does it say about us when government agencies are not actively coordinating to halt contradictory management practices often operating at cross purposes and negatively affecting the ecological health of the region, such as: feeding wildlife, permitting oil and gas exploration in wildlife migration corridors, not ending the slaughter of Yellowstone bison for disease reasons, and not demanding cumulative affects studies on the total impact of recreation as different national forests assemble their forest plans?

What does it say about us when we see something like running down wildlife predators with snowmobiles, that is so obviously ethically dubious and runs counter to our beliefs as a society, yet we deflect and diminish the taking of professional responsibility?

What does it say about us when we work for conservation organizations and are reluctant to call out a recreation use and the impacts it's having because we engage in that same use on weekends and don't want to alienate ourselves from our friends?

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What does it say about us when we condemn the conservation movement for lacking human diversity in its ranks, which it obviously does, yet its politically-correct critics fail to understand why building a movement that counts biological diversity and respect for other sentient species is also important?

What does it say about us when we starve federal and state land management agencies of the funds needed to do their job and then we beat those agencies up as allegedly being inept?

What does it say about us when we hear that trophy hunting of grizzlies, after we've just brought them back from the brink, is vital to their conservation? And if the argument is that trophy hunting generates money and builds social tolerance, then why aren't we also sport shooting bald and golden eagles, peregrine falcons, whooping cranes and wild horses?

What does it say about us when we know that wildlife watching is central to our \$1 billion annual nature tourism industry in Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks alone, yet we allow popular park research wolves to be shot along national park borders? What does it say about us when we wake up in the morning and consciously decide to "get along by going along" even though we know in our guts that if we're really going to save this place—if we are sincere in our rhetoric about thinking long-term—that we need to challenge status quo thinking and act soon?

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem we know today is actually the product of individuals who previously were not afraid to tout the enduring value of conservation and smart thinking.

One of them, the forerunning ecologist Adolph Murie once said, "Let us not have puny thoughts. Let us think on a greater scale. Let us not have those of the future decry our smallness of concept and lack of foresight."

Todd Wilkinson is founder of Bozeman-based Mountain Journal (mountainjournal. org) devoted to protecting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and a correspondent for National Geographic. He also is author of "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" about famous Jackson Hole grizzly bear 399 available only at mangelsen.com/grizzly.

Federal hydrologist to speak on forests and drinking water

EBS STAFF

On March 26, the Department of Ecology at Montana State University will host visiting forest hydrologist Kelly Mott LaCroix for a presentation on the relationship between forests and drinking water. Held at 3:30 p.m. in Lewis Hall on the Bozeman campus, the talk is titled "Beyond Timber and Trekking: Exploring the Role National Forests and Grasslands Play in Protecting Drinking Water Supplies."

Typically, when thinking about U.S. Forest Service lands, event organizers say the public tends to think about the readily-visible values of public forests, such as recreation, timber harvest or mineral extraction. There are, however, inconspicuous benefits of national forests, such as the role they play in providing abundant clean water for drinking and irrigation.

When National Forest System lands were set aside 100 year ago, it was considered a measure to protect water supplies-today, one in five Americans rely on water supplies that originate on national forest lands, the organizers say.

LaCroix's presentation will explore the history of watershed management and provide an analysis of the role these lands play in protecting water supplies. She will draw upon surface and groundwater data, and discuss some of the possibilities for innovative partnerships to improve and protect watershed conditions on our nation's forests and grasslands in the future.

"Kelly's work brings together mapped data on drinking water sources and national forest boundaries to shed light on one of the most important, but often underappreciated, values of our public lands," said Travis Belote, a research ecologist for The Wilderness Society and an affiliate of MSU's Burkle Lab. "It isn't an exaggeration to say that national forests literally serve as natural water towers for tens of millions of people. If you live in an area with any visible mountains, chances are that those mountains play some role in providing you



A view of the surrounding mountains from the Custer Gallatin National Forest's Indian Ridge Trail near Big Sky. PHOTO BY CIARA WOLFE

with drinking water and they are likely public land."

LaCroix serves as the forest hydrologist and watershed program manager for the Tonto National Forest in Arizona. Over the past decade, she has worked at the national and state levels, as well as within academia and the nonprofit sector on watershed hydrology, water management and policy. She received her doctorate from the Arid Lands Resource Sciences program at the University of Arizona, where she studied environmental flow needs of desert ecosystems and effective mechanisms for stakeholder engagement.

For more information, contact Meghan Heim at (406) 944-2018 or meghan.heim@ montana.edu.



ENVIRONMENT

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VATER WISDO

Presented by the Gallatin River Task Force and its partners, this recurring series highlights the conservation work done and environmental concerns found in our local watersheds.

Every drop counts Water conservation critical tool for stretching supply

BY STEPHANIE LYNN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Big Sky is a headwaters community with limited water supply.

Every day, residents and visitors tap into finite groundwater aquifers constrained by the semi-arid climate. Due to its location near the source of the Gallatin River, Big Sky has few options to purchase the right to use additional water. If current use and growth continues, the public water supply may be unable to quench the thirst of the growing community within the next few years.

Municipalities utilize cost-effective water conservation strategies, including incentives to change behavior, improvements in utility management, and rebates for water-efficient products to maximize water supply. After estimating that purchasing water is six times more expensive than reducing use, the city of Bozeman outlined a goal to secure more than half of their new water supply through conservation in a 2013 integrated water resources plan.

Every drop of water saved creates ripples of indirect positive effects. Water stored underground, and not utilized, recharges rivers and streams when they're at their lowest, benefiting fish and wildlife. In addition, water-efficient households connected to a public utility with tiered pricing, such as Big Sky Water and Sewer District, save money on their water bill. Finally, water-conscious homes generate less wastewater, which reduces treatment-plant inflows.

Big Sky is ripe for improved water-use practices. Water consumption per capita is about 125 gallons on the average day, which is more than three times what water experts consider to be efficient use. The Gallatin River Task Force aims to reduce water use in Big Sky to align with the national average through a fledgling water conservation program.

According to Brandy Straub, conservation project manager for the Task Force, community members can save water, money and energy while safeguarding Big Sky's limited water supply with three small steps:

Picking up a leak-detection kit at the Task Force office to find and stop leaks. Applying for a rebate to replace old shower heads, toilets and washing machines. Managing water use by taking shorter showers or turning the faucet off while washing dishes.

Water-efficient fixtures and appliances are perhaps the easiest way to save water. To date, nearly 100 individuals have saved about 1.8 million gallons of water by purchasing water-saving products through the Task Force rebate program.

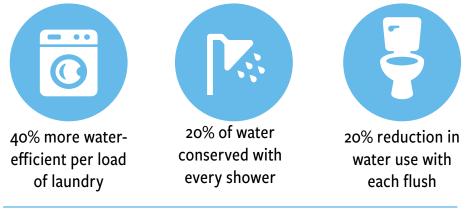
"Our experience with the Gallatin River Task Force Water Conservation Program was excellent with a simple process to claim the rebate," said rebate participant Greg Hagge. "Wanting to install equipment that promoted water conservation was an easy decision, and receiving the rebate made it even more so."



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To learn more or apply for a rebate to purchase water-efficient products, visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org/waterconservation/rebate-programs.

Stephanie Lynn is the education and communications coordinator for the Gallatin River Task Force.



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The great bear Finding middle ground

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – For conservation champion Shane Mahoney, wild animals define us. "They made us human because we had no other way of knowing how to feel as a species except in comparison to them," Mahoney said at a recent forum in Bozeman. During his talk, Mahoney provided a stark observation:

"If all 7 billion of our species disappears tomorrow, there will be no gathering of the others to lament our passing," Mahoney said. "But as we lose them, and in particular, if we lose some of those that have inspired us for so long, we begin to enter a world of growing darkness and growing silence ... At some point, we will have to admit that we will have lost something essential to our humanness that we can never manufacture or replace."

A native of Newfoundland, Mahoney has more than 30 years of experience working as a wildlife scientist, manager and advisor, and currently serves as the international liaison for The Wildlife Society, among other positions. He commanded an audience of nearly 170 on March 2 in the Ellen Theatre, speaking about history's lessons for conservation.

"Wildlife does not exist by accident anywhere, anymore, and never will again," he said. "Think about your responsibility here; think about mine. All species, everywhere now, their fate is dependent upon the decisions we will make, the decisions we will not make, and the positions and decisions we will defer."

Speaking about the "great bear"—the grizzly bear—but only saying the name a sparse handful of times, Mahoney challenged the room to remain passionate in their beliefs, but to find a place within themselves to come to an agreement.

"We need to put what matters at the center," he said. "The [wildlife] matter[s] the most. Our philosophy should be simple: What matters to them, what works for them, should work for us and what does not work for them, what is not in their best interest, should not work for us. And what that means is that sometimes we have to accept things we don't like."

Mahoney's words came as the keynote address during the event hosted by the Western Bear Foundation and "Right to Roam" podcast, and aimed at presenting the science of past, present and future bear management.

Titled "Can We Bear the Bias?", the evening was presented as a forum with Right to Roam's Chris Sheets asking questions to expert panel members from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey and Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, as well as Montana, Idaho and Wyoming departments of fish and wildlife. and investigation of every known mortality. Within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem specifically, this scientific program is conducted by IGBST, which is made up of individuals from USGS, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribal Fish and Game Department, and the state wildlife agencies of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, among other entities.

Of specific concern for Wyoming Game and Fish Department's large carnivore section supervisor Dan Thompson was the September ruling by District Court Judge Dana Christensen to put the distinct population segment of Yellowstone back on the endangered species list due, in part, to a concern for genetic diversity within the isolated Yellowstone population.

"Our biggest slam dunk was how good the genetics are in the GYE and we all felt that way based on science," Thompson said. "I'm speaking for myself, but that was a major frustration that that was seen as a reason to relist the population."

In order to provide context to Thompson's statement, van Manen quickly jumped in. In 2016, he said, their research team took a close look at genetic diversity in the Yellowstone region over the past 25 years. While the population's genetic diversity is slightly less than other grizzly populations in North America, van Manen said genetic diversity hadn't really declined over time.

"I think one really important thing to keep in mind is that bears are telling us that they've been biologically recovered," van Manen said. "When you see population growth in the core slowing down, that's because of higher densities; they're reaching that carrying capacity."

Following the event, Joe Kondelis, president of the Western Bear Foundation, and Sheets of Right to Roam, told EBS they were glad to provide a platform to seriously discuss the science behind North American grizzlies.

"We come from different sides, but we all want the same thing: a restored grizzly population," Kondelis said. "I think people are just unsure of how to talk to each other."

He added that while the Western Bear Foundation does support hunting as a potential tool for the state agencies to better manage grizzlies, hunting is just a small part of it. "That's not what conservation is about," he said. "[It's] ensuring a future for bears out here in the West."

"For me, it's rewarding to work with a species that so many people care about," Frank van Manen, of the U.S. Geological Survey and IGBST, told EBS in an interview prior to the event. He said he's proud to provide the data to "help people develop their views in how they think these bears



should be managed."

The panelist discussion, however, was borne out of fears that popular opinion in recent years neglects to account for the very science van Manen and other wildlife scientists have dedicated their lives to.

"Our critics say we're biased. My argument is we're not," van Manen told the March 2 crowd. "We produce the science, we produce the data, we produce the biologic evidence for that data."

According to panelists, grizzly bear research is extensive throughout Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, consisting of daily monitoring with radio collars, population modeling

A collared sow grizzly with two cubs near Roaring Mountain in Yellowstone National Park. NPS PHOTO

в I G ART s к Y AUCTION





Big Sky Town Center



Recreationists asked to give wildlife space this spring

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – Elk are most vulnerable when winter melts away in the early spring, leaving the grazers with depleted fat reserves and limited food options. This critical stage coincides with bull elk dropping their antlers in preparation for the summer's new growth cycle, which spurs many outdoorsmen and women into a real-life treasure hunt for their shed antlers.

Acutely aware of the harsh conditions elk face at the turn of the seasons, a group of Montana sportsmen are working to encourage responsible horn hunting across the state this year, asking shed hunters to wait until at least April before commencing the hunt. The initiative is led by Montana chapters of the Mule Deer Foundation, Safari Club International and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Bozeman area wildlife biologist Julie Cunningham stressed the importance of this campaign in an email received by EBS. "Conditions are harsh right now," she wrote. "Elk have their lowest fat reserves come April and these late-season deep snows can make them vulnerable. Preventing unnecessary displacement may help reduce stress and winter-kill."

"This awareness campaign has gotten a lot of folk's attention," said Scott Falagan of the Mule Deer Foundation's Bitterroot Chapter. "It's really great to see how many folks are supporting this."

To further promote this awareness, conservation organizations in Missoula and Ravalli counties will hold a drawing on April 1 for a Kimber Hunter Rifle, an opportunity exclusive to county residents who made the pledge. Falagan encourages those living outside of these counties to ask their local organizations for this level of support.

"As an individual, our small efforts can make a significant difference," he wrote in a letter promoting the initiative. "Please understand, wildlife is not in the clear come April 1. Tread lightly and use discretion."

Throughout the state, wildlife officials seek to protect wildlife winter range with Wildlife Management Area designations that are closed to human activity during the winter and spring. In the Big Sky area, the Gallatin Wildlife Management Area, which is within the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area, is closed until May 15.

In addition to shed hunters, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks asks all recreationists to give wildlife space in the coming months. In a March 11 press release, the department requested that all snowmobilers, skiers and snowshoe enthusiasts avoid areas where animals are likely to be bedded down, and, in order to prevent a chase scenario, to keep all dogs on leashes when elk or deer are present.

"The stress of a chase alone can eventually lead to the death of the animal," the release said.



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A bull elk in Yellowstone National Park. Late winter and early spring can be a stressful time for deer and elk, with deep snow, limited food and depleted fat reserves. NPS PHOTO

INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Seeing Yellowstone through expert eyes

BY CHRISTINE GIANAS WEINHEIMER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Have you ever visited a place you'd been to many times before, but seeing it through someone else's eyes created a different experience? This summer, the Yellowstone Forever Institute is offering an opportunity to explore Yellowstone National Park in a whole new way: by seeing it through the eyes of an expert.

A special addition to the Institute's summer Field Seminars, the Yellowstone Masters Series features world-renowned experts in their fields whose work has made important contributions to their professions. Masters Series participants will experience the park alongside people who have changed our way of seeing and understanding the world, from journalists and natural historians, to research scientists.

"These Masters Series courses offer a rare opportunity to learn directly from truly remarkable leaders in their respective fields, renowned for their expertise and their contributions," said Robert Petty, senior director of education for Yellowstone Forever.

Each course will take a deep dive into a fascinating subject such as animal behavior, supporting wildlife-compatible landscapes, and multi-media storytelling for conservation in the digital age. Yellowstone will be the classroom, but the knowledge acquired will have relevance to global wildlife conservation and sustainability issues.

The following Masters Series courses are open for registration and are limited to 12 participants each. All Masters Series programs include catered meals and private lodging.

Corvids and Canines

June 12-15

Social and intelligent, ravens and wolves are individually interesting, and even more fascinating when their worlds overlap. Through lectures, discussion and field trips, participants will become immersed in the world of ravens, observing their territorial behaviors as mated pairs defend their domains, and their social behavior as they gather at rich food sources.

Course instructors John and Colleen Marzluff, researchers, authors and experts in

animal behavior, will guide the group in watching ravens in the wild interacting with wolves and other animals, as well as among people.

Beyond Yellowstone

July 22-26

Wild animals find safe haven within the borders of protected areas like Yellowstone, and in the ecosystems surrounding them. However, barriers to broader movement between these landscapes can isolate distant animal populations from one another, jeopardizing diversity and overall health. The National Geographic Society's Beyond Yellowstone program is using a science-based approach to support wildlife-compatible landscapes in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and beyond.

Led by Chris Johns, former editor-in-chief of National Geographic, participants will learn first-hand through field trips and meetings with local landowners how individuals, communities and agencies can work together to address the challenges of species recovery and migration across public and private lands.

Storytelling Goes Wild!

August 6-9

This course introduces an innovative approach to wildlife conservation and sustainable development by studying the principles of design thinking, artistic problem solving, branding, marketing and campaigning. The guide on this unique journey will be conservation creative and National Geographic Explorer Asher Jay, an international adventurer whose compelling artwork, installations, films and ad campaigns aim to incite global action on behalf of wildlife conservation.

Through morning and evening field trips to collect images and information, participants will learn novel ways to document Yellowstone's ecosystem. Back in the classroom, the group will use an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates both science and art to produce students' own multimedia or mixed-media outreach, and perhaps even their own campaign centered around Yellowstone.

Learn more or register at yellowstone.org/masters.

Christine Gianas Weinheimer lives in Bozeman and has been writing about Yellowstone for 17 years.

First Yellowstone bear sighting of 2019 Protect yourself and protect bears

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The first grizzly bear sighting of 2019 occurred in Yellowstone National Park during the beginning of March. On March 8, visitors observed a large grizzly bear between Canyon Village and Fishing Bridge. Additionally, grizzly tracks were reported between Mammoth Hot Springs and Norris Junction on March 11. The first grizzly bear sighting in 2018 occurred on March 7.



Use binoculars, a telescope or telephoto lens to get a closer look.

- Store food, garbage, barbecue grills and other attractants in hard-sided vehicles or bear-proof food storage boxes.

- Report bear sightings and encounters to a park ranger immediately.

- Learn more about bear safety by visiting nps.gov/ yell/planyourvisit/bearsafety.htm.

Male grizzlies come out of hibernation in mid- to late March. Females with cubs emerge in April and early May. When bears emerge from hibernation, they look for food and often feed on elk and bison that died over the winter. Sometimes, bears will react aggressively while feeding on carcasses.

All of Yellowstone National Park is bear country, from the deepest backcountry to the boardwalks around Old Faithful. Protect yourself and the bears people come here to enjoy by following these guidelines:

- Prepare for a bear encounter.

- Carry bear spray, know how to use it and make sure it's accessible.

- Stay alert.

- Hike or ski in groups of three or more, stay on maintained trails and make noise. Avoid hiking at dusk, dawn or at night.

- Don't run if you encounter a bear.

- Stay 100 yards away from black and grizzly bears.

Grizzly bear tracks in Yellowstone National Park. NPS PHOTO

"Yellowstone visitors care deeply about the conservation of bears and observing them in the wild," said Kerry Gunther, the park's bear management specialist. "Reduce human-bear conflicts by preventing bears from getting food and garbage, hiking in groups of three or more people, carrying bear spray and making noise in blind spots on the trail."

While firearms are allowed in the park, the discharge of a firearm by visitors is a violation of park regulations. Bear spray has proven effective in deterring bears defending cubs and food sources. It can also reduce the number of bears killed by people in self-defense.

The park restricts certain visitor activities in locations where there is a high density of elk and bison carcasses and lots of bears. Restrictions began in some bear management areas on March 10. Visit nps.gov/yell/ learn/management/bearclosures.htm to learn more about these closures.

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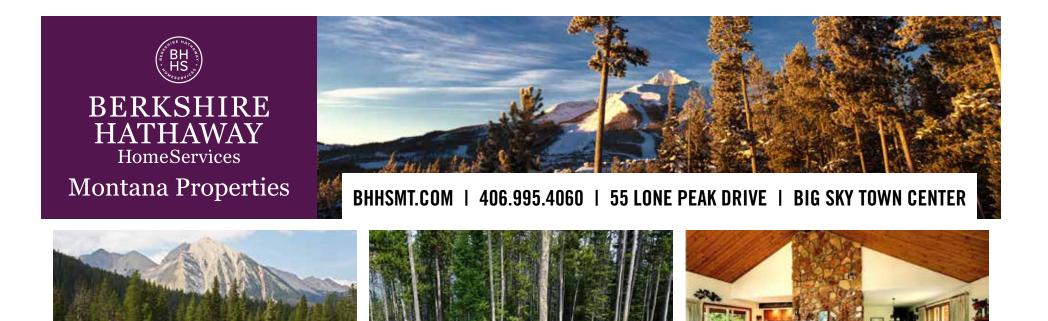
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Public lands package prohibits mining; reauthorizes conservation fund

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

LIVINGSTON - From the top of Crevice Mountain, located just east of Gardiner and adjacent to the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, you can see roughly one-third of Yellowstone National Park. You can also see the Yellowstone River, and Caroline Byrd suspects that with a really good throw, you could probably land a rock in it.

"It's just stunning," Byrd said of the landscape. Byrd is the executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Beyond its scenic power, she added that Crevice lies along an important migration corridor for Yellowstone's northern elk herd and that the area provides important tributaries to the Yellowstone River.

In recent years, land on Crevice and a portion of Emigrant Peak was included in a gold mining proposal that elicited opposition from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition as well as more than 400 local businesses that comprise the Yellowstone Gateway Business Coalition. While Emigrant and Crevice have historic patented mining claims, the recent proposal was for mining on public ground.

"Imagine a steady stream of ore trucks going right up Chico [Hot Springs'] driveway. Imagine them ripping apart the mountain and poisoning the water," Byrd said, adding that the destruction would be the result of a particular type of mining used to extract gold. "You can't just say no mining anywhere, [but] these are not good places for mines."

The result of four years of opposition, Crevice Mountain is among 30,000 acres of public land that is now permanently off limits to mining as a part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act. Formerly named the Natural Resources Management Act, it includes conservation measures that affect the entire nation and was signed into law by President Donald Trump on March 12.

A package of numerous land and water conservation bills bundled together in a lengthy 700 pages, the act was passed by the U.S. Congress on Feb. 26, with a 363-53 vote in the House and 92-8 in the Senate.

For Montana, this public-lands bill's effect is two-fold. In addition to permanently withdrawing land adjacent to Yellowstone's northern boundary from mining activity, it also permanently reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has been used to purchase city parks, public lands and access sites across the state, and expired last October.

"If you enjoy the outdoors, if you enjoy community trails, if you enjoy community playgrounds, if you enjoy recreation acres, if you think forest management is important, then you have probably benefited by the Land and Water Conservation Fund," said Glenn Marx, the executive director of the Montana Association of Land Trusts. "It has made the Montana way of life better."

Established in 1964 to safeguard natural resources, the fund has provided Montana with nearly \$600 million to protect open spaces, preserve historic sites, improve recreational access and assist with forest management. In addition to expanding community trail systems in the Gallatin Valley, the funds have allowed for the purchase of 165 of Montana's fishing access sites, and helped consolidate public lands in the Gallatin Range.

"That is just major bipartisan support for what most people agree is the country's premier conservation program," Marx said of the permanent reauthorization.

He said that with the funding becoming available soon, land trusts within the state as well as agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management will develop proposals for LWCF projects, and Montana could see as much as \$23 million in 2019.



OUTDOORS



On the Trail: Avalanche awareness

Explore local hiking, biking and equestrian trails with Big Sky Community Organization's trail series.

BY SARA MARINO *ebs contributor*

Spring is nearly here. But when sunny skies and warmer days call you to the backcountry, don't forget to stay avalanche aware. Recently the Big Sky Community Organization caught up with Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center forecaster Alex Marienthal, who provided some basic tips to keep in mind as we transition from winter to spring skiing.

It Takes Two: Never go alone in the backcountry. No matter how experienced you are, if something goes awry, you still need someone to be able to get help.

Safety First: While your gear of course can't prevent an avalanche, it's essential to helping you find your buddy quickly, or vice versa. Respect yourself and your ski partner by being prepared and carrying a beacon with working batteries, an avalanche probe and a shovel. It's also always a good idea to let someone else know where you're going.

What's Going On? Be aware that conditions can change rapidly throughout the day as it warms. What may start out as light, cold snow in the morning, can turn into heavy, wet and unstable snow that's more likely to slide by early afternoon.

When you get to your destination, look for signs of avalanche potential. Vegetation can hold clues. Are trees missing branches or flattened on the uphill side? Are there clear chutes that have been created over time by previous avalanche activity? What's the slope angle? Most avalanches occur on slopes between 30 and 45 degrees. For reference, Liberty Bowl off the Tram at Big Sky Resort is approximately 32 degrees, while the steepest pitch of the Big Couloir tops out at 50 degrees.

Education: Finally, educate yourself. Take an avalanche course, be it the first time, or as a refresher. Learn more about what to look for and how to dig a snow pit to gauge the stability of the snow you want to ski or board.



OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

Remember, have fun and be safe.

Before you head out, check the GNFAC's daily advisory at mtavalanche.com, where you can also find information about educational opportunities. The daily avalanche forecast will be posted at least through the first week of April, depending on conditions.

For more information about Big Sky's parks, trails and recreation programs, visit bscomt. org. The Big Sky Community Organization engages and leads people to recreational and enrichment opportunities through thoughtful development of partnerships, programs and places.

Sara Marino is the community development manager for the Big Sky Community Organization.





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Forest Service seeks detailed input for Custer Gallatin

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – Following the March 1 release of the Custer Gallatin National Forest's latest round of revision plan documents, the public has a final opportunity to provide input on how they would like to see the forest managed. Comments will be accepted through June 6, after which managers will develop a final forest plan for release in 2020.

The revision package includes a draft of the proposed forest plan, as well as an assessment of alternatives that take into account public comments from the past three years.

"It has the entire spectrum of what was heard. Each alternative that we have has tradeoffs and benefits to the resource," said U.S. Forest Service public affairs specialist Mariah Leuschen-Lonergan.

The draft plan doesn't identify a preferred alternative at this point, but does include definitions and an overall direction for forest management.

Leuschen-Lonergan recognizes that the four-year revision process, which will update the management directive for the Custer Gallatin from plans originally created in the 1980s, is lengthy and forest planning science is complex. However, public input remains valuable.

"We want to see the full spectrum of public comment for this final comment period," she said. "What is really helpful at this juncture is to go beyond a simple vote and dig deeper to what it is that you prefer or do not prefer in an alternative."

To assist the public with their commentary, the Forest Service has provided a 16page summary of the 933-page alternative assessment, which is officially referred to as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, along with pointers on how to provide comments and interpret the documents.

Leuschen-Lonergan also noted that the final forest plan will be developed at the discretion of Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson, who may adopt different portions

of the five proposed alternatives rather than select one alternative in its entirety. This decision will be made based on the best available science and public input.

Additionally, those who have been involved in the commentary process will be given an opportunity to state any objections to the final document next year, while individuals who have not been involved will not be able to file objections.

There will be public meetings to discuss the forest plan at Bozeman's Hilton Garden Inn on April 3 at 6:30 p.m. and in West Yellowstone on April 4 at 5:30 p.m. at the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce. There will also be ten resource-specific podcasts released in the coming weeks, available on the Your Forests, Your Future website.

For more information, to view the revision documents and submit comments, visit fs.usda.gov/detail/custergallatin. Planning podcasts will be available at future.org/podcasts/forest-service-planning.

Definitions

Recommended Wilderness is defined as an area that meets the criteria to be designated by Congress as wilderness as a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. These lands have potential to become designated.

Backcountry Areas have low levels of existing development. Management direction may vary in each backcountry area, such as determining whether motorized or mechanized recreation is a suitable use.

Recreation Emphasis Areas typically offer a variety of quality recreation opportunities, including motorized and nonmotorized uses. The recreation opportunities are accessible to a wide range of users, in several seasons, and typically offer challenges to a wide range of skills.

Comparison of alternatives for Madison, Henrys Lake and Gallatin Mountains Geographic Area

ISSUE	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D	ALTERNATIVE E
Acres of recommended wilderness	20,774	104,910	137,513	324,248	ο
Acres of backcountry designation	ο	38,565	50,745	ο	173,266
Acres of recreation emphasis designation	ο	140,155	170,776	27,977	159,736
Miles of motorized trail no longer available	ο	ο	ο	84	ο
Miles of mechanized trail no longer available	ο	ο	14	122	ο
Acres of winter motorized recreation no longer available	ο	0	8,884	73,283	ο
Connectivity	No plan direction	*	*	*	Plan components
Acres of forest suitable for timber production	214,504	188,237	183,732	172,911	188,937
Acres of forest unsuitable for timber production	174,294	185,209	165,278	83,887	214,820

*Plan components and key linkage areas identifed







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Effective Pain Management Treatment



BY DR. ANDREA WICK EBS CONTRIBUTOR

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain. This has placed our country in its first ever opioid epidemic, leading to the abuse of drugs such as heroin and fentanyl.

During the '90s, many patients were prescribed drugs such as hydrocodone and oxycodone post-surgery

or after cancer treatment. Now, back pain, anxiety, depression and other mood disorders are some of the most common ailments treated with opioids.

According to the "Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine," the lack of knowledge and research on the long-term use of these drugs has resulted in the current crisis, leaving many at a loss for pain-management options.

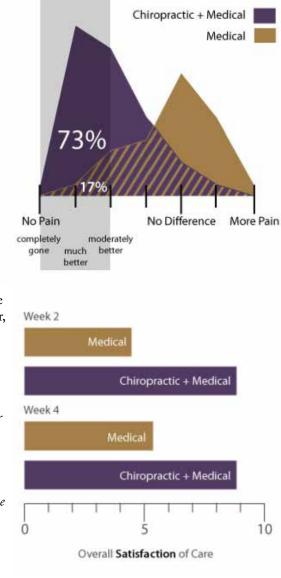
However, the psychology of pain can help us to understand better treatment outcomes.

Pain is an important part of the injury process and helps our body tell us when we're reinjuring ourselves or going beyond the limit of what we can tolerate. Additionally, pain has a large emotional component that's highly untreated or ignored.

Pain triggers the sensory cortex of the brain, specifically the dorsal posterior insula as found by University of Oxford scientists. Finding modalities or treatments that lessen the activity in this area of the brain will lead to better pain-management outcomes.

There are options for pain management that don't come in the form of a prescription medication. Scientifically proven non-drug options include chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage therapy, physical therapy, meditation and relaxation techniques. Supplements such as curcumin, turmeric and proteolytic enzymes, as well as medical marijuana and cannabidiol oil can also replace synthetic drug therapies.

Chiropractic care is recognized by Harvard Medical School as being a successful agent for back-pain treatment. Reports indicate that spinal manipulation is more effective than a placebo and as effective as medication for reducing low-back pain, and nearly one-fourth of regular chiropractic patients had significantly lower total health-care costs, decreased hospital admissions and a reduced need for prescription pharmaceuticals.



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As a chiropractor, I'm biased toward regular chiropractic care for pain management. However, any of the options listed above will lead to a better, healthier life that could keep all of us opioid-free.

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



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SPORTS

SECTION 3: SPORTS, BUSINESS, DINING & FUN



Town Race Series champions crowned

BY DOUG HARE **EBS STAFF**

The inaugural Town Race Series came to a quick end on Wednesday, March 13 and after the snow-dust had settled, Big Sky Sotheby's claimed top honors for the season. When told of his victory, Tim Cyr of the Big Sky Sotheby's team said, "Wow, that's great! Half of our team is under ten years old. We have Callie Pecunies who might be the fastest female racer in the league, but the rest of our team is comprised of little rippers from the Big Sky junior race team."

For eight weeks, teams of four to six of locals competed weekly at Big Sky Resort's NASTAR course on Ambush trail for bragging rights about being the fastest on the mountain, and many participants convened for drinks and conversation at Montana Jack after their runs.

"Town series was great this year. It was wonderful to see everyone come out and improve over the season. Most people improved by 1 to 2 seconds over the winter," said Tim Chamberlain, who served as pacesetter, raced for the VerMonters, and was NASTAR operations manager for the season.

"I thought the season went great, too. The competition was good-natured and friendly. It was nice to see people kibitzing at the top of the course," said Dave Belz, who raced for Extras! Extras! and was the NASTAR coordinator for the season. "It felt a little bit like softball in the winter with the camaraderie and competition. The best part about this is that because of the scoring system, anyone can really contribute no matter their age or ability."

According to Belz, the Town Race Series has the momentum to continue to grow in future seasons with more racers, more sponsors and more prizes.

The final race was sponsored with an after party at Lotus Pad. Racers met up at the popular Thai-



LEFT: Thanks to Big Sky Resort's Dave Belz (left) and Tim Chamberlain (right) for their NASTAR know-how, competitors in the Town Race Series were able to track their improvements throughout the race season. PHOTOS BY MEGAN PAULSON

RIGHT: Under stormy skies, Bayard Dominick prepares to hit the start gate during the last race of the season.

2019 Town Race Series - Final Standings

fusion restaurant to celebrate the end of season, gorge themselves on appetizers, and congratulate the victors.

"I sponsored this because I love people, skiing, good food and, of course, I'm always happy to support our community. We're all so busy and it's important to remember to take time to feed the soul with fun, friends, food and of course skiing! Cheers!" said Alex Omania, owner of Lotus Pad and part of the Lone Mountain Legends.

Big Sky Resort Vice President of Mountain Operations Troy Nedved also enjoyed the season: "People might not realize that we have one of the more difficult NASTAR courses in the country in terms of pitch and length. But this was really about community and getting people on the hill. You won't believe how many people said that they hadn't raced since their youth or hadn't even been on skis in years."

PLACE	TEAM	OVERALL SCORE
1	Big Sky Sotheby`s	105.8
2	Alpine Water	100.5
3	Ambulance Chasers - DBC Law	95.3
4	VerMontanans	88.6
5	Big Sky Mountain Sports	85.2
6	Lone Mountain Sports	80.6
7	Scissorbill's	62.4
8	Lone Mountain Legends	52.0
9	Outlaw Rippers	49.2



RESORT ROUNDUP Your guide to events, activities and news at Big Sky Resort

Big Sky Freeride team dominates Headwaters Spring Runoff

BY DOUG HARE EBS STAFF

After a long spell of frigid temperatures, the sunshine finally returned just in time for the 2019 Big Sky Headwaters Spring Runoff IFSA Junior Regional 2* competition, held March 9-10. On Saturday, competitors battled on Dead Goat and Obsidian terrain for the chance to qualify for a final run on Sunday. The event was judged by Joe Turner, Evad Vanspoor and Kristen Cooper.

"We were fortunate to have had great weather and with some smart skiing by the athletes in the qualifying rounds, we were able to take 55 competitors onto the world-class venue of Three Forks for the finals where we saw some very impressive skiing," said Pete Manka, who announced and helped coordinate the event.

By the end of the weekend, the Big Sky Freeride team had athletes in first place in every division except for one. Kennedy Cochenour finished first in U12 female ski division and Blaise Ballantyne took home first in U12 male ski and also won the Sick Bird award with the help of a big 540 at the bottom of the venue and a stylish ski switch entrance into the corral.

"Super fun venue. So fun to get together with all the freeride athletes that I've gotten to know over the years in Big Sky. Everyone did an awesome job! All of my coaches: Wallace Casper, Cooper Rausch, Drew DeWolf and Joey Thompson, they did a great job of getting me to the podium," Ballantyne said. "They all just tell me to go full send. I also want to thank Parkin Costain and Gardner Dominick for inspecting with me and psyching me up for this competition."

Andrew Smith took home first prize in the highly competitive U14 male ski division with a Sunday run that catapulted him from fourth to first. Elijah Singer won the U12 snowboard male and his older brother Isaac won the U14 snowboard male division.



Luuk MacKenzie carves a powder turn during the highest scoring run of the Headwaters



Jack Lovely takes flight on one the many airs that earned him a Sick Bird award, given to the athletes that put down the burliest and gnarliest lines of the competition. PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL IMAGES PHOTOGRAPHY / BIGSKYPHOTOS.COM

Luuk MacKenzie had the highest scoring run of the weekend on Sunday, which moved him from fifth place to first in the U18 male skier division.

"Our team has been having a blast this year and I'm stoked on our performance this weekend as well as this entire season. Our athletes excel in steep terrain and are very good at 'reading rocks,' as I like to call it," Coach Wallace Casper said.

Casper noted that his squad has captured podium spots all over the country this season and his athletes are some of the highest ranked in the country.

"The whole team has been super-committed this season and we have spent a lot of time working on technical skills and have dialed in a lot of good training zones," Casper said. "I really like our venues because they give competitors experience in entry-level mountain navigation. If you compete in Big Sky, you've got to like hiking! It was a super fun weekend. Props to all the volunteers, competitors and employees involved in making this happen."

According to Casper, the biggest surprise of the weekend was watching Max Bass from Aspen, Colorado, spin over 1440 degrees in competition between his two runs. He had back-to-back 360s spinning in both directions, as well as a switch 180 off the cornice on the top of Obsidian.

Did you miss the action? Don't worry. Another freeride competition is slated for March 29-31. The IFSA Big Sky Headwaters World Qualifier 2* will showcase adult freeride athletes trying to tackle the same terrain that our juniors crushed in their hometown event.

Spring Runoff—a run that catapulted him in first place in his division.

"To have me and Isaac both finish in first place is awesome. It has been coming for a while now and it just so happened to be here at home," Elijah Singer said.

"Watching your kids compete in extreme sports is both thrilling and terrifying at the same time. I'm really proud of Isaac and Elijah. They work really hard each weekend getting up early and training all weekend with their coaches. And it seems to be paying off!" said Jill Myers Singer, mother of Elijah and Isaac. "Watching both of them take the first place spots in their respective categories at their home mountain is indescribable for us and for them!"

"The team and I have trained really hard this year, so to be able to win at the mountain I love so much is huge for me!" Isaac added.

A different duo of Big Sky siblings also both won their respective divisions. Skylar Manka won the U14 female ski category and her sister Nehalem easily won her U18 female ski section with the highest combined score of any athlete on the weekend.



Elijah Singer, the reigning North American champion for his age group as male snowboarder, grabbing his board and some style points on the way to a first place finish.

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Final races ahead for the Big Sky Ski Team

BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

Alpine Update

The Big Sky Ski Team racers have been busy with the last qualifiers for both the Western Regionals and Tri-Divisional events. The last qualifier of the season for U14 and U16 age brackets was held at Bridger Bowl March 1-3, but even with brutal cold weather our team kept "cool" and crushed it. The Big Sky Ski Team won the overall on the weekend.

At the beginning of the season most racers have a goal to qualify for a regional event. This provides the motivation for most racers to do well in the qualifying events during the race season.

The younger racers have the YSL final March 15-17. We are expecting about 250 racers from the Northern Division to come to Big Sky for the event.

The U14 Western Regional Event, which has a limit of 160 boys and girls from as far away as Alaska, will be visiting Big Sky from March 21-24.

The U16 Western Regional Event, also limited to 160 racers, will be held in Sun Valley, Idaho, March 14-17.

The Tri-Divisional Event will be held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, March 21-24. This event is also limited to 160 racers.

The ski team will train throughout March and take a short break in early April. Many racers are already making plans for spring/summer training at Mount Hood, Oregon. And many racers will switch from the race skis to mountain bikes to stay in shape for the next winter season.

Members of the Big Sky Ski Team were all smiles after a successful Big Sky Speed Week. PHOTO BY MARTHA JOHNSON

Thinking of ski racing? Visit www.bssef.com for more information.

3/1/19 GS Results

U14 Girls

1. Brown, Lili (1:4756)

2. Manka, Skylar (1:47.66) 3. Unger, Chloe (1:48.16) 5. Klug, Carson (1:49:78) 12. McEldowney, Cameron (1:52.38) 13. Davis, Margaret (1:52.96) 14. Ditullio, Drew (1:53.20) 18. Hoover, Myla (1:55.45) 19. Johnson, Allene (155.89) 20. Schreiner, Graycen (1:58.73)

U16 Girls

2. St. Cyr, Franci (1:42.50) 5. Johnson, Winter (1:44.76) 6. Davis, Hillary (1:45.07) 7. Carisch, Gracie (1:46.40)

4. Vap, Morgane (1:48.94) 5. Manka, Skylar (1:49.30) 6. Klug, Carson (1:49.49) 7. Ditullio, Drew (1:50.15)

U14 Boys

7. Ueland, Cameron (1:53.04)

U16 Boys

2. Beatty, Ryan (1:41.66) 3. Kirchmayr, Luke (1:44.57) 4. Hassman, Kjetil (1:45.18) 11. Hoover, Miles (1:52.50)

3/2/19 GS Results

U14 Girls 2. Brown, Brooke (1:46.89)

3. Brown, Lili (1:48.48)

12. Johnson, Allene (1:51.89) 13. Hoover, Myla (1:52.79) 20. Davis, Margaret (1:54.37) 22. Schreiner, Graycen (1:56.47)

U14 Men

3. Ueland, Cameron (1:51.78)

U16 Boys

3. Kirchmayr, Luke (1:43.61) 10. Hassman, Kjetil (1:47.77)

Lower the edge angle in the steeps

BY DAN EGAN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Most skiers think that they can slow down by edging more on the steeps, but the opposite is true. A high edge angle at the end of a turn will scoot the ski forward and often cause the skier to become off-balance. Combine this with some tension or stress to the downhill leg and the situation can worsen because the skier is moving away from the fall line instead of embracing it.

Although it is true that edging will provide grip, it will also cause the skis to travel across the fall line rather than down it, thus creating a false sense of security because when traversing across a steep slope you are often out of position for the next turn.

Simple fact: edging in the last third of the turn causes acceleration because when you pressure on the ski edge in that part of the turn, you will accelerate across the slope. When this happens, the skier typically does not have enough pressure on the uphill ski, and this causes even more instability. The result will be hesitation to make the next turn especially if the terrain is intimidating.

Here is an example. A skier enters onto a steep slope, and their hips are behind their feet. Then they initiate the turn, their skis accelerate down the fall line and the skier immediately puts the skis hard on their edges thinking it will slow them down only to accelerate across the fall line. They repeat this a few times and low and behold their thighs are burning and their confidence is shaken.

So what is the fix? It's simple: edge less on the steeps. The goal is to get the skis to drift down the fall line rather than traverse across it. To accomplish this, add some pressure to the uphill ski at the end of the turn so that the feet are closer together. This will release the edge of the downhill ski and the result will be controlled deceleration in the fall line.

Drifting down the fall line will also lengthen the turn, which will increase stability. Plus while standing on both skis, the skier will feel more comfortable moving into the next turn. Balance will improve as will confidence.

Here are a few things to remember next time you head out onto the steeps. Start on a steep, groomed slope. Stand tall with your shoulders over your feet and your feet under your hips. Then lower the edge angle of the skis to create more surface area on the snow



Jen Bennett demonstrating how to embrace the fall line and not rely too much on edging late in turns to decelerate on steep terrain. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAN EGAN

and slide down the hill. Now with some momentum allow the skis to drift down the fall line instead of traversing across it and make a turn.

Do this for three or four turns then add some edge to grip and stop. Repeat. Once comfortable head off to some steep, smooth slopes and practice. The goal is a series of smooth, medium-length turns at a consistent speed with little-to-no acceleration between turns.

I tell skiers of all abilities that deceleration happens best over a series of turns. Think of it as slow, slower, slowest stop. When you slow down over a series of turns you are more apt to stay in balance and better manage your control in varied terrain.

The result will be more confidence as you explore more steep terrain on the mountain.



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The shortest days are often the best

BY PATRICK STRAUB

EBS Contributor

The pace of winter fishing fits my style: slow, gradual and deliberate. The quietness of the river is eerie, like the green at a small college on Sunday morning.

On the morning of December 21—the first day of winter and the shortest day of the year—a few years ago, I stand on the bank with my 18-month-old daughter Adela, watching the currents in the Gallatin River flow past.

Snowflakes hit the water, disappearing instantly. Occasionally, a trout rises to a hatching midge. Despite her silence, I know Adela is in tune and observing the scene. For me, the quiet is reassuring.

With Adela bundled up and loaded into the kid-pack, I step into the river cautiously, armed with waders, outerwear and a three-weight fly rod. In my first few steps, the water I encounter is warmer than the air temperature. My fingers stiffen in the cold.

Eventually I tie a couple feet of 6X tippet to my leader and onto that a size-20 parachute Adams. I make my first presentation to the rising trout.

"Watch this kiddo," I whisper to myself.

But the fly only drifts past the rising trout and continues on. A few more drifts and I can feel Adela looking over my shoulder, expecting something.

I cut off the dry fly and retie 18 inches of fluorocarbon tippet and two size-20 beadhead zebra midge flies, the first one red, the second black. Above the knot of the new tippet, I tie a small tuft of yarn as a strike indicator. Adela watches as the trout continue to rise.

With my new offering, I make a drift to the rising fish. "This will get 'em," I say, this time loud enough for her to hear.

The orange wisp of yarn goes underwater. I raise my rod and a trout leaps into the air, trying to toss the fly. Adela squirms, her small legs kicking against my back. I bring the fish to hand and then release it back into the clear, cold water of the Gallatin.

We work along the bank, hooking several colorful trout and landing a few. Eventually, they cease feeding—their window of activity is short in winter.

Back on the banks, Adela and I giggle as we make angels in the fresh snow. I stand up from the cold ground, reaching down to grab her hand.



Pat Straub fishes the Gallatin River in 2013 with his daughter Adela, near their home in Gallatin Gateway. PHOTO BY THOMAS LEE

Our two snow angels lay side-by-side: mine, large and clumsy; hers, tiny and delicate.

In the months since, the memories of trout and the zebra midges have faded, but I vividly recall laying on my back below the blue winter sky and the warmness of my daughter's laughter as we played in the snow.

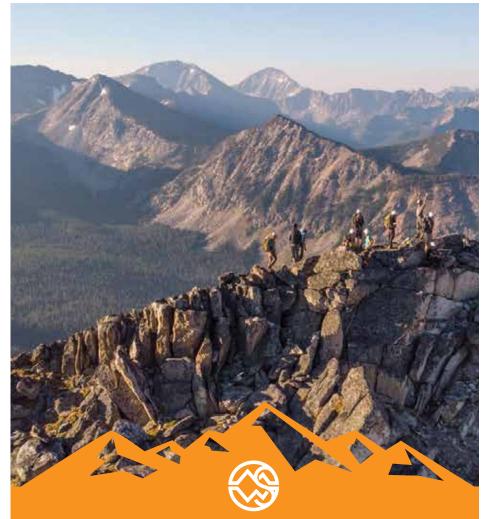
A 20-year veteran fishing guide, Patrick Straub has fished the world-over. The co-founder of the Montana Fishing Guide School, he's the author of six books and owns Gallatin River Guides with his wife in Big Sky.

A version of this story first appeared in the Winter 2014 edition of Mountain Outlaw.



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Explore Big Sky



Making it in Big Sky: Tribe Salon

BY DOUG HARE EBS STAFF WRITER

Hanna Powell grew up in Madison Valley, just on the other side of Lone Mountain in Harrison and Ennis, Montana. After spending eight years in Big Sky, snowboarding, mountain biking and performing as a singer and musician, Hanna decided to follow her dream of being a hairstylist and moved to San Francisco to attend the Cinta Aveda Institute.

After receiving both Cosmetology and Barbering licenses, she returned to her native state to start her career in the hair world. When opening Tribe Salon in the Meadow Village in 2017, Hanna's main objective was to discover her guests' desires and provide optimal results to enhance their natural beauty.

Explore Big Sky: What has been the key to your success?

Hanna Powell: My success is a direct reflection of how much pride I take in providing not only a consistent service, but an experience to my clients that makes them feel great. I feel successful when my clients walk out of Tribe Salon with a smile on their face.

EBS: *Do you remember your first customer or first sale?*

H.P.: Yes! A longtime local, Nancy Long was my first guest. And bless her heart, was she ever patient with me as I adapted to my new space! A big thanks to all my clients who were patient in the first few months when Tribe was still 'evolving'!

EBS: What is it about Big Sky that compels you to stick it out through the hard times?

H.P.: I have lived in Big Sky for 14 years and this is home for me. The community has been incredible to support me through this process and I enjoy being a part of responsible growth in Big Sky with a focus on serving locals.

EBS: What is one of the most memorable moments you have had as a resident/business owner in Big Sky?

H.P.: There have been so many wonderful memories in this community, I can't choose just one!

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



Hanna Powell has been busy ever since opening Tribe Salon in the Meadow Village in 2017. PHOTO BY LIAM KESHISHIAN

H.P.: When I was first opening Tribe, I was very nervous and unsure that I was making the right decisions. A client and friend told me that things rarely work out the way you plan and there will always be distractions and stumbling blocks that you have to deal with when you are on your road to success but to always be resilient and keep working hard!

EBS: What advice would you give to small business owners just starting out in Big Sky?

H.P.: Always be aware of how you are representing and serving the community through your business. Make a conscious effort to be a positive reflection of Big Sky to both locals and visitors.

EBS: Where do you see your business in 10 years?

H.P.: I hope to continue to grow and evolve to provide the latest techniques and process to my clientele so they have the 'big city' perks in our beautiful, small local town.

EBS: Where do you see Big Sky in 20 years?

H.P.: It is hard to say given the amount of growth we are experiencing at this time. It is my hope, however, that we maintain the level of

community and don't lose sight of what makes Big Sky so special.

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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.

It's official, we've gone too far



BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But then...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

American Life in Poetry: Column 729

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

Family life can shove one up against another, and here's a poem by Jeffrey Harrison that gets to that. It was originally published in Five Points, one of our most respected literary journals. Harrison's most recent book is Into Daylight (Tupelo Press), and he makes his home in Massachusetts.

How It Worked

By Jeffrey Harrison

It was hard to sit there with my father, watching one of my sister's girls playing a set of tennis against my son or daughter because he'd forget himself and with a groan of disappointment or a grunt of sympathetic exertion make it clear that he was rooting for my sister's child and against mine. There was no use calling him on it, because he'd deny it and get angry. So I would get angry but try not to show it, until I couldn't stand it any longer and would get up and walk away. That was how it worked between us, the unspoken building up like thunderheads above the tennis court, where the kids played on, not caring who won and hardly noticing the sky had darkened.

We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2018 by John Stanizzi, "Ascension." Poem reprinted by permission of John Stanizzi. Introduction copyright ©2019 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004–2006.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Explore Big Sky

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In the Spotlight: Kara Tripp Explore Montana's scenery through the palette knife

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

SECTION 4:

BOZEMAN - There is a saying that one should do what one loves in order to be happy and successful. For Kara Tripp, that means creating paintings of her backyard with a palette knife.

The third-generation Bozeman native has always been surrounded by the creative world. Her father was an artist who painted wooden decorative decoys and her family traveled with him to art shows in the summer.

Although she studied chemical engineering at Montana State University, Tripp worked odd jobs after graduation until fully dedicating herself to a creative career.

"My mother-in-law is also an artist, so her and my dad both encouraged me to start painting," said Tripp, now 40. "There was a gallery in Big Timber that was opening and they were accepting new art, so I submitted a few pieces, which was in 2008."

Beginning with just a few paintings she created, Tripp enrolled in the Montana Artrepreneur Program in her early 30s. MAP, as the program is known, is a Helenabased business school for artists, one that "demystifies the world of business" and affirms a creative path as a credible profession, according to its website.

"The program really propelled me from being a hobby artist to doing shows and selling more work,"Tripp said.

After completing the program, Tripp's production and sales skyrocketed. One factor is that her pieces transport you to a familiar place, like driving down Highway 191 into Gallatin Canyon. Another is Tripp's style of chosen medium.

"I used to paint with a brush but switched to a palette knife because of its impressionistic feel," she said. "I can quickly move the oil around, scrape or build up the paint to create nice textures."

A palette knife looks like a miniature trowel and artists often use one to mix paint before applying it with a brush. But Tripp uses the palette knife to create her paintings because of its ability to quickly put paint to canvass and to give her art a thicker, mosaic quality and depth.

"I paint fairly traditional subjects in terms of bison, cranes, foxes and Montana landscapes, but the way I paint and frame them is a little more contemporary," Tripp said.





S COURTESY OFTripp creating one of her masterpieces.

In her artist statement, Tripp describes the palette-knife approach as a liberation from her fixation with minuscule details: "I feel sometimes like I'm sculpting things to create my shapes, which leaves an impressionistic end result and leaves a little to the imagination."

Tripp draws inspiration from her childhood and her present-day surroundings. Growing up in southwestern Montana meant regularly witnessing the sights and scenes of The Treasure State, including bison and other wildlife. Plus, she works from photographs she takes while driving around or near town.

"I take photos of hay bales everywhere I drive when the light is nice," Tripp said. "My kids can get annoyed and think each one looks the same, but they always look different with different light and trees behind them."

Tripp finds her muse in the old masters of impressionism, but also in contemporary artists, such as Robert Moore, an Idaho-based palette knife painter. "After taking his class I realized that a palette knife offers the results I want," she said. "His work, bold technique and first instinct of not reworking his paintings once starting really attracted me."

At the Sweet Pea Art Festival in Bozeman, Tripp was a featured artist in 2014 and her artwork was chosen for "Best in Show" three years in a row at the event's art exhibition. "I grew up going to Sweet Pea every year so it was a really cool full circle to win their poster contest,"Tripp said.

"Face to Face," a 30-by-24 oil painting by Tripp. PHOTOS COURTESY OF KARA TRIP

The artist now creates and hangs her work for the public to view in studio 111 in the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture. "I love the Emerson," Tripp said. "It's a great place to be because of the events they always put on and I think people really know it for its one-of-a-kind Montana art."

Along with the Emerson, Tripp's work has been featured throughout downtown Bozeman in various local businesses and public spaces, including the library and Lockhorn Cider. She has also been featured in galleries in Billings, Bigfork and Big Sky among other Montana towns.

In addition to painting familiar subjects, Tripp also produces commissioned pieces in specific sizes and themes for clients, such as portraits or family pets. "Anything is possible if someone knows what they want," she said. "It's a really fun part of my business because I get to paint things I never would have created otherwise."

For Tripp, there's no slowing down anytime soon. "I like being my own boss and speaking with people one-on-one when they come to my studio," she said, smiling. "I'm happy to say that this is my full-time gig."

Visit karatrippartist.com to view more of the artist's work.

Twiddle to headline Rialto

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

BOZEMAN – Replace your troubles with good times at the Rialto in Bozeman on March 21 with Iya Terra and Twiddle.

Twiddle started at Vermont's Castleton State College in 2004 when keyboardist Ryan Dempsey and guitarist Mihali Savoulidis collaborated on songs in their freshman dorms. The new-age jam band, which covers rock, jazz, bluegrass, reggae and funk, has since released several albums beginning with "The Natural Evolution of Consciousness" in 2007.

The latest 27-song studio album from Twiddle, PLUMP, comprises major hits such as "Lost in the Cold" and "Every Soul," tunes describing the journey through life's up and downs.

"So many fans have shared how these songs carried them through very difficult times," said Brook Jordan, Twiddle's percussionist, in a press release on Rialto's website. "That alone makes this all worth it."

What the band is most famous for, however, is its improvisational live music sets; seeing Twiddle is similar to attending a Grateful Dead, Phish or moe. concert. After touring for 12 years, Twiddle has sold out multiple historic rock venues, including Port Chester, New York's Capitol Theatre and Washington, D.C.'s 9:30 Club.

Beginning in 2013, Los Angeles, California-based Iya Terra has evolved with reggae's continuous change. With high-energy performances and a "full sound," they bring a modern approach to the genre. Since their first tour in August 2014, they've shared the stage with reggae artists such as Julian Marley, Easy Star All Stars, Pepper, Stick Figure, and John Brown's Body. On March 21, Iya Terra will open for Twiddle.

Visit rialtobozeman.com for tickets or more information about the 18-and-over show.



From left to right: Ryan Dempsey, Mihali Savoulidis, Zdenek Gubb, and Brook Jordan. PHOTO COURTESY OF TWIDDLE.

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Calling all fishy folk for the Fly Fishing Film Tour

GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

The Fly Fishing Film Tour (F3T) will make a splash in Big Sky on Wednesday, March 20, at Lone Peak Cinema with two showings at 5 and 8 p.m. The 2019 tour showcases ten fly fishing films from around the world.

"This remarkable evening of outdoor cinema is in itself an adventure you won't soon forget," promised the film tour website. "With an emphasis on the people, places and fisheries that help make up the vast world of fly fishing, the 2019 F3T will take you from Alaska to Florida, South Dakota to French Polynesia, British Columbia to the coast of Australia, and more."

The show will have a special appearance by Karlie Rowland, star of 2019 film tour selection, "Where it All Started." The flick tells the story of her return from Seattle to the Henry's Fork, where she is a fourth-generation angler. Rowland will be available to meet fans and for a question-and-answer session after each show.

A tasting gallery featuring local spirits will give fishy folk the chance to wet their whistles between footage that shines a spotlight on finned protagonists, including trout, steelhead, permit and tarpon.

One film, "The Return," follows a fisheries biologist on a twoday journey into a remote corner of Yellowstone National Park as he investigates whether native cutthroat trout have returned to their spawning tributaries after ten years of restoration. Another short, "Alignment," chronicles Eric Jackson through a season spent snowboarding and seeking steelhead.

In addition to highlighting the best fly fishing films, the F3T partners



The Fly Fishing Film Tour will premiere at Lone Peak Cinema on Wednesday, March 20. PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE.

with local fly shops and conservation organizations from across the country. Last year, the tour raised more than \$500,000 to fund education and conservation projects that enhance the sport of fly fishing. Proceeds from the Big Sky event will support the Gallatin River Task Force in their mission to protect the Gallatin River.

Tickets for the Big Sky showing will be a suggested \$10 donation to support the future of cold, clean and abundant water in the Gallatin River.

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TETON SURF CLASSIC - Snowboard Jam, March 31





BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, MARCH 15 – THURSDAY, MARCH 28

If your event falls between March 29 and April 11, please submit it by April 3 by emailing media@outlaw.partners.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Open Skate Town Center Ice Rink, noon

Curling League Town Center Ice Rink, 5:00 p.m.

Pinky and the Floyd Rock Show Rainbow Ranch, 8:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16 Skimo Race Big Sky Resort, 8:30 a.m.

Run to the Pub Half Marathon Bozeman, 10:00 a.m.

Open Skate Town Center Ice Rink, noon

SUNDAY, MARCH 17 Adult Drop-In Hockey Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 18

Youth Hockey Cinic Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 19 3 on 3 Hockey League Town Center Ice Rink, 6:00 p.m.

Adult Broomball Town Center Ice Rink, 8:00 p.m. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20 F3T Fly Fishing Film Tour Lone Peak Cinema, 5 p.m. & 8 p.m.

Dancing Buck's T-4, 7:00 p.m.

Open Skate Town Center Ice Rink, 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21

Visit Big Sky Board Meeting Big Sky Town Center Sales Office, 8:30 a.m.

Youth Hockey Clinic Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

Twiddle The Rialto, 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

Smokin' Aces Rail Jam Big Sky Resort, all day

Live Music: The Well Choppers, 10:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23 James Sewell Ballet

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

Adult Drop-In Hockey Town Center Ice Rink, 7:30 p.m. Kinetic Meditation Montana Ballet Company, 6:00 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 25

Open Skate Town Center Ice Rink, noon

Youth Hockey Clinic Town Center Ice Rink, 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 26

3 on 3 Hockey League Town Center Ice Rink, 6:00 p.m.

Adult Broomball Town Center Ice Rink, 8:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

Open Skate Town Center Ice Rink, noon

Big Sky Headwaters Alliance – Resilient Water Supply Meeting Big Sky Water and Sewer, 1:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Big Sky Headwaters Alliance – Healthy Headwaters Meeting Big Sky Water and Sewer, 1:00 p.m.

Dancing Buck's T-4, 7:00 p.m.

WORTH THE DRIVE



GREAT FALLS, MONTANA C.M. Russell Art Auction

Purchase tickets for the Auction for the Arts Paint and Sip event at bigskyarts.org. Participants will paint with live-auction artist Julie T. Chapman and silent-auction artist Megan Buecking and will choose between a

landscape or wildlife subject. Also, enjoy a mimosa bar at Buck's T-4 on March 30 from 9-11:30 a.m. while doing so.

Alcoholics Anonymous can help if you think you might have a drinking problem. Call Alcoholics Anonymous 888-607-2000 to talk to a member of A.A. or go to aa.montana.org for meeting times and locations.

The Mansfield Center | March 22

More than 800 artists and over 15 shows are featured during the Western Art Week in Great Falls. Throughout the week you can expect to find live music performances, educational symposiums, quick finishes and live auctions. The C.M. Russell's art auction attracts collectors, artists and patrons from around the world and is known to be one of the most prestigious Western art events in the country. The live auction will feature pieces by Charles M. Russell, other historic artists as well as new work by contemporary Western artists. Head to visitgreatfallsmontana.org for more information.

Auction for the Arts to feature five new artists

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

The seventh Auction for the Arts, the Arts Council of Big Sky's annual fundraiser, takes place March 30 at Moonlight Lodge from 6-10 p.m. A key part of the evening is a "quick finish," in which each artist brings a work in progress and finishes it in the early part of the evening, followed by a live auction of the art created.

"We are fortunate to have so many talented, well-known Western and contemporary artists take part in the live auction," said Event Chair Linda Goldinger. "In addition to the work of familiar artists like Tom Gilleon, Kevin Red Star and Mike Untiedt, we have five new artists all with a decidedly contemporary flair to their work."

Belgrade-based Amber Blazina is a Western oil painter specializing in impressionist and expressionist alla prima methods. A graphic designer since 2002, she transitioned to oil painting in 2016 and became a full-time painter in 2017 creating bold, energetic paintings.

Bozeman artist Terry Cooke Hall participated in the event's 2018 silent auction. Hall started her career doing illustrations for land development firms in Southern California, which led to the creation of a commercial art business in murals and faux-finishing for contractors and developers. Since 2006, she's focused on developing a fine-art career.

"My style bridges the gap between the traditional and contemporary West while applying the foundational principles of design, value and color," she said. "As a first-time, quick-finish, live-auction artist this year, I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to present a new body of work that reveals a more modern and sophisticated approach to my style."

Rocky Hawkins' art career began with illustration and commercial art, but he found it didn't fulfill his creative need and desire for self-expression, which steered him to the world of fine-art painting. A search to connect more closely with Native American inspiration brought him to Montana, and he resides with his wife, Kat, in Harrison.

Palette knife artist David Mensing obtained a degree in and worked in the field of architecture for about three years before seeking other pursuits. He attended Scottsdale Artists School on a full scholarship and has studied and painted extensively with Robert Moore in Idaho. He now lives in central Oregon with his wife and three children.

Award-winning indigenous artist Ben Pease is also moving from the silent to live auction this year. A Montana State University art major, Pease uses original antique paper items to draw contextual, digital painting, spray paint, ink, acrylic, oil and almost anything else he can find in his studio to create his well-known mixed media pieces. His work is layered with symbolism which tells stories and conveys social messages.

The Auction for the Arts will also include a silent auction of local and regional artworks along with heavy appetizers, desserts, jazz music and a "paddle raise" to collect funds for classroom space in the BSCO's proposed community center, where the Arts Council can host children's art activities, adult art workshops and other art events. An anonymous donor is matching gifts made in support of this cause, giving paddle raise participants the opportunity to double the impact of their donations. Purchasers of live auction artwork are invited to a thank-you breakfast at Buck's T-4 on March 31 at 9 a.m.

Three of the new artists—Hall, Pease and Mensing—will participate in an Auction for the Arts reception on March 29 at Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty from 5-7 p.m. At the reception, each artist will have a miniature painting in a one-night-only silent auction.

The event is sponsored by Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty and tickets are on sale now at bigskyarts.org.

ARTISTS IN 2019 LIVE AUCTION

Mike Barlow Susan Blackwood Amber Blazina Meagan Blessing Michael Blessing Julie T. Chapman Todd Connor **Thomas English** Howard Friedland **R.** Tom Gilleon Terry Cooke Hall **Rocky Hawkins** Barb Schwarz Karst Harry Koyama Joe Kronenberg David Mensing **Ben Pease** John Potter **Kevin Red Star** Carol Spielman donation to the Arts Council Laurie Stevens Sam Anton Terakedis

donation from David and Rebecca Shopay, in memory of Klaus Gump

Michael Untiedt

Shirle Wempner

Dennis Ziemienski donation from Altamira Gallery, Jackson



LEFT: Amber Blazina's "Convoy" will be part of the 2019 Auction for the Arts live auction. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ACBS. **RIGHT:** Rocky Hawkins' 48-by-36 oil painting, "Crossroads of time," represents the "interaction of past and present time joined at a crossroad or middle ground of a fragmented dimension and is an open invitation to visually and mindfully explore." PHOTO PROVIDED BY ACBS.

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"Sing Street"

BY ANNA HUSTED EBS FILM CRITIC

52 March 15-28, 2019

Nothing describes my reaction to John Carney's "Sing Street" better than his own lyrics to "Drive it Like You Stole It," sang by 17-year-old Ferdia Walsh-Peelo: "You won't let it go, you keep coming back for more." Released in 2016, "Sing Street" makes a great film to catch up with around St. Patrick's Day for its heart, soul and Irish roots.

Irish loner Conor (Walsh-Peelo), an outsider from the outset of the film, is sent to a new public school after his dad loses his job. Feeling that the only way to make friends is by not fitting in, Conor decides to form a band. But the band is about more than just playing music, which it does quite well. It's also about the lifestyle and pomp



The Irish '80s rock 'n' roll, "Sing Street," is a comingof-age story about friendship, grit and love. PHOTO COURTESY OF FILMNATION ENTERTAINMENT.

of being a band in the '80s. As his older brother, Brendan (Jack Reynor), who probably prefers Zig Zag to a pipe, says: "You've got to learn how not to play."

"Sing Street" hearkens back to another great Irish film, 1991's "The Commitments," not just in its era, but also in its form and style. Conor teeters somewhere between Billy Idol and David Bowie, rebellious in his own right. He would rather dress how he wants and defend the nerds than follow school uniform codes and be the bully. His bandmates look like Duran Duran and his love interest, Raphina (Lucy Boynton), could have stepped right out of a John Hughes movie. The climactic ending of the film washes the band makeup and uniforms away, showing us that Conor just wants to do the right thing by the girl and band he loves.

This Irish coming-of-age story tears down the establishment, in this case the school system, and builds up friendship, music, performance and grit. "Sing Street" respects high schoolers in a way many movies don't by letting them tell their stories with low camera angles, which puts them on a subconscious pedestal, and by leaving the adults in the periphery, giving the lion's share of screen time to the kids.

I won't go deeper into the plot or characters because you've got to see it for yourself. The emotional tone is impassioned excitement for life and love despite being dealt a bad hand. This is best expressed through the soundtrack, which features "Inbetween Days" by The Cure and "Town Called Malice" by The Jam.

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Unsurprisingly, coming from the same writer and director as "Once," the soundtrack to "Sing Street" will stick with you for the rest of time. Not only because it has undertones of '80s pop rock, but also because it cleverly delivers a message of questioning authority through original songs like "Brown Shoes," which points out the foolishness of a school dress code while the school can't afford new supplies and better teachers. Conor sees the world as it could be, not as he's told it is, and he proves that it can be a better place.

Carney's movies give us a sense of place in Ireland and they always subtly inform his characters' choices. But more than that, he gives us humanity through a young man and his guitar. I can't wait to see what he comes up with next.

"Sing Street" is available to rent on Amazon Prime, Google Play or YouTube.

Anna Husted has a master's in film studies from New York University. In Big Sky, she can be found up on the hill or at the movies at Lone Peak Cinema. When not gazing at the silver screen or watching her new favorite TV show, she's skiing, fishing or roughhousing with her cat, Indiana Jones.

James Sewell Ballet returns with innovative performance

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The James Sewell Ballet returns to the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Saturday, March 23, for its annual performance of innovative movement. This is the company's sixth season performing at WMPAC. Each year it develops new material that pushes the boundaries of dance.

"These dancers are true athletes. If there is anything that Big Sky understands, it's athleticism," said John Zirkle, executive director of WMPAC. While many people might not consider themselves ballet connoisseurs, Zirkle thinks the performance will appeal to a far broader audience than might expect it.

Known for its long history of collaborating with contemporary musicians, the James Sewell Ballet will partner with Martin Dosh, the Minneapolis musical phenom, for an integrated live performance titled "Body Beats."

Known as Dosh, he is perhaps best described as a one-man band: he plays piano, percussion and guitar, recording and looping each instrument to create richly layered soundscapes. Dosh will perform onstage alongside the dancers, providing a live soundtrack to their movements, which will result in a fully-integrated new creative work.

James Sewell Ballet also welcomes guest choreographer Gabrielle Lamb, who will present new work designed specifically for the company. The dancers will perform her dance series, "Thaw," inspired by the beauty and complexity of winter, a theme that is no stranger to Montana locals.

Lamb was a longtime soloist at Les Grandes Ballets Canadiens de Montreal. Now best known as a choreographer, she has won the Princess Grace Award for Choreography and is working with James Sewell Ballet



The James Sewell Ballet will perform at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center on Saturday, March 23. The dancers will perform both "Body Beats" and "Thaw." PHOTO COURTESY OF WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

this spring as a guest collaborator. Her work is recognized for examining spaciousness and unruliness.

"James Sewell embodies WMPAC's commitment to new art," said Zirkle. "This performance is exciting not just because it's happening in Big Sky, but because it's truly on the leading edge of this artform. We're incredibly lucky to have a space that attracts artists of this caliber."

Visit warrenmillerpac.org for tickets and more information.



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Museum of the Rockies to host Dr. Jeff Strickler

GALLATIN HISTORY MUSEUM

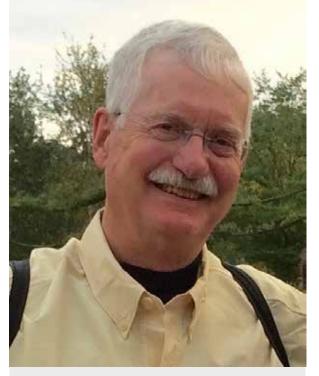
Join the Gallatin History Museum on Wednesday, April 3 at 6 p.m. in the Hager Auditorium at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman for a presentation by Dr. Jeffrey Strickler.

According to Strickler, a historian and pediatrician who has written several books about Big Sky, the talk will focus on the history and characters of the area and will be accompanied by historic photographs of them.

"[I will be] trying to give a face to these stories," Strickler said.

The historian has been putting the finishing touches on a new book titled, "Whispers of the Past and Reflections on Nature: Names in Bozeman's Backyard, The Madison, Gallatin and Bridger Ranges." Although the book also discusses

natural history, the presentation-which shares the name of his upcoming book—will deal only with the historical and biographical aspects.



Dr. Jeffrey Strickler will give a face to the history and characters of the local area at the Museum of the Rockies on April 3. PHOTO PROVIDED BY DR. JEFFREY STRICKLER.

Strickler is the author of "Big Sky Names: An Amble Through Western History and Ecology on the Roads, Streams, and Developments of Big Sky, Montana;" "Images of America: Big Sky;" and "The Skier's Guide to the Biggest Skiing in America, featuring Big Sky Resort and Lone Mountain Ranch."

Strickler's Montana family roots go back to the early 1900s, and lured him to return in 1975 to practice pediatrics in Helena. He retired to Big Sky in 2005 where he's since indulged his passions for skiing and history. Having hiked all over southwestern Montana for the past 43 years while poring over topographic maps, he has used his fascination with names to eke out the hidden history of the area he loves.

"I have had an ongoing interest in names and where they come from," said Strickler. "And I have a passion for history."

The program is open and free to the public.

Visit gallatinhistorymuseum.org for more information.



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Unlike standard paint-and-sip classes, the Art on the Rocks series switches the medium and beverages each month for those looking to learn something new and drink something different. Basic techniques and know-how concerning the use of gel mediums, brushes and paper as well as composition, color and contrast will all be discussed.

The 21-and-over classes occur on the first and third Thursday of each month.

Visit theemerson.org for tickets and more information.

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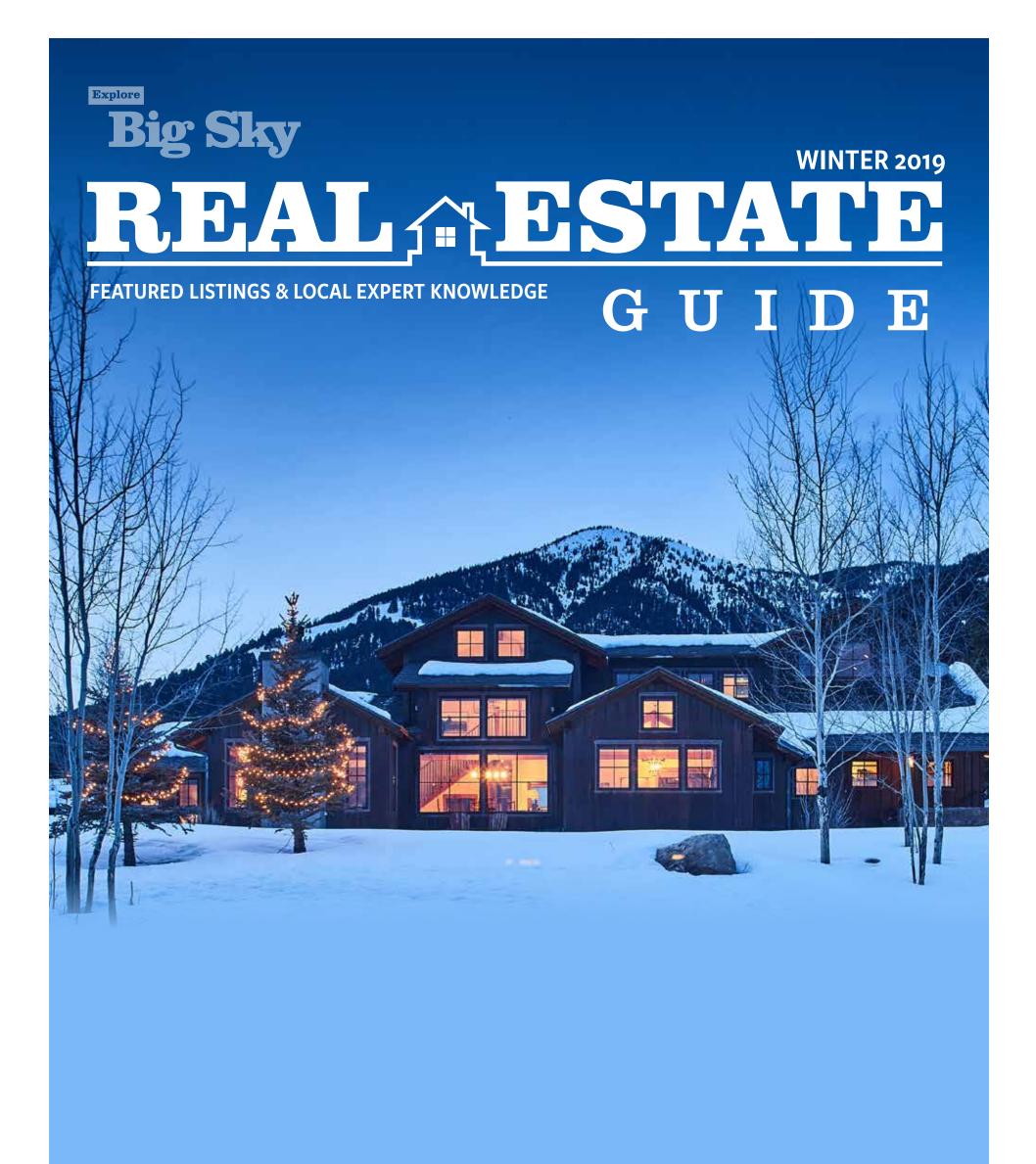
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Big Sky's increasingly competitive housing market

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

The topic rears its head at every gathering in Big Sky: the community is growing—quickly.

The draw for visitors, new second homeowners and fulltime residents is multifaceted. Untapped growth and economic potential, epic skiing just minutes away—sans the epic lines and crowds seen at other large resorts—and a population bent on building up a community and its values from scratch have magnetized increasing numbers of visitors with an eye for property ownership in Big Sky.

However, prospective homeowners find themselves facing an increasingly competitive buyer's market, with the median sales price for residences jumping more than 46 percent from February 2016 to February 2019, from \$477,000 to \$697,000. Meanwhile, properties are snapped up with escalating fervor, with median days for a listing to remain on the market dropping nearly 45 percent from 117 days to 65 days over the same period.

Inventory in the community continues to shrink. From 257 homes on the market three years ago, 142 occupied the market last month, almost a 45 percent decrease. With commodities like concrete at near-record high price points (according the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), lumber prices more than double those of 10 years ago (according to NASDAQ commodities market reports), and several ongoing, largescale projects such as the Montage Big Sky shrinking the available labor pool, current building costs are becoming prohibitive for new projects.

Big Sky's housing market, while unique in many instances, still abides by the simple principles of supply and demand, so it comes as no surprise that decreased inventory has ramped pricing, rendering the point of market entry increasingly selective.

Still, strong local interest is encouraging for future community development, and several years of steady sales is undoubtedly favorable for Big Sky.

"We have seen some good traction over the last six years, especially over the last three," The Big Sky Real Estate Company Vice President of Sales and Founding Broker Ania Bulis said. "It's no secret we have more tourism, more mentions in the national press, exciting new resort installations like the 8-person lift, and projects like the Montage coming out of the ground. People want a piece of that."

Bulis notes a relatively unique phenomenon in the Big Sky market, where buyers see real estate purchases less as an investment and more as a seedling for long-standing roots in the area.

"Investment is not the driving purchasing factor here," Bulis said. "A percentage of every real estate purchase decision is investment, but it's really marginal in Big Sky in comparison with other communities around the nation, and even in comparison with other resort communities."

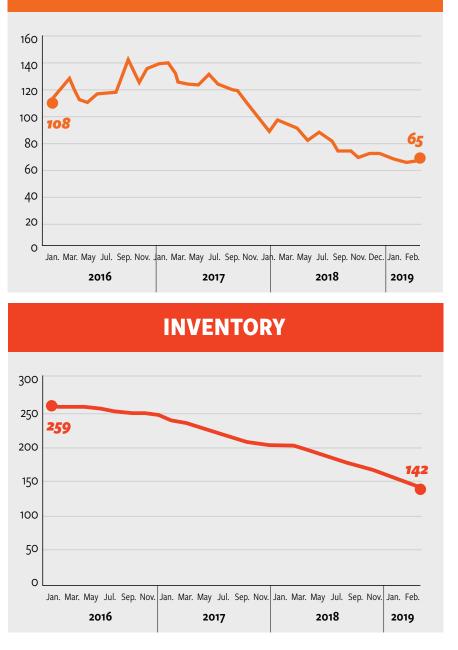
MEDIAN SALE PRICE





MEDIAN PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT

MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET



While fully developed ski towns such as Jackson, Wyoming, and Vail, Colorado, are in stages of rehabilitating existing constructions, in Big Sky, the sky's the limit—for the foreseeable future. Bulis said incoming residents and potential buyers find the opportunity to participate in the formation of the community enticing, a major selling point.

Interest in locales around Big Sky remains varied, with relatively equal numbers seeking property in many of the area's offerings.

"There are 79 pending sales in Big Sky (excluding the Yellowstone Club) which represents \$113 million in volume," said Tallie Lancey, a broker at Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty. "In terms of units, a third of today's buyers will purchase property on the mountain, another third at Moonlight Basin, 11 percent at Spanish Peaks, and about 25 percent in the meadow."

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Hardwood floor maintenance: a feat for the sake of feet

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

Metaphorically speaking, to "walk all over" something suggests a lack of importance, relegating said object to the ranks of afterthought. But as human society splintered and spilled into every corner of the globe, evolving in alien ecosystems that fostered unique histories and cultures, the floors beneath our feet began to warrant a special interest.

Early human dwellings sported dirt, cow dung, straw and hay bases, among others, packed hard by the movements of inhabitants and the oils of bare feet, which is still seen today in many homes around the world. Yet, the foundations of modern flooring practices began to materialize around 7,000 years ago, with stone and brick floorings popularized in Ancient Egypt, and hand-woven rugs carpeting Asia, the Middle East, and Asia Minor.

Wood floors didn't enter the scene in force until the Middle Ages, which saw roughly cut planks of local woods laid for rudimentary finishing practices, scraping away imperfections with crude hand tools followed by rubbing down the timber with handfuls of sand. This arduous and timeconsuming practice was reserved only for the ultrawealthy.

In the United States, even since the earliest colonial times, hardwood flooring has been commonplace, a luxury taken for granted somewhere along the march of technological progress. But make no mistake, they are a luxury, and as with most luxury products, require attention and maintenance.

Given their underfoot positioning and role in literally supporting our domestic lives, hardwood floors eventually lose their luster and succumb to the effects of time. Have no fear: according to Jarren Golay, general manager and product specialist at Four Corners-based Harbour Hardwood Floors, there are several measures to preserve the quality of this chic instillation, extending the lifespan of the wood for generations. "The most important thing for all hardwood floor owners to understand is that they require maintenance to support longevity," Golay said. "They need to be aware of the type of finish and make informed cleaning decisions."

Harbour-recommended cleaning products include Basic Coatings' "Squeaky" wood floor cleaner and Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner when persistent messes call for detergent based products. For everyday cleaning needs and the do-it-yourself crowd, use a solution of distilled white vinegar and water, an ounce of vinegar for every gallon of water. Never use abrasive materials when cleaning, and bear in mind that the frequency of cleanings accelerates the breakdown of finishes.

Golay reminds hardwood floor owners that measures such as taking off shoes can reduce the number of scuffs and scratches—which can accumulate into larger damage. He added that keeping socks on is paramount as the oils our feet produce can wear down finishes.

"Oils from the feet and cooking oils break down finishes very quickly," Golay said. "That's why you see kitchen areas, particularly those in front of a sink or stove, with more wear than any other place in the house."

According to Golay, maintenance should take place every 5-10 years in most homes, particularly those supporting larger families that include parents, kids and pets. However, with proper care and attention, a single maintenance event can last up to 20 years before another is needed.

Golay admits hardwood floor care isn't glamorous, but emphasizes its essential nature: "I hope people take a serious interest in this as it will be one of the most beneficial and informative bits of advice for keeping their wood floors looking good longer, which will help them avoid costly repairs and added maintenance expenses in the long term."

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Remove shoes whenever possible and wear socks or non-abrasive house slippers when walking on the floor. If shoes are worn then remove all debris from the soles such as wood and gravel. High heels and boots may dent the wood. Bare feet can leave oil residues from your skin causing dull smudges and footprints on the finish. For daily or frequent clean up of the floor you should mostly just vacuum with a non-abrasive hardwood flooring attachment (no beater brush) and/or dry dust mop when needed. *Clean up all spills and liquids immediately to avoid damage.* When deeper cleaning is needed to remove dirt, we recommend that you use a solution of Distilled White Vinegar & Water in a ratio of approximately 1 ounce to 1 gallon water or 1 cap to 1 quart water: When using a 1 quart spray bottle just apply a fine mist of vinegar and water solution to a 5' x 5' area, or so, then buff dry with the direction of the grain using a microfiber mop.

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

As German bombers strafed Churchill's London, Lucy—a child refugee evacuated to the English countryside to live under the care of Professor Digory Kirke with her siblings—happened upon a grand, wooden wardrobe. Curiosity compelled her through the furs and coats behind its ornate doors until she spilled into a hidden world: the land of Narnia.

As we age, we shed much of the imaginative richness of childhood, traded in for more pragmatic approaches to life. Imaginary friends, tea parties with anthropomorphized stuffed animals, full-scale battles fought by plastic figurines and secret worlds under a bed become crowded out by interpersonal relationships and societal duty. Eventually, most forget they ever had such capacity for illusory invention.

Despite this shift, certain themes persist even into our twilight years, never failing to pique interest and wonder as they are promoted by works of literary fiction such as C. S. Lewis'"The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe," by lore shared next to cackling fires, and by film.



In keeping with the mineshaft décor at 228 Altman Lane, a simple wooden trap door leads thirsty patrons into the depths of an earthy, cool wine cellar. PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT ALTMAN

Trap doors, hidden worlds and secret passageways stand as example of the fantastic and mystic that weave throughout our various story mediums.

When an adult moviegoer winds down the veiled stone labyrinths of The Temple of Doom with Indiana Jones, or when a reader steps through unassuming doors and into raucous prohibition drinking scenes with Jay Gatsby, they can't help but relish in the magic of it all. Though these ensconced passages often seem left in faraway lands, sometimes they're right under your nose, as is the case in Big Sky.

Many homebuilders in the community have elected to integrate these wonder-inspiring designs right into their homes. The homes located at 128 Moosewood Road and 228 Altman Lane in Big Sky boast such sly additions. One look at the blonde-stained, flush-with-the-wall bookshelf at the Moosewood Road location raises no eyebrows, but a little forward pressure placed on the unit exposes true colors, sliding it along a greased track. Behind the door: a 4-bed bunkroom clad in multicolored linens, carpets, and wall paints.

Listing broker Tallie Lancey of Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty notes the awe the feature inspires in prospective buyers.

"You really just see them light up, it's pretty incredible," Lancey said. "It's one of those unique things you don't expect."

The 228 Altman Lane house is built with reclaimed materials of an Anaconda, Montana gold mine and a Big Sky crystal mine. The final product is an industrial-chic living space, replete with steel chains, fist-sized bolts, massive timber beams, and corrugated metal ceilings.



Tucked behind an old-school wooden corner bar, adjacent to a tin washtub and wooden crates, lies a thick, hoopshaped metal handle surrounded by

An unassuming bookshelf glides open, effortlessly, on a set of greased metal tracks, revealing hidden wonders. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY the faint outlines of an entryway.

A tug uncovers a subterranean wine cellar.

"When I set out to have this built, I thought having a trapdoor leading to a cellar would work well with the mine décor," said owner Scot Altman. "It makes getting each bottle a part of the experience."

Countless other trap doors, sliding walls, and clandestine passes populate the homes of Big Sky, but you'd be hard-pressed to find them. The owners seek to keep them as they were intended to be: secret.



Big Sky | Sotheby's

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TALLIE LANCEY, **BROKER**

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115 Teita Drive | Bozeman, MT | \$420K 1,909 SQ FT | 4 bedrooms | 2 bathrooms 35 Woodman Drive | Belgrade, MT | \$341K 1,732 SQ FT | 3 bedrooms | 2.5 bathrooms



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47 properties sold since January 1, 2019. CONTACT JEFF HELMS, 406.539.0121 OR JEFF@BIGSKY.COM, FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Address	Price	Close Date	Address	Price	Close Date
21 SITTING BULL ROAD, #1290	\$159,000.00	1/4/19	TBD BIG PINE DRIVE	\$165,800.00	2/6/19
1 BARRAMUNDI LOOP , #1455	\$799,000.00	1/4/19	13 RED CLOUD, , 9A LOOP , #9A	\$1,125,000.00	2/7/19
LOT 29 TWO MOONS	\$225,000.00	1/4/19	4 MANITOU LOOP, FRACTION H	\$185,000.00	2/8/19
149 JUNIPER BERRY DRIVE , #E	\$342,000.00	1/8/19	TBD WHITE OTTER ROAD	\$349,000.00	2/12/19
155 AURORA LIGHTS DRIVE , #B14	\$295,000.00	1/14/19	1 HIDDEN TRAIL	\$1,825,000.00	2/15/19
5 SILVER STAR	\$1,750,000.00	1/14/19	2755 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD	\$699,000.00	2/15/19
48 BIG SKY 48 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD	\$325,000.00	1/15/19	50 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD	\$159,000.00	2/15/19
1970 YELLOWTAIL ROAD	\$1,480,000.00	1/16/19	2B SUMMIT VIEW ROAD , #403B	\$825,000.00	2/19/19
365 ANTLER RIDGE ROAD	\$1,150,000.00	1/16/19	TBD UPPER WHITEFISH DRIVE	\$186,000.00	2/19/19
39 HOMESTEAD CABIN FORK	\$1,789,000.00	1/17/19	2078 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD	\$1,079,000.00	2/20/19
1053 TURKEY LEG	\$385,000.00	1/18/19	742 SUNBURST DRIVE	\$472,000.00	2/22/19
9 MANITOU LOOP, LAKOTA CABIN 45F	\$179,000.00	1/18/19	1284 HILL CONDO	\$164,900.00	2/26/19
60 BIG SKY RESORT RD, #10607	\$495,000.00	1/23/19	21 SITTING BULL #1296	\$274,000.00	2/28/19
12 RUNNING BEAR ROAD , #40	\$650,000.00	1/25/19	353 FIRELIGHT DRIVE	\$430,000.00	2/28/19
48 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD , #284	\$305,000.00	1/30/19	TBD CIEL DRIVE, LOT 1	\$395,000.00	2/28/19
11 SADDLE RIDGE ROAD , #G3	\$849,000.00	1/30/19	98 PHEASANT TAIL LANE 1	\$912,500.00	3/1/19
239 BEAVER MOUNTAIN TRAIL	\$699,000.00	1/30/19	169 SILVERADO	\$1,245,000.00	3/1/19
TRACT 5, 595 OUSEL FALLS VIEW ROAD	\$4,900,000.00	1/30/19	2061A LITTLE COYOTE RD	\$405,000.00	3/1/19
68 SPOTTED ELK ROAD	\$850,000.00	1/30/19	168 WILDRIDGE FORK	\$3,995,000.00	3/4/19
2695 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD	\$997,000.00	1/30/19	21 SITTING BULL ROAD , #1350	\$185,000.00	3/4/19
120 CRAIL RANCH ROAD	\$865,000.00	1/31/19	1481 TOWERING PINES ROAD	\$169,000.00	3/7/19
2 LOWER MOUNTAIN HOME ROAD , #20	\$1,825,000.00	1/31/19	TBD WILDRIDGE FORK	\$665,000.00	3/8/19
2350 TWO GUN WHITE CALF	\$1,425,000.00	1/31/19	173 SPRUCE CONE DRIVE	\$350,000.00	3/8/19
40 EAGLEHEAD DR D4	\$425,000.00	2/6/19			

Currently on the Market

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Elk Ridge Ranch Road, Homesite #11 \$550,000



Little Plume Road \$3,600,000



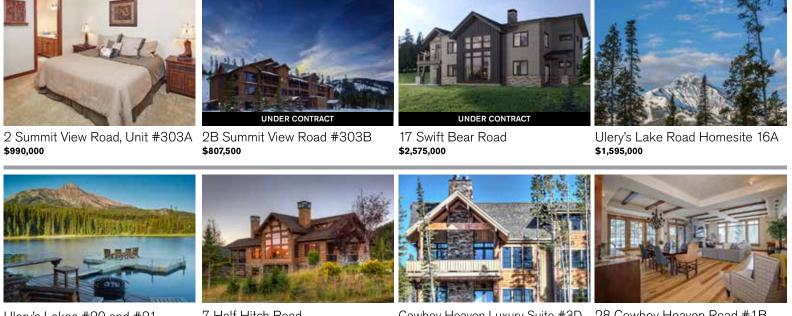
2 Summit View Drive #101C \$1,208,000

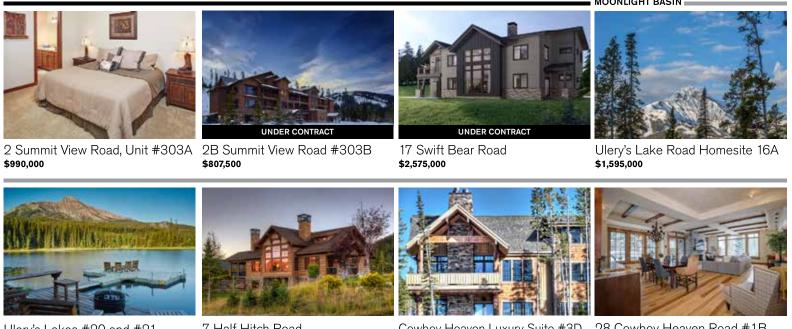


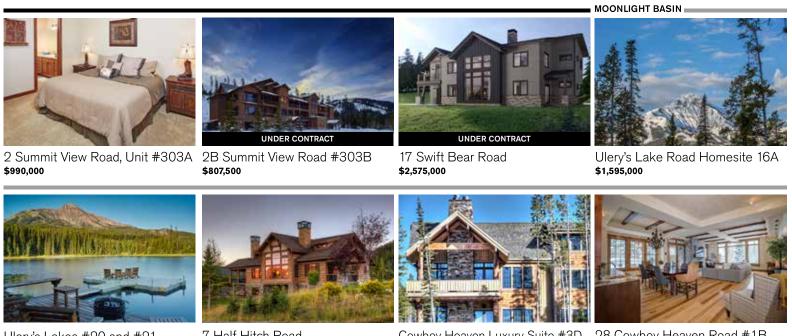
2B Summit View Drive #301B \$880,000

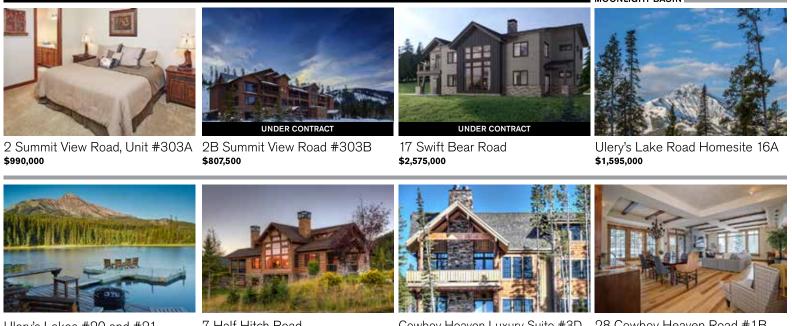


2 Summit View Drive #301C \$1,089,375









Ulery's Lakes #20 and #21 \$2,450,000

7 Half Hitch Road \$4,600,000

Cowboy Heaven Luxury Suite #3D 28 Cowboy Heaven Road #1B \$2,265,000 \$1,845,000

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49 years later, Town Center continues growth

EBS STAFF

In 1968, NBC newscaster Chet Huntley conceptualized Big Sky with a dream that required vision and character to see it though: harnessing the rugged beauty and power of 11,166-foot Lone Mountain into a worldclass resort, with a unique blend of European access and elegance paired with the spirit of the Rocky Mountain West. Thanks to that dream, Big Sky has sprung to life.

Bob Simkins of Bozeman knew he wanted to be part of the Big Sky life, so in 1970 he purchased six square miles of land with former partners the Taylor family from Bozeman – some of this land would help form the Big Sky Meadow Village area. Over the next two decades, the Simkins family visited their property for weekend adventures to hike, fish and picnic where the Town Center is today. When Bob passed away in 1993, he left his family the land and a dream of making a difference in Big Sky.

Today, the Simkins family and the Town Center development team work each day to help Big Sky fulfill its potential. As their father had done since the beginning, the Simkins look forward to maintaining their stewardship of Town Center because they enjoy being involved in the evolution of this community.

"We appreciate all of our businesses, especially the early visionary business owners and entrepreneurs who took a leap of faith on our vision," said Bill Simkins, Town Center's master developer and managing partner. "We feel that the best is yet to come."

This vision has taken root as Town Center continues to grow with purpose. The Wilson Hotel, Big Sky Town Center's first branded hotel, is on schedule for a grand opening in early summer along with the adjacent mixed-use Plaza Lofts building. Both projects will bring additional restaurants and retailers to Big Sky. More residential development in Town Center is on the horizon, along with the potential for a nightclub and bowling alley.

The county approved Town Center's master plan in 2000, and a hotel has been a key aspect of that plan.

According to Town Center Project Manager Ryan Hamilton, 491 total residential entitlement units are currently approved for Town Center, which includes multi-family and single-family housing, and upper story



An aerial view of Big Sky Town Center taken in January shows completed and future development along Ousel Falls Road and Town Center Avenue. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

"apartments" in the commercial district. Approximately 235 of these residential units are either built or under construction in Town Center.

More housing is likely to come online over the next two years, Hamilton said, depending on what project developers propose to Town Center. Some residences are expected to end up in the rental market and others will be up for ownership.

Over the past four years, Town Center has seen the completion of Roxy's Market, the Big Sky Medical Center, the mixed-use Peaks Building, residential condos, 25 Town Center Avenue on the corner of Ousel Falls Road and Town Center Avenue, and the adjacent 47 Town Center Avenue building.

Additionally, Town Center completed the central plaza—an engaging and unique public gathering space in front of the Wilson Hotel—and two parking lots are on the horizon that together will hold about 475 vehicles, among other projects. Most recently, the Big Sky Community Organization purchased 3.3 acres from Town Center in mid-December with the help of the Simkins family and the Len Hill Charitable Trust.

To inquire about commercial or residential development opportunities, call Town Center at (406) 586–9629 or visit bigskytowncenter.com. An early version of this story appeared in the winter 2016 Real Estate Guide.





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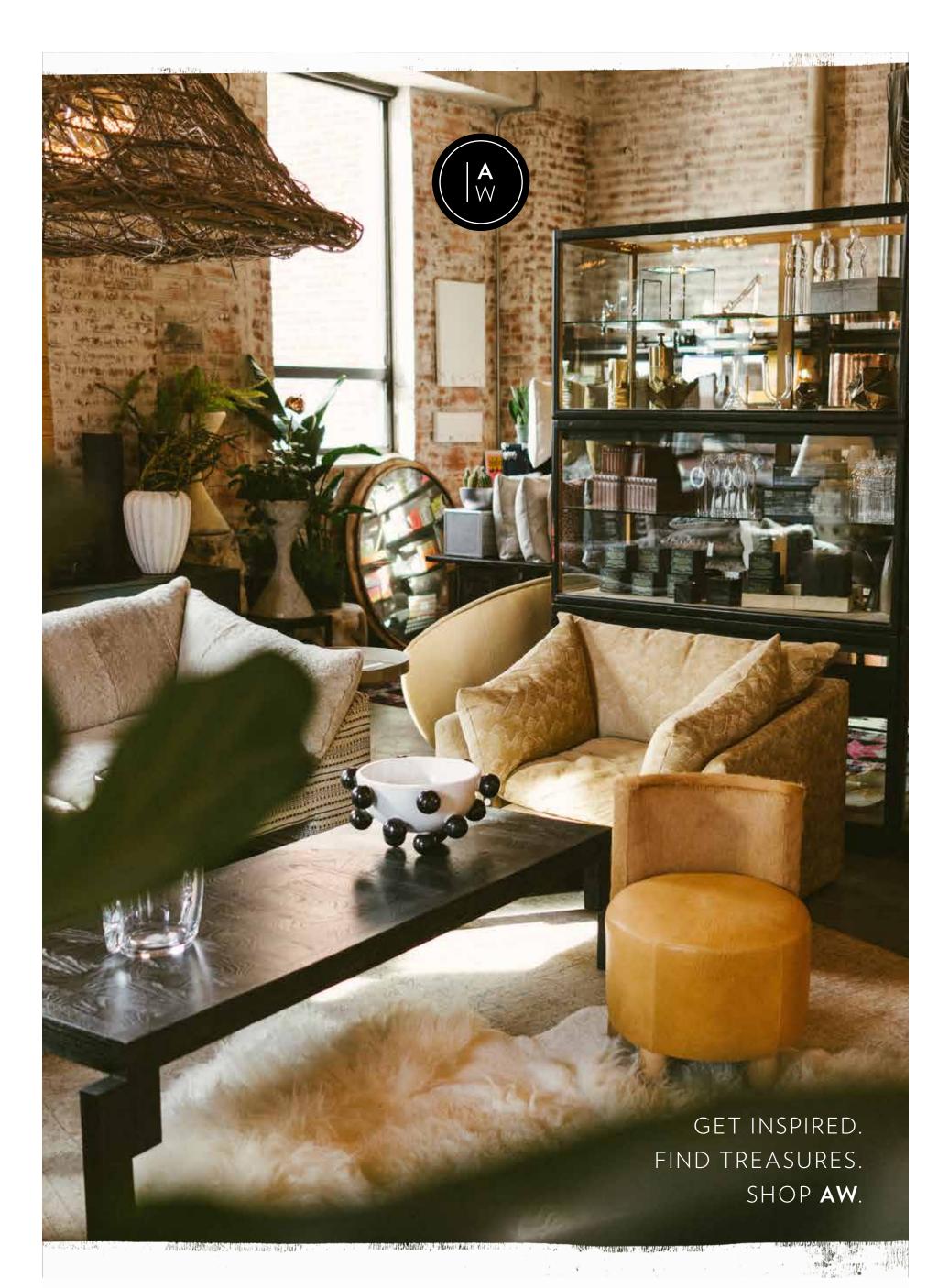


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