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ON THE COVER:

The Ikon Pass has become the scapegoat for an influx of skiers at Big Sky Resort. But is this position, squarely in the crosshairs of incensed locals, fully deserved?

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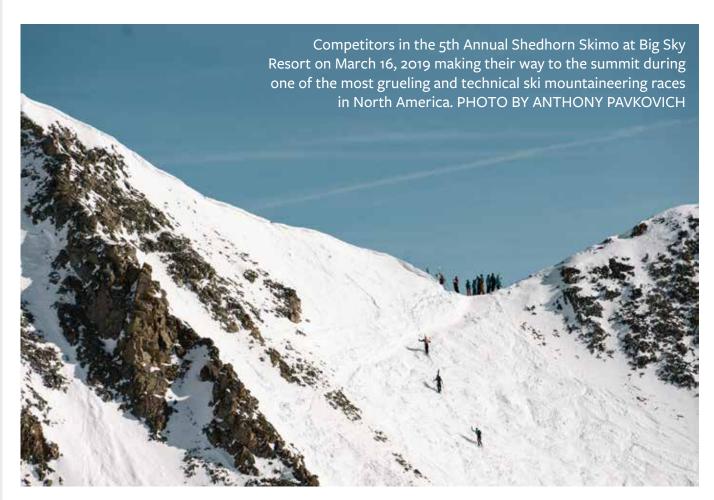
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EDITORIAL POLICY

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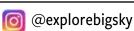
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FWP seeks public comment on smallmouth bass removal project

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking public comment on a programmatic environmental assessment to remove smallmouth bass from Gallatin Valley ponds. Comments on the proposed environmental assessment will be used to make a final decision on whether to proceed with the project as planned.

FWP proposes the use of rotenone to eliminate known sources of smallmouth bass in ponds within the Gallatin Valley. Once smallmouth bass are successfully removed from a community pond, FWP will restock the pond with rainbow trout. FWP will work with any private pond owner to restore a fishery to appropriate game fish species after the treatment has been completed.

The deadline for public comment is April 17 and a public meeting will be held in early April. Comments can be mailed to FWP in Bozeman or emailed to FWPRG3EA@mt.gov.

Governor Bullock announces Grizzly Bear Advisory Council, calls for applicants

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

On March 19, Governor Steve Bullock announced that he will establish a Grizzly Bear Advisory Council to help initiate a statewide discussion on grizzly bear management, conservation and recovery. The Council will be selected through an application process that ends April 12.

"Legal uncertainty has created a void requiring our leadership," Gov. Bullock said. "As bears continue to expand in numbers and habitat, we must identify durable and inclusive strategies to address current issues and prepare for the future. This advisory council represents a key step toward Montana embracing the tremendous responsibility and opportunity of long-term grizzly bear recovery and management."

The GBAC will be tasked with considering broad strategic objectives, such as maintaining and enhancing human safety, ensuring a healthy and sustainable grizzly bear population, and more.

Yellowstone Club Community Foundation awards annual scholarships

YELLOWSTONE CLUB COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Yellowstone Club Community Foundation was established in 2010 to provide a resource to nonprofit community organizations in the greater Big Sky and Gallatin Valley area. Funded by Yellowstone Club members, guests and the local community, the YCCF provides grants to nonprofit organizations that promote community services, arts and education, health and conservation efforts.

The YCCF's scholarship program continues to grow. In 2019, YCCF increased its award to Friends of Big Sky Education to a \$6,000, multi-year scholarship. The foundation also provides annual scholarships to Leadership Montana and Montana Wilderness School.

This year, four students won scholarships that will help them continue educational and community service aspirations. This year's winners are Bozeman High School senior Daniel Gao, Lone Peak High School sophomore Reilly Germain, Bozeman High School student Renn Meuwissen and Lone Peak High School student Solae Swenson.

Sexual assault victim files suit against BSSD

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – In 2015, Cycle Kokot, former Ophir Middle School and Lone Peak High School girls' basketball coach, was sentenced to 15 years in Montana State Prison followed by 10 years probation for a felony count sexual assault.

Gallatin County District Court Judge John Brown found Kokot had used his position of power to coerce and manipulate an underage player for sex, enacting a psychological toll on the girl and her family.

On March 7 of this year, an unnamed plaintiff filed a lawsuit in district court against the Big Sky School District, along with LPHS, Ophir Middle School and Kokot, according to court documents obtained by EBS. The suit alleges Kokot also sexually assaulted her and that the school district was aware he was engaging inappropriately with multiple players.

Such "inappropriate closeness," as listed by the suit, include mandatory one-on-one practice sessions (with threats of demotion or benching players, thus jeopardizing collegiate aspirations and scholarships, as a means of enforcement) and communications via cell phone and email without parental knowledge.

The plaintiff was unable to seek help, as the suit alleges that Kokot threatened physical violence and suicide in order to maintain compliance.

The suit also alleges the Big Sky School District was complacent not only in their hiring and vetting processes, but also in properly training school staff, "regarding how to maintain appropriate boundaries with students, how to recognize grooming behaviors and sexual abuse, or mandatory abuse reporting requirements," according to the documents.

"I interviewed the people that did the training, and I felt they did a good job," Dave Dalthorp, the district's attorney, told EBS in a March 19 phone interview.

According to the suit, the plaintiff is seeking damages along with a letter of apology to the plaintiff and any other unknown victims, stating school district responsibility for the abuse, to be published annually in a local newspaper and year round on the BSSD website for a period of five years.

Select roads open for spring bicycling

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, WY – Beginning on March 29, bicyclists willing to brave the unpredictable elements of spring in Yellowstone National Park can ride 49 miles of park roads from the West Entrance to Mammoth Hot Springs.

As conditions allow, bicycles will also be permitted from the East Entrance to the east end of Sylvan Pass, and the South Entrance to West Thumb.

There is no bicycle access to Old Faithful or Canyon until those interior park roads open to public motorized vehicle access on April 19. Electric or pedal-assist bikes are not allowed on park roads when they are closed to motorized, public travel.

Spring biking in Yellowstone should be taken seriously due to snowplows on the road, quickly changing weather conditions, temporary road closures, snow and ice coverage, wildlife and more.

Check Yellowstone's website to stay up to date on road openings and closures.



With bears emerging from their dens, hungry and with cubs in tow, has your approach to outdoor sports and living adjusted? If you have pets, does this affect the way you manage them outside?



Chaz Boutsikaris Big Sky, Montana

I encounter them all the time, especially mountain biking. They don't scare me; they're not looking to hurt you. I have two dogs, a little one and a big Pyrenees. Bears, cats—they don't want to be seen, and he barks so much and draws so much attention they don't bother coming around.



Debby KvamWest Hartford, Connecticut

When we're out here in the warmer months, we're very conscious of it and carry canisters of bear spray. We shout around blind corners, but sometimes, I want to bring a transistor radio and play music—but that would ruin the outdoor experience.



Mariah Schnapp Louisville, Kentucky

I'm about to go hiking right now, so it's something I had to think about. I obviously brought some bear mace.



Stevie PedenFour Corners, Montana

When we go on hikes, we like to keep our dog on a long leash and keep our bear spray close. We keep our garbage closed; pack it in, pack it out sort of thing. Other than that it doesn't change too much, you just have to be aware and be loud. Be bear aware.





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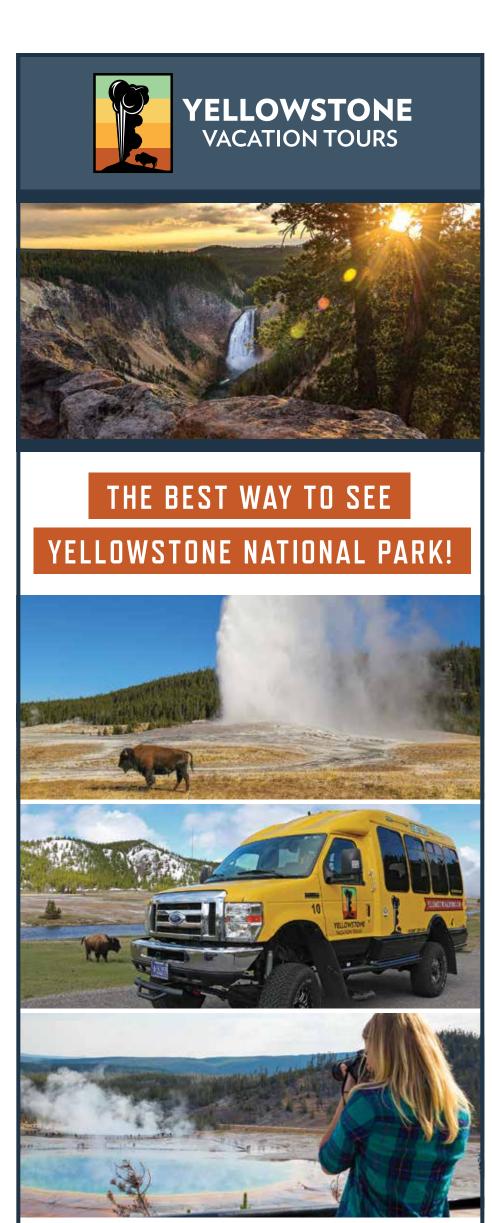




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Guest Editorial

To our locals,

This letter is to you. We want you to know that you matter. You make Big Sky what it is. Without you, who are we?

A year ago, many of you participated in our Big Sky Place DNA destination branding study. Conducted by Destination Think!, this study helped us better understand what makes Big Sky unique. If we don't know who we are, who you are, how can we attract visitors and deliver on their experience?

Here's what you said to us:

"Incredible skiing, small-town feel nestled away in one of the most beautiful places."

"A sense of remoteness and extremely safe and welcoming community. Living among animals and the outdoors with neighbors in a true little community." "The sweetest little human experiment in the midst of a wilderness!"

We, as a community, have so much to be grateful for: Our special place on the wild outskirts of Yellowstone National Park; our consistent snowfall with "The Biggest Skiing in America" in our backyard; and our sense of community.

Many who consider themselves Big Sky locals actually live in the greater Gallatin Valley—Belgrade and Bozeman—the fastest growing micropolitan area in the U.S. Fifty percent of our consistent workforce commutes in daily from these towns. They are a part of our community. We're all seeing more and more people move into southwest Montana, and when they get here, they choose to embrace Big Sky.

The positive economic activity unfolding in Big Sky is a result of this increase in residency throughout the greater Gallatin Valley, the 30-percent increase in air seats this winter and lower fares into Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, and an increased awareness of Big Sky as a tourist destination. Last year Mother Nature blessed us with snow when places like Colorado and Utah had practically none, and that shined a spotlight on our world-class ski hill along with the attention brought by joining the Ikon and Mountain Collective pass products this season. At the same time, this growth is facilitating many on-mountain and in-town improvements.

Ultimately, Big Sky, born a ski resort in 1973, is no longer solely an alpine destination for winter outdoor enthusiasts. Rather, it has become a special place that an ever-increasing number of us have chosen to call home. We get to live where others vacation. But with that comes unique challenges as our desire to be a sustainable community outpaces our ability to build the underlying infrastructure to support it.

Tourism, however, remains the lifeblood of our community. Its positive impact and the monies derived from our visitor economy as illustrated by the nearly 200-percent growth in resort tax collections, from \$2.3 million to \$6.7 million over the past decade, can't be overlooked. Resort towns need guests—our guests don't need us—they can always choose to go elsewhere.

Visit Big Sky recognizes the economic impacts of tourism. Our small businesses, which for years have struggled to make it in Big Sky, are thriving. Their financial stability will lead to wage growth and more reliable employment for our workforce. However, in representing the full destination, we understand the need to balance these financial gains with the cultural, social and environmental objectives held by our community.

In February, the Big Sky Resort Area District initiated a Community Strategic Visioning process called Our Big Sky. The resulting plan from this process will guide future development within Big Sky over the next 10 years. Visit ourbigs-kymt.com and #iambigsky on Facebook to engage constructively. Let your voice be heard. Embrace tourism and our visitors. For just as there is no destination branding without you—without them there is no destination.

Respectfully,

Candace Carr Strauss, CEO, TEAM Big Sky and Visit Big Sky Board of Directors
Ryan Hamilton, Big Sky Town Center – Board President
Dan Martin, Karst Stage – Vice President
Tim Drain, Natural Retreats Big Sky – Secretary/Treasurer
Justin Bain, CrossHarbor Capital Partners
Julie Grimm-Lisk, Gallatin Riverhouse Grill/Jake's Horses
Ryan Kunz, Lone Mountain Ranch
Annie Pinkert, Big Sky Resort
Krista Traxler, Yellowstone Club
Ennion Williams, Big Sky Trout

In response to Taylor Middleton's letter

To the Editor:

There's frustration among the community regarding changes occurring at Big Sky Resort, and a lot of us feel we don't have a platform to say how we'd like to see the place evolve to ensure everyone's happiness. Ikon Pass holders have become a scapegoat, and that's not right.

I first moved to Big Sky in 2002 and now make the exhausting drive from Bozeman for the opportunity to ski. I'd give anything to live in Big Sky, but in your "thriving" community, many of us cannot live. While the housing crisis may not be intentional, it's clear that your resort is concertedly trying to exclude most of us. I noticed it start when the Dug Out Cafe burned down, a place where I was treated like a real person. I've never set foot in Everett's 8800, but have heard from friends about going in there to purchase a drink and being accosted at the door because they didn't fit the profile of the clientele your company wants. It used to be nice to purchase a beer at Moonlight Lodge, but I'm no longer allowed in there.

Your company is promoting its absurd heated bubble chairs, which is a symbol in and of itself. A coworker and I wanted to enjoy a storm during the holidays, so on Ramcharger we left the bubble up. We were yelled at by the lift operator that the bubble needed to be down so the chair didn't get wet. Your resort values your precious seats more than individuals. Ski areas like Discovery have it figured out.

This will be my last winter with a season pass. I'm not sure you'll care, so good luck with your thriving resort.

Ben Wickham *Bozeman*

Equal pay for tram access

To the Editor,

What an incredible winter we are having indeed, and I couldn't be happier about being here ... but I must voice my opinion in light of the next season where Big Sky Resort has decided to opt in to all of the collective passes, as I see on the resort's website.

Why do these discounted passes get the rights to the coveted Lone Peak Tram? I pay extra for my ski pass to have the right to ride the tram and I have only ridden it once in the last month (I waited 55 minutes, thank you.) because of the extra-long line filled with the Ikon passholders. The solution—and this would bring more money to Big Sky Resort—would be to charge Ikon passholders extra if they want to ride the tram. They can get a tram ticket at the window the day they want to ride it. I pay extra, so should they.

I understand Big Sky Resort needs to create funds to keep this amazing resort alive. But did we need an eight-seated ski lift? Heated seats? More bathrooms to service all these new visitors ... yes! More parking for all these new visitors ... yes! More eating facilities to service all these new visitors ... yes!

Karen Davids Big Sky

OUTLΛW

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

Rock legends roll into Big Sky, Brandi Carlile to open

The inaugural Peak to Sky concert

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

On July 6, Mike McCready, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee and lead guitarist of the legendary Seattle-based band Pearl Jam, will curate an epic night of music in Big Sky.

He will be joined by fellow hall of famers Chad Smith (drums, Red Hot Chili Peppers), Duff McKagan (bass and vocals, Guns N' Roses), and Josh Klinghoffer (guitar, Red Hot Chili Peppers) and Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins, an assembly of talents that have rocked in live shows for hundreds of millions around the world.

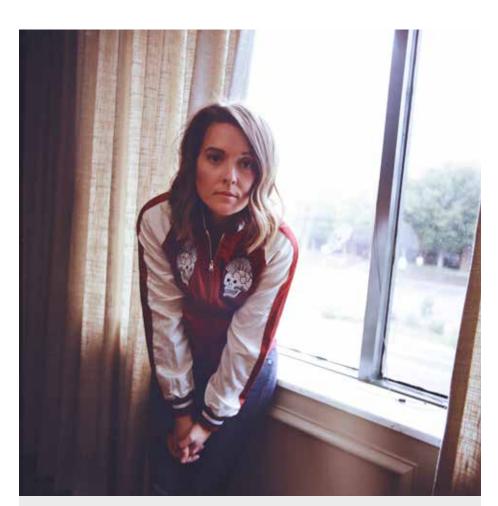
They will bring those same all-star skills to the Big Sky Events Arena in Town Center for the Peak to Sky concert—a show unlike any other Big Sky has witnessed.

A band this impressive comes with an equally extraordinary opener in the form of Brandi Carlile, the multigenre sensation who left the 2019 Grammy Awards with some hardware: three Grammys to be exact.

"I love playing music with Chad Smith, Duff McKagan and Josh Klinghoffer. I am stoked to play with Taylor Hawkins too," McCready said. "Asking Brandi Carlile to be a part of this event was a no brainer."

From an objective vantage, the lineup is the most robust musical talent to come to Big Sky in 16 years, with the last veritable headliner, Willie Nelson, performing back in '03.

"In 2003, Willie Nelson played in Big Sky, the biggest concert here to date," said Eric Ladd, CEO of Outlaw Partners, the Big Sky-based media,



BY KAREN LORIABrandi Carlile, the multi-genre sensation boasting three Grammys from the 2019 Grammy Awards, will open for the rock super band. PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDI CARLILE



Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Mike McCready, lead guitarist of the iconic Seattle-based rock band Pearl Jam, is bringing an all-star musical ensemble to Big Sky this July. PHOTO BY KAREN LORIA

marketing and events company organizing the event, which also publishes this newspaper. "The energy we had in Big Sky was phenomenal, and ever since I've wanted to bring that feeling back to our town."

This event should prove to be the largest ticketed headliner event since that incredible evening in 2003, but its origins are humble; in true-to-form Big Sky fashion, McCready, a part-time resident of Big Sky, conceived the idea with Ladd on a chairlift this winter before making some fresh tracks on Lone Mountain.

This July, the same mountain that served as the locus of concept will backdrop this special night of music.

"It's an opportunity to put our amazing town and venue on the big stage, an opportunity to put some of the best musicians in the world in front of a crowd from our community," Ladd said. "These guys have played in front of hundreds of thousands in single shows, and now they'll play in front of 4,500. It'll be a one of kind experience."

Ladd pointed out that because of the intimate venue all concertgoers will have a clear view of the stage. "There isn't a bad seat in the house," he said.

"This show is going to be awesome and I am looking forward to the town of Big Sky and the surrounding area coming out to rock with us," Mc-Cready said. "Maybe this can turn into something that lasts."

According to Ladd, the hope is to make Peak to Sky into an annual show, folding it into the existing summer events lineup, which includes the Big Sky PBR at the end of July.

Tickets for Peak to Sky go on sale April 19, at 9 a.m. MDT, and are available for purchase online only at peaktosky.com. Ticket options will include Skybox, VVIP, VIP, seated GA and floor GA, and will start at \$75. There will also be lodging packages in conjunction with Big Sky hotels, including the soon-to-open Wilson Hotel in Town Center.

EAK TO SKY

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OUTLAW



This is the first installment in an ongoing series centered on Big Sky's growth, the challenges it presents and potential solutions. While the Ikon Pass is a contributing

factor to this growth, it's not alone. Ikon serves as our jumping-off point to investigate the broader dynamics at work in Big Sky.

The locals, the resort and the new Big Sky

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BY BAY STEPHENS

BIG SKY - In 2008, Vail Resort's Epic Pass burst onto the ski scene, offering relatively cheap season passes with unlimited access to a dozen Vail-owned resorts in the American West. On its heels, the Mountain Collective landed in 2012 as four resorts partnered to allow two days of skiing at each.

Enter the Ikon Pass, the first real competitor to Epic, which debuted in January of 2018, and granted unlimited access to 14 resorts and up to seven days at 23 other destinations, including Big Sky, for the 2018-2019 season.

Throughout this first full winter, the Ikon Pass became the subject of local grumblings in partner ski towns across the U.S. that are having busier seasons than usual. The disgruntlement and disparaging stickers directed at Ikon got so bad that three different heads of ski resorts wrote letters to their respective communities in Aspen, Jackson and Big Sky.

On March 6, Big Sky Resort General Manager Taylor Middleton submitted his letter to the editor that EBS published online the same day. It hit with a splash, going viral and triggering a storm of comments - many contentious - on the Facebook pages of EBS, Big Sky Resort and Unofficial Networks, among others.

The letter's message: Be nice to Ikon passholders since we were all first-timers here once, too. According to multiple interviews by EBS staff, the letter left many Big Sky locals feeling reprimanded, unappreciated and distanced from the resort they love.

In the wake of Middleton's letter, EBS gathered the perspectives of locals, the resort and community leaders to determine whether the Ikon Pass is really the problem, or just the tip of an iceberg, indicating larger issues of growth and a lack of communication in the Big Sky community.

The local factor

On any given Saturday, families and individuals have had to find spots on the floor and against walls to eat their lunches in the packed upstairs cafeteria of the Mountain Mall at Big Sky Resort.

An influx of skiers is palpable this season. And the pinch has locals talking. From Big Sky restaurants to area watering holes, the ski hill to the laundromat, a tone of discontent has percolated throughout the community this winter.

"The cry is that [locals] just feel they're not treated equitably," said Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, at a recent VBS board meeting.

For many local residents, Middleton's letter solidified this sentiment of being left behind.

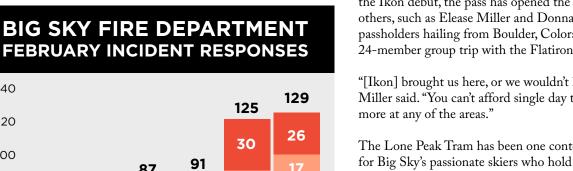
"At the end of the day, there are all of these people that are saying, 'Hey, we need some love, Big Sky [Resort]," Lotus Pad owner Alex Omania told EBS.

Brian Hurlbut, executive director of the Arts Council of Big Sky, agreed that the letter could have offered more solutions rather than asking community members to be nice to Ikon visitors. "[It was] kind of a slap in the face to the community of people that have lived here and skied here for a long time," he said.

Both Hurlbut and Omania think this winter brought more visitors than Big Sky's infrastructure could handle, and Ikon has only added to the mix.

ily need more people right now," Hurlbut said. "And that's what the Ikon pass is doing. It's bringing even more people who otherwise wouldn't have come here."

"Tourism and visitors have been on the rise for a number of years, so we don't necessar-



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While some visitors came to Big Sky long before the Ikon debut, the pass has opened the door for others, such as Elease Miller and Donna Scott, Ikon passholders hailing from Boulder, Colorado, on a 24-member group trip with the Flatirons Ski Club.

"[Ikon] brought us here, or we wouldn't have come," Miller said. "You can't afford single day tickets any-

The Lone Peak Tram has been one contentious issue for Big Sky's passionate skiers who hold a tremendous sense of pride in the iconic 15-person ski lift. Hurlbut said the line has been too long this year, so he doesn't wait in it though it seems unfair to him that Ikon passholders have the same access.

"That brings in the question, is [Ikon] starting to devalue the other season pass products that [the resort] offers," Hurlbut said, adding that he pays a premium to have unrestricted access to the tram. "The Ikon Pass includes tram access. They're not paying any more [money]."

He suggested some sort of upcharge for Ikon Pass users who had their sights set on skiing off the peak, shortening the line for everyone else and not affecting those indifferent to the tram.

For Omania, the influx of visitors throws into sharp relief a shortage of employees, many of whom work multiple jobs such as at the resort and in her restaurant. Although the increase is good for business, she says, the lack of employees and incentive to keep them makes running the business challenging.

Season passes are a key benefit for workers, Omania said, which is why she bought seven for her managers, though she wishes she could provide passes for all her workers. Her budget for benefits revolves around this expenditure, she said, adding that it's the same for many of the area's small businesses.

One solution in Omania's mind would be for the resort to give ski passes to local businesses to distribute among employees, helping reduce the strain on these shops to afford the passes and keep workers on payroll. She pointed out that this poses no threat to further lengthening lift lines because businesses buy passes for their workers anyway.

Omania would like to see Big Sky Resort take more of a leadership role in connecting with local businesses considering the resort plays a keystone role in the community. She said working together to create more immediate solutions to the stressors pressing the community would benefit everyone.

"This is a really good opportunity for [the resort] to be a positive role model in this community," Omania said. "... Ikon is not really the issue. The issue is what all these people are doing to the community and how we just aren't ready for all these people."

Is Ikon really the problem?

If the pattern at Big Sky resembles Jackson or Aspen, Ikon is only a sliver of the issue and points to larger and sweeping undercurrents.

Attributed to record snowfall, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's slopes swarmed this season. JHMR president Mary Kate Buckley wrote in her letter to Jackson Hole News and Guide that local passholders comprised 39 percent of the resort's total skiers while Ikon skiers represented 16 percent. She added that half of that 16 percent were visitors

who skied Jackson in past seasons anyway, only on different pass offerings such as Mountain Collective or day tickets.

Overall, Buckley credited 8 percent of the year's incremental increase in skier visits to the Ikon Pass.

Aspen's season tracks a similar pattern. According to Jeff Hanle, Aspen Skiing Company's VP of communications, Colorado's been pounded with snow this year, and by powder-starved locals following last season's drought. Local pass sales are up 10-12 percent over two seasons ago, Hanle told EBS, a more comparable season to this year in terms of snowfall, but up a whopping 40 percent over the dry spell of last season.

Hanle said Ikon accounts for 9 percent of the 1.2 million skier visits to Aspen's four mountains as of March 14.

"You can't point the finger at Ikon passholders here," Hanle said. "What I tell my friends and neighbors: When you're standing in a line with people, look next you. They're your friends and neighbors for the most part."

Big Sky Resort has not released its skier visitation data and Taylor Middleton declined to interview for this story, so it's difficult to say exactly what the case is here. However, one statistic—increasing numbers of ambulance transports—can act as a sort of proxy for visitation. The numbers show what everybody already knows: Big Sky is blowing up.

According to Big Sky Fire Department Chief William Farhat, ambulance transports are 37 percent higher for February of this year than the same month last year, which was likewise 37 percent higher than February of 2017, before Ikon had any role in Big Sky's visitation.

"That's a lot," Farhat said. "Two years in a row, you've had these large jumps."

These leaps in visitation growth make it difficult to pin Ikon as the sole cause of booming visitation numbers, but rather highlight Big Sky's overall success at marketing itself as a community. Farhat said 90 percent of the ambulance transports in February were for nonresidents, the highest the department has ever recorded and a far cry from the average 70-75 percent during ski seasons past.

"Ninety percent is a shockingly high number," Farhat said, adding that the influx of visitors and increasing frequency of service calls can leave his staff stretched thin. "It's a lot to manage. We're outstripping any growth projections we've ever had."

Like many other resort towns, Big Sky pumps local and state dollars into billboards, newsletters and public relations campaigns across the nation. Farhat says the scenario is a Catch-22.

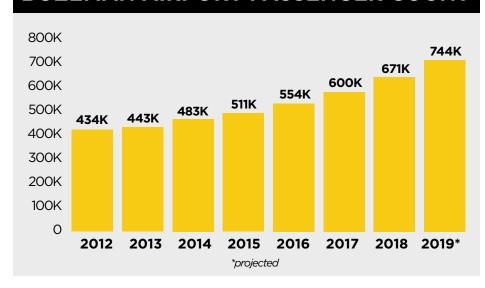
"As we market ourselves as a community, we're reaping the benefits but there are also challenges," Farhat said. "Big Sky is a victim of its own marketing."

"[Ikon] brought us here, or we wouldn't have come," Miller said. "You can't afford single day tickets anymore at any of the areas."

The bus showed up

Big Sky's growth feels more exponential than linear, prompting the Big Sky Water and Sewer District to get the ball rolling on a \$21.7 million plant upgrade to meet the blistering growth. The Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport has seen record-breaking passenger volume for the ninth consecutive year in a row, according to a Jan. 9 airport press release; the facility handled 142,753 more passengers in 2018 than 2017, an increase of 11.9 percent.

BOZEMAN AIRPORT PASSENGER COUNT



Yet Ikon is taking the heat for Big Sky Resort's longer lines.

The board of Visit Big Sky, the area's official marketing entity, addressed negativity surrounding Ikon during its March 21 meeting.

"There is a significant issue and misperception with where this growth is coming from," said Annie Pinkert, Big Sky Resort's VP of business and also a VBS board member, during the meeting. "Ikon represents a small, very small slice of the growth of skier visits to Big Sky Resort."

Along with increased air seats, season pass growth is a major contributor to the rise in skier visits as Big Sky and Bozeman grow at six and three times the national average, respectively, she told the VBS board.

For Big Sky Resort, Pinkert said, economics and skier numbers are a balancing act.

"If we were to lower our price to \$949 (the price of an Ikon Pass) for people that are skiing 144 days a year, you would have lift lines like you can't imagine," she said. "You can't have both low prices and no volume. You've got to choose."

Pinkert added that every visitor drawn to Big Sky pays into resort tax in some way.

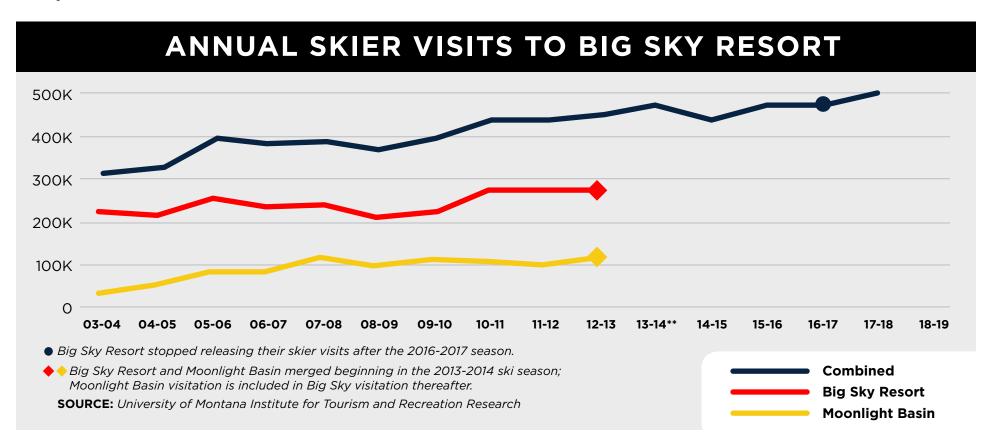
Ennion Williams, also a VBS board member, said the rush of visitors this year was a realized dream 10 years in the making. The effort, he said, was sparked after the Great Recession when community members asked for resort tax funding to market Big Sky as the "Biggest Skiing in America," the end goal being for the resort to top 500,000 skier days in a year while benefits trickle down to surrounding businesses and the community.

In tandem with a decade of sustained and coordinated marketing, Williams said the 2017-2018 ski season, which saw massive snow in Montana and a dearth for southern ski areas, put Big Sky squarely on the map.

"This winter the bus showed up, and the bus had the Ikon Pass on it," Williams said. "Everybody's fixated on [it as the problem], just because this year we started the Ikon Pass ... These people were coming anyway."

"This is the new Big Sky," Williams continued. "It's not going to change. Next year we're going to have more people than we had this year."

Stay tuned for our next installment, in which we will examine growth as it relates to Big Sky's unique housing market.



Legacy of female leadership continues at historic 320 Ranch

BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – In 1898, a Montanan named Sam Wilson homesteaded a 160-acre plot along the Gallatin River, a parcel dotted with pine and wildflowers. His father, Clinton Wilson, snatched up an adjacent 160 acres just two years later and the two men combined the plots, forming the "Buffalo Horn Resort."

The resort remained male-operated for the next three-and-a-half decades, until 1936 when Dr. Caroline McGill, Montana's first woman doctor and first pathologist, purchased the land.

McGill's stewardship of the ranch was marked by forward thinking installations, such as bringing electricity to the ranch via a Cadillac engine 10 years before power lines weaved the Gallatin Canyon, and expanding guest and dining services offered to visitors, effectively laying the foundation for the regional tourism and dining staple.

Perhaps the most important piece of McGill's legacy is setting forth a tradition of female leadership at the ranch, an anomaly for the Western guest ranch industry.

Eighty-two years after McGill's purchase, the tradition carries on, with Amber Brask assuming the general manager position in October of 2018.

"The ranch has a strong line of female general managers," Brask said. "... Here I am today with the history of other female ranch managers behind me. I think it's important for the women of the community, especially the young ladies, to see they have as much potential as anyone."

Today, from the food and beverage manager to the hotel manager, six out of the eight managers at the ranch are female.

Brask, a Big Sky native, grew up on the ranch grounds working in nearly every



Amber Brask grew up on 320 Ranch after her father purchased the business in 1986. As the newest general manager, she carries on a tradition of female leadership. PHOTO COURTESY OF 320 RANCH

corner of the family-operated business. Her father Dave Brask bought the ranch in 1986, adding to a number of enterprises including cattle ranching and waste solution services.

After time spent living and working in Boise, Idaho, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Boise State, Brask returned to Big Sky to take on the general manager role.

"It's something I always had in the back of my mind—and [320 Guest Ranch] aligned with my nature, my love for the outdoors and wilderness, better than the other family businesses."

Brask hopes to build out the ranch's services while also preserving the historically appealing aspects of the establishment.

"I'm hoping to evolve things like communal spaces, which are important for today's 'digital nomad' visitors," Brask said. "Evolving the steak house menu is also really important, things like sourcing ingredients farmed with sustainable and organic practices."

She also wants to decrease the amount of outsourcing of activities for guests, bolstering the existing recreational offerings along with adding new ones.

With the Gallatin River cutting right through property limits, building out a world-class fishing experience is at the top of Brask's list.

"I want to expand the quality and extent of fishing right here at the ranch," she said. "I want this to be known as a fly-fishing destination."

With history and family at her back, serving as inspiration, encouragement and a wealth of knowledge to draw upon, Brask is the latest in a line of pioneers relentlessly innovating to heighten the guest experience.

Montana gains seat on U.S. Travel Association board of directors

Candace Carr Strauss to advocate for state's tourism

VISIT BIG SKY

Tourism is Montana's second largest industry and one of its local champions, Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, has been appointed to serve as its voice on the national level as director at-large of the U.S. Travel Association Board of Directors on Feb. 21. The U.S. Travel Association, an influential industry group, works to grow travel to and within the United States. The association advocates on behalf of businesses and destinations across the country, which together generate \$2.4 trillion in economic output annually while supporting 15.6 million American jobs.

Strauss took the helm as CEO of Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber in February 2017 and since then, Big Sky has risen to become the second largest hotel bed tax generator in the state behind Billings, Montana's largest city. As a newly appointed U.S. Travel Association board member, Strauss joins her former colleague Elliott Ferguson, who she worked with at Destination DC, in the nation's capital. Ferguson is now national chair of the U.S. Travel Association.

"I look forward to working with Elliott [Ferguson] and the other directors to strengthen the position of the U.S. as a premiere international travel destination," Strauss said. "It will be an honor to serve the industry by helping to grow travel champions and advocating for pro-travel legislation needed to fuel the economic engine that is the #PowerofTravel," said Strauss, who heads to Washington D.C. on April 10 to participate in the association's "Destination Capitol Hill" and her first board meeting.

The board includes representatives from Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Mississippi, Maryland, Maine, New York, Oklahoma and more.

"Candace does an amazing job of bringing attention to the tourism industry's significant economic impact on the state's economy," said Dax Schieffer, director for Voices of Montana Tourism. "What an opportunity for her powerful voice of Montana tourism to contribute to furthering the conversation happening on a national level."



Visit Big Sky and Chamber CEO at Montana's capital building in Helena. Strauss was appointed to the U.S. Travel Association board of directors in March. PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT BIG SKY

The U.S. Travel Association is a champion for public lands and national parks, evidenced by its support of the Land and Water Conservation Act recently passed by both chambers of Congress. The association is currently urging Congress to pass the Restore Our Parks Act, which addresses the \$12 billion maintenance backlog. The backlog is a common topic of conversation in Montana, with Glacier National Park and its three entrances to Yellowstone National Park, which helped attract the state's 12.5 million non-resident visitors in 2017.

School district partners with Habitat for Humanity for teacher housing

BY BAY STEPHENS AND MICHAEL SOMERBY

BIG SKY – After approximately six months of investigation and due diligence, the Big Sky School District officially announced at the March 21 school board meeting that they would partner with Habitat for Humanity Gallatin Valley to build two triplexes on school property at a total cost of \$900,000, and seek the vote of the community to fund \$600,000 of the project with Habitat for Humanity requesting the remaining \$300,000 from resort tax funding.

"Given the desperate state of housing for everyone in the community, we have taken the opportunity to create the idea of a partnership with Habitat for Humanity," board chair Loren Bough said during the meeting.

The teacher housing project hinges on voter approval in the May 7 mail-in election, which would guarantee \$600,000 in loans and interest to install the foundation and build the first three of the six units this summer. Habitat for Humanity Executive Director David Magistrelli estimated these first units could be completed by October and that everything is in place to break ground if the levy passes.

"We're already talking to contractors," Magistrelli said. "If it passes on [May 7], we could begin on [May 8]."

The remaining three units would be built the summer of 2020, depending on the funding approval of the Big Sky Resort Area District tax board.

The cost to taxpayers for the \$600,000 needed for the district triplexes would be \$5.64 per year for every \$100,000 in market value of a home. The levy would last for five years so that, on a million-dollar home, the homeowner would pay \$56.4 per year for that period.

"The board recognized its own organizational need as a part of a bigger community need and I think worked really hard to find the perfect partner for it," BSSD Superintendent Dustin Shipman said. "Now we're providing the community the opportunity to support it through a voted levy."

The housing project will help address struggles the school faces such as losing teachers that commute from Bozeman—which comprises half of the school district's workforce—after four or five years, or the crisis of teachers renting in Big Sky whose landlords suddenly give them a month to clear out so the house or apartment can be put on the short-term rental market, Shipman said.

"It's really about teachers, which is really about students," Shipman said.

The estimated price per square foot is less than \$135, less than half of the average in Big Sky. The low cost is made possible by Habitat for Humanity's nonprofit status, meaning no markup on building materials, as well as donated services, appliances, and a core volunteer workforce, Magistrelli said.

Coming in at approximately \$130,000 per unit, the triplexes would be owned by the school district, which would be able to rent them significantly below market value, solely at the cost of maintenance.

"The board doesn't take those asks lightly, believe me," Shipman said. "We're partnering with an organization that is nationally known for doing the right thing."

Housing trust looks at budget, resort tax ask and Meadowview

The Big Sky Community Housing Trust advisory council met in the Human Resource and Development Council offices in Meadow Village Center the same day to discuss budgetary needs and their resort tax funding request for the upcoming year, along with the district's teacher housing plans, and upcoming hurdles and successes with the Meadowview developments.

Last year, the BSRAD appropriated nearly \$1.95 million for housing trust budgetary needs, namely those related to funding the subsidized housing of the Meadowview development.

The council hopes to leverage the TIGER grant, \$10.3 million in funding for transportation and transportation infrastructure in Big Sky that relieves some of the pressure on resort tax funds, coupled with the trust's successful projects like the Meadowview subsidized housing development to support their ask.

"Let's ride the wave of the TIGER grant," said Brian Wheeler, vice president of real estate development for Big Sky Resort and housing trust member.

"We finally have something on our resume and we should definitely recognize that," said Tim Kent, branch manager of First Security Bank in Town Center and housing trust member.

The advisory council hopes to work "parallel" to the Big Sky School District Board, maintaining ongoing housing strategy in Big Sky and the vernacular-specific qualifications for terming a unit as "affordable."

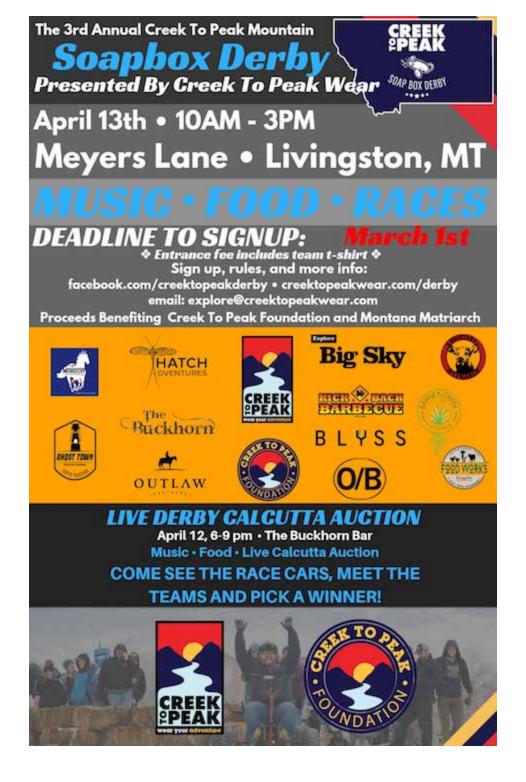
Their own project, the Meadowview developments, is fast-approaching the first wave of move-ins.

The earliest units will be available on June 1, with construction continuing throughout the year, according to Laura Seyfang, program director of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust. The housing trust is coordinating a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the new housing in Big Sky while also planning preliminary walkthroughs for applicants who want a physical impression before purchasing

"Many people can't look at the floor plans on a piece of paper and make this big of a decision," Seyfang said. "We need to get people in there as soon as possible so they can get a better sense of what they're going to buy."

Interested in learning more about the Big Sky School District partnership with Habitat for Humanity to build teacher housing on their campus and the requested levies on this year's ballot? Representatives from both Habitat and the School District will be hosting informational sessions on the following dates:

Tuesday, April 2, 6-7:30 p.m. in the Ophir Elementary Learning Commons Monday, April 8, 6-7:30 p.m. pm in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center Wednesday, April 24, 6-7:30 p.m. in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center Wednesday, May 1, 6-7:30 p.m. in the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center



Montana lawmakers consider bill allowing early ballot counts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA, MONT. (AP) – Montana's election administrators are asking lawmakers to allow them to open and being counting absentee ballots earlier because the number of mailed-in ballots continues to increase.

The Senate has passed a bill that would allow absentee ballots to be opened starting on the Thursday before Election Day and for the counting of absentee ballots to start the Monday before Election Day.

A House committee heard the bill on March 20. Supporters said the sheer volume of absentee ballots means they need more time to prepare and count ballots to meet voter, candidate and media expectations of when election results should be available.

Currently, counties can start opening absentee ballots on the Monday before Election Day and can start counting them on Election Day. Clerks from Missoula and Cascade counties said counting their ballots in November took at least 40 hours.

Casey Hayes, the elections manager for Gallatin County, said the bill would allow his office to be more efficient and effective while maintaining current levels of security and secrecy.

Election administrators said with early processing, absentee ballots would be removed from their secrecy envelopes, unfolded and placed in locked and tamper-proof boxes based on precinct. The boxes are then held in locked storage until counting can begin.

"In an age of instant gratification, voters and candidates want those results as soon as possible," Hayes told the House State Administration committee. "Allowing tabulation to begin a day early would provide more complete results by the close of polls on Election Night."

Administrators said the results counted by the tabulation equipment can only be accessed by election administrators, and each attempt to access them is logged, providing another layer of security.

Dana Corson, the state director of elections, said Secretary of State Corey Stapleton strongly opposes the bill.

"Secretary Stapleton ran for office on the platform of promising Montana to improve the integrity of elections," Corson said. "This bill decreases the integrity of elections" by opening ballots early.

He suggested clerks could come in at 12:01 a.m. Monday to start opening ballots and begin counting at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, giving them another eight hours on each of those days to process and count ballots.

Corson argued that while election fraud hasn't been reported to him, it often goes undetected and if detected, unpunished.

"The problem I have with a lot of those comments is: How do you prove a negative? You can't," said Bret Rutherford, the election administrator in Yellowstone County, Montana's largest county by population.

He said the bill would give his office more time to deal with ballots that are already sitting there, sometimes for weeks.

"It is sitting in this envelope in a locked room waiting to be unfolded the day before Election Day or Election Day," Rutherford said. "This little piece of paper doesn't add that much security."

The bill, which would not apply to counties that hand-count their ballots, includes fines between \$100,000 and \$500,000 and punishment by up two years in prison for releasing results before the polls close. It passed the Senate 30-19 in February. It still must pass out of committee before going to the full House.

Senate President Scott Sales, a Republican who is running for secretary of state in 2020, voted against the bill.

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Lawmakers consider the future of bison in Montana

UM LEGISLATIVE NEWS SERVICE TEAM

Debates are intensifying at the Montana Legislature over the state's management of North America's largest land mammal: the American bison.

Some argue bison are a critical cultural, spiritual and historical resource. Others argue bison pose a threat to the health and well-being of cattle. Now, legislators are considering a number of bills that would decide where bison are allowed to graze and which government entity gets to make that decision.

Rep. Tyson Runningwolf, D-Browning is carrying one of those bills. It would allow bison to be transferred from Yellowstone to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

Bison populations were decimated in the early 1800s as Europeans moved West, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Native Americans had been hunting bison for centuries. Their hides and meat were staple resources for tribes, which became scarce when hunting bison became a sport, rather than a necessity, for settlers.

Bison were nearly extinct when a small herd was moved to Yellowstone National Park. The population revived.

In 2019, bison are confined to certain areas in the state. Some ranchers feel strongly about keeping bison in these areas because they're carriers of brucellosis, a disease that affects bison, cattle, elk and humans. It can lead to high rates of abortion in cattle, bison and elk.

Brucellosis cost cattle ranchers billions of dollars in the last century, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Montana achieved brucellosis-free status in 2002.

Researches have not been able to document a transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle in the wild, although it is possible. According to the Department of Agriculture, more than 50 percent of bison in Yellowstone have tested positive for the disease.

A private organization's application for a bison grazing permit in central Montana has led to anxiety and fear of possible damages. Lawmakers are asking the federal government to deny the request.

House Joint Resolution 28 urges the federal Bureau of Land Management to deny American Prairie Reserve's request for a year-round grazing permit that would cover land in Choteau, Fergus, Petroleum, Phillips and Valley Counties. It passed the House 59-40 and was heard in a Senate committee.

The Bozeman-based conservation organization owns this land and argues HJ 28 is an attack on private property rights. However, the lawmaker sponsoring the bill says he believes bison grazing will affect private property of ranches in the area.

Rep. Dan Bartel, R-Lewistown is carrying the resolution and said it's "critical to the well-being of Montana's livestock and wildlife." Bartel said ranchers have



Rep. Dan Bartel (left), R-Lewiston, and Rep. Kenneth Holmlund, R-Miles City, are working on legislation together to address the possibility of bison moving into central Montana. PHOTO BY SHAYLEE RAGAR / UM LEGISLATIVE NEWS SERVICE

implemented best practices for soil and grazing management and that it would be counterproductive to allow this new grazing permit.

The United Property Owners of Montana, the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation and the Montana Wool Growers Association support the resolution.

Other bills include House Bill 332, which would give local officials "a seat at the table" when it comes to deciding bison transfers into Montana. House Bill 478 would revise laws related to transferring wild bison to tribal entities, allowing bison to be transferred from Yellowstone to tribal lands before the bison have received brucellosis-free certification.

Many voiced their opinions regarding proposed bills and resolutions relating to bison management in the state. While some argue the issue most closely relates to science and agriculture, others say that it has to do with disease management, native rights and property rights.

While presenting his bill in committee, Runningwolf said, "Our beautiful state is embroiled in a management conundrum."

Be aware of and take precautions for spring runoff

GALLATIN MEDIA CENTER

GALLATIN COUNTY – As we move into spring, the weather over the next 90 days will have a large impact on our spring runoff. It is challenging in the middle of March to predict if we will get wet spring snow dumps, a quick spike in hot weather, or heavy warm rain – all of which impact how quickly our winter snow pack will melt off.

Ideally, our snow will melt off continually over time. But when enough of these weather contributors occur, the snow can melt faster than our waterways can accommodate, which causes flooding.

At this point, we cannot predict if flooding will occur, but we have a heavy snow-pack on the valley floor and in the mountains. If you live near a waterway, now is the time to make sure as much water as possible stays in the waterway.

Take some time now to do the following: clean debris out of culverts and from under bridges; clear debris out of ditches and other waterways; make sure there is a clear path for snow to melt away from your buildings; and clear snow piles away

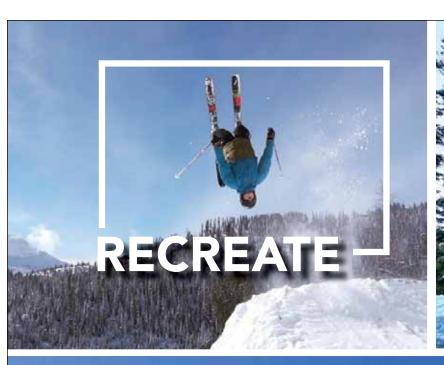
from doors, windows and other places that make it easy for melting snow to affect you.

Next, spend a few minutes to develop a plan on what you will do if flooding affects you. Identify where and when you could be affected by flooding, develop a plan to keep water from getting there and identify what you would need in order to implement your plan and where you will get supplies.

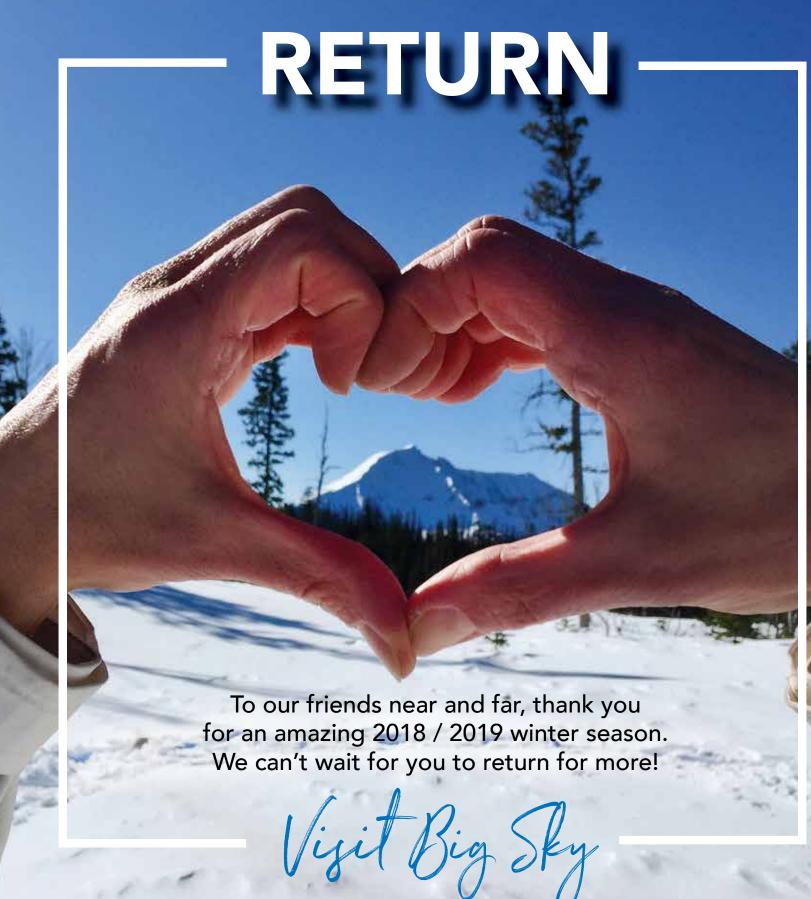
If flooding does occur, closely monitor the water conditions and predicted weather. Water levels change quickly and often peak in the middle of the night. If it looks like your plan may need to be enacted to protect your property, get the supplies and don't waste time. Once flooding occurs, it is too late to prevent damage.

Once implemented, continue to monitor the situation and be prepared to make adjustments. Water is hard to predict and it is has to go somewhere. Be safe around flood water as it can be extremely dangerous and often catches people off guard.

Visit readygallatin.com for more information on flooding and preparedness.







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Big Sky's confluence of nature, culture, people and preservation is so inspiring that one visit makes you want to stay for a lifetime.

Our Mizzion:

As the community's official destination management and marketing organization, Visit Big Sky leads the development and promotion of authentic tourism experiences through research and stakeholder collaboration to grow Big Sky's economy while balancing the need to sustain quality of life for its residents.

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT, OUTDOORS, & HEALTH







The New West: Impacts we have on wildlife



BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

Twice in the same week at different events in Jackson Hole, Bruce S. Thompson projected graphics onto a screen. Each time there were accompanying gasps in the audience. These were not moments of shock, but rather epiphanies that invited instant personal reflection.

Thompson, who is a professional natural sciences education specialist who also spent 17 years as education direc-

tor of the nationally-renowned Teton Science Schools, was making vivid a phenomenon that many outdoor-oriented people suspect, but which has been hard to put a finger on.

The phenomenon is recreational impact on wildlife, a topic treated by some as almost taboo.

Many people assume or claim that because they don't actually witness animals running away at their approach, there must not be impacts, he said. Indeed, federal land management agencies, like the U.S. Forest Service, have been slow to respond to the impacts of growing recreation pressure. Yet as Thompson points out, absence of evidence doesn't equate to absence of impact.

Right now there seems to be an awakening happening around the realization that wildlife displacement is happening.

Thompson, who lives in Dubois, Wyoming, says his research in to recreational impacts on wildlife was piqued by a push from commissioners in Fremont County, Wyoming, to transform the 4,520-acre Dubois Badlands Wilderness Study Area, stewarded by the Bureau of Land Management, into a National Conservation Area.

Not long ago, Thompson presented what he found: that hikers with dogs are formidable wildlife disruptors. In dog-crazy communities, of which the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem has an abundance, people who head out with their domestic canines need to be aware of the impacts they cause.

A single hiker walking down a trail causes wildlife displacement of 150 feet. But a hiker with a dog on a leash results in wildlife displacement of 280 feet in one direction. When the panoramic radius on both sides of the trail is combined to create total diameter, it means dogs cause a displacement zone of 560 feet.

It's one thing if it causes an animal to flee but then it's able to return after the person and dog are gone, but the disruption can become chronic, if not permanent, when the trail receives a stream of near-constant or heavy use. Not only does it cause the animal stress and expended energy, but it results in the animal abandoning the prime places where it finds the best forage and security cover, Thompson said.

Often, mountain bikers insist they are no more disruptive to wildlife than hikers and equestrians, Thompson said. Though, there is a problem. Bikers travel faster and cover much longer distances than hikers; they tend not to make noise; while navigating trails, they're more concerned about avoiding rocks and trees than being fully attentive to their surroundings; and the way they ride makes their presence less predictable, he explained.

If a single mountain biker is traveling twice the distance as a hiker, then it could be argued, Thompson says, that the cyclist is having twice the spatial impact in terms of potential wildlife disruption. And, with a rising number of mountain bikers and local clubs pressuring the Forest Service to let them upgrade and build new trails, the impacts are hardly benign.

"The obvious thing at stake in Greater Yellowstone, the simple answer, is that what we have in this place is not present in those other places," Thompson told me. "We are confronting the old tale of dwindling wilderness and natural systems. We've become a prominent symbol of the metaphor and no one knows yet if we'll be able to hang on to what we have [and] avoid the mistakes those other places have made."

No user group likes being called out. Both the Custer Gallatin National Forest, headquartered in Bozeman, and the Bridger-Teton are presently involved with updating their long-term management plans.

Significant scrutiny is being directed toward the Custer Gallatin and its management of the 155,000-acre Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area that, ecologists say, contains incredible wildlife diversity and superior habitat in the Gallatin Mountains between Yellowstone and Bozeman.

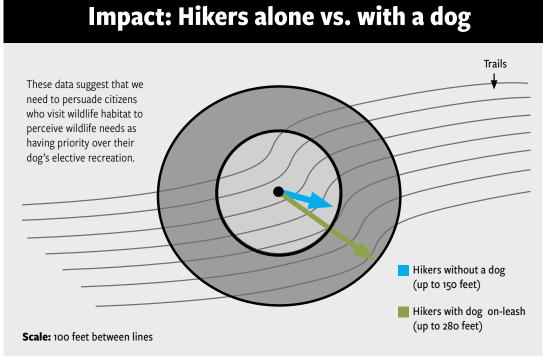
In 1996, conservationists sued the Forest Service for allowing motorized recreation, mountain biking and illegal trail building to occur in the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn, ultimately resulting in a settlement in 2001 that forced the Custer Gallatin to assemble a travel management plan. Illegal trespass by motorized users and mountain bikers remains a persistent problem in the roadless Gallatin Range near Big Sky.

How much consideration are the Custer Gallatin and Bridger-Teton giving to wildlife persistence now and in the decades to come? What is the science telling them about the impacts of human intrusion?

"On one level, it seems completely intuitive that we're having impacts," Thompson said. "But as you put the statistical information together, it really becomes compelling. I wasn't planning on getting involved with this issue in my retirement, but the more I learn, it's not something I can persuade myself to let go of."

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

Impact: Approach-Flight Distance "Most recreationists feel it is Trails acceptable to approach wildlife at a much closer distance than wildlife will allow." "Recreationists also tend to blame others for stress to wildlife rather than holding themselves responsible." Mean Approach Distance deemed acceptable to Recreationists: 194 feet Actual Mean Flight Distance Scale: 100 feet between lines of Wildlife: 495 feet





WATER WISDOM

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.

Water Wisdom: Guest column A Wild and Scenic Gallatin

BY MIKE FIEBIG EBS CONTRIBUTOR

With the weather warming and the days growing longer, I recently drove up Gallatin Canyon dreaming not only of powder turns, but also of spring runoff.

As of mid-March, the Gallatin River watershed was at a whopping 124 percent of average snowpack, which was abundantly clear looking out my truck window. As the snowcapped peaks of the Gallatin and Madison ranges stood out against the deep blue sky, my thoughts drifted toward paddling or fishing after work, and hiking or climbing above the river on weekends.

For wild, free-flowing rivers in Montana, a big snowpack means higher flows or a longer paddling season, sometimes both. This also means clean, cold and copious water for fish, wildlife, recreationists and downstream irrigators.

I for one love that the Gallatin River is not only my backyard river, but that it's a wild river. And there is a growing coalition of individuals, business owners, conservationists and recreation groups working to keep it that way by proposing it for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The coalition, Montanans for Healthy Rivers, needs your help to make the Wild and Scenic Gallatin River a reality. This designation would keep the Gallatin clean and free-flowing, as well as protect the recreation, scenery and historic values that Montanans love about the river corridor. At the same time, the act protects public access and doesn't impact private property rights.

Recently, Montanans celebrated the passage of the 2019 John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act, which protected the Yellowstone River from mining and permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It also designated over 600 miles of new Wild and Scenic rivers in seven states, from the coastal forests of Oregon to the redrock canyons of Utah.

The proposed Gallatin River Wild and Scenic designation is part of a larger, made-in-Montana bill called the Montana Headwater's Security Act, which would designate 37 of Montana's best headwaters streams as Wild and Scenic, primarily in Greater Yellowstone and the Crown of the Continent. Other rivers in the Act include public lands sections of the Madison, Yellowstone, Smith and Dearborn rivers, as well as Rock Creek outside of Missoula.

Montanans for Healthy Rivers needs your help to make the Montana Headwaters Security Act a reality. Now is the time to permanently protect our favorite backyard rivers like the Gallatin. Consider taking a minute to call Sens. Jon Tester or Steve Daines, or Congressman Greg Gianforte to ask them to introduce the Montana Headwaters Security Act.

To learn more about the act and which waterways it would protect, visit healthyriversmt.org.

Mike Fiebig is an avid paddler, member of Montanans for Healthy Rivers and serves as the Northern Rockies Conservation Director at American Rivers.



A view of the Gallatin River in the Gallatin Canyon near Big Sky. PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN RIVERS

INSIDE YELLOWSTONE



Tips for viewing Yellowstone wildlife

BY CHRISTINE GIANAS WEINHEIMER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Now that spring is officially here—or what passes for spring in Montana—you may have come down with a case of spring fever. As ski season gives way to mud season, a drive out to Yellowstone's Northern Range for wildlife watching might be just what the doctor ordered.

The Northern Range's high density of wildlife, combined with its wide-open vistas, make it an ideal place for wildlife watching. At its heart is Lamar Valley, nicknamed "the Serengeti of North America" for its abundant wildlife. The area is also considered the world's premier location to see wolves in the wild. You can view not only a wide variety of species here, but also see predator and prey species interacting with each other.

"If you've never gone wildlife watching in the park with an experienced naturalist, I highly recommend you give it a try," said Zachary Park, assistant director for the Yellowstone Forever Institute. "Make sure they bring along high-quality scopes, which can vastly improve wildlife viewing."

Here are a few more tips to help make the most of your day in Yellowstone's Northern Range:

Check on conditions. If entering through Gardiner, stop at the Albright Visitor Center in Mammoth Hot Springs to pick up a map, check on current road and trail conditions and learn of any wildlife closure areas.

Plan your timing. If possible, plan the majority of your outing in the early morning or early evening when most large mammals tend to be feeding and are more easily seen.



Lamar Valley, often called "the Serengeti of North America," is known for its open vistas and abundant wildlife. NPS PHOTO

Pack your binoculars and your patience. You'll need to steadily and slowly scan the landscape for movement, taking advantage of the many road-side pullouts along the Northeast Entrance Road. Don't forget to look up; watch for eagles, osprey and other raptors near water sources

Look for spring babies. Start watching in April for bison calves, or "red dogs." In May you might also see bear cubs, wolf pups or bighorn sheep lambs. Elk calves are usually the last to arrive, in late May or June.

Hit a trail. Inquire at a visitor center or ranger station about trail conditions. The Yellowstone River Picnic Area Trail tends to be a good pick in spring when most trails are still covered in snow. The easy-to-moderate trail is 3.7 miles round-trip and affords views of the river and surrounding mountains. Keep an eye out for bighorn sheep.

Take a tour. To help you explore the Northern Range, the Yellowstone Forever Institute offers educational tours and other programs ranging from a half-day to several days.

Stay safe. Follow park guidelines and always stay at least 100 yards away from bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards from all other animals. Hike in groups of three or more and carry bear spray, even on short day hikes.

Visit nps.gov/yell for more details on road openings and bear safety guidelines.

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



Yellowstone during the shoulder season

BY JIM HOLSTEIN **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

Every year on the first Monday in March, Yellowstone begins to close roads to snowmobiles and snowcoaches and begins spring plowing.

While some visitors may be surprised to learn the park shuts down for the winter in March, this is necessary because of the amount of roadway that must be plowed, approximately 270 miles. It's a big task plowing these roads, which are often packed like a glacier with several feet of ice and snow.

If the weather and equipment cooperate, the park opens back up each year by the Friday of Memorial Day weekend.

While the West Entrance south of Big Sky is now closed for plowing, Yellowstone's Northern Range is open year-round and is just in reach of Big Sky. A two-hour drive and 124 miles via Bozeman and Livingston gets you to Yellowstone's North Entrance at Gardiner. Mileage for this trip can add up, and getting a guide can help with time management and wildlife spotting.

Once in the park, the roads to Mammoth, Tower Junction and Cooke City are plowed and open, giving folks a taste of Yellowstone any time of the year. You can visit the constantly changing and extremely colorful Mammoth Hot Spring Terraces and plan some time to walk some of the boardwalks.

Mammoth Hot Springs is one of Yellowstone's most beautiful and dynamic features. Flowing at a rate of 500 gallons of water per minute, it also deposits about 2 tons of travertine a day, forming the constantly changing terraces. Add the bright colors of the thermophiles thriving in the hot water and the springs at Mammoth create a magical

The road inside and outside the park is in the heart of the Northern Range, home to 70 percent of the park's wintering wildlife. Animals are abundant and are often close to the road. Species such as mule deer, white-tailed deer, coyotes, elk, bison, bighorn sheep, eagles and pronghorn are common, while wolves become a little more difficult to find as they make dens for the arrival of puppies.

This is also the time of year when grizzlies and black bears start to emerge from hibernation, and with the warm weather predicted in coming weeks, more bears are likely to



Mammoth Hot Springs, located near Yellowstone National Park's Northern Entrance, is known for its bright colors and constantly changing limestone formations. PHOTO BY JIM HOLSTEIN

emerge from their dens. Other springtime species will start showing up as well, including the mountain bluebird, osprey, sandhill crane, marmot and badger.

Visitors traveling to Yellowstone this time of year should be aware that Yellowstone doesn't plow between 4:30 p.m. and 6 a.m. and most of the area doesn't support cellphone reception. It's also important to note that there are thousands of elk and deer that feed at night along Highway 89 from Gardiner to Livingston. Stay vigilant on all area roads inside and outside the park, travel at your own risk and carry a winter survival kit.

Jim Holstein, a thirty-year resident of Big Sky, has been a guide for Yellowstone Tour Guides since 1991. He's worked in the park since 1987 and helped fight the fires of '88.

Summer opening dates, conditions permitting:

- April 19 West Entrance to Madison Junction; Mammoth to Old Faithful; Norris to Canyon Village
- May 3 East Entrance to Lake Village; Canyon Village to Lake Village
- May 10 South Entrance to West Thumb; Lake Village to West Thumb; West Thumb to Old Faithful; Tower Junction to Tower Fall
- May 24 Tower Fall to Canyon Village; Beartooth Highway







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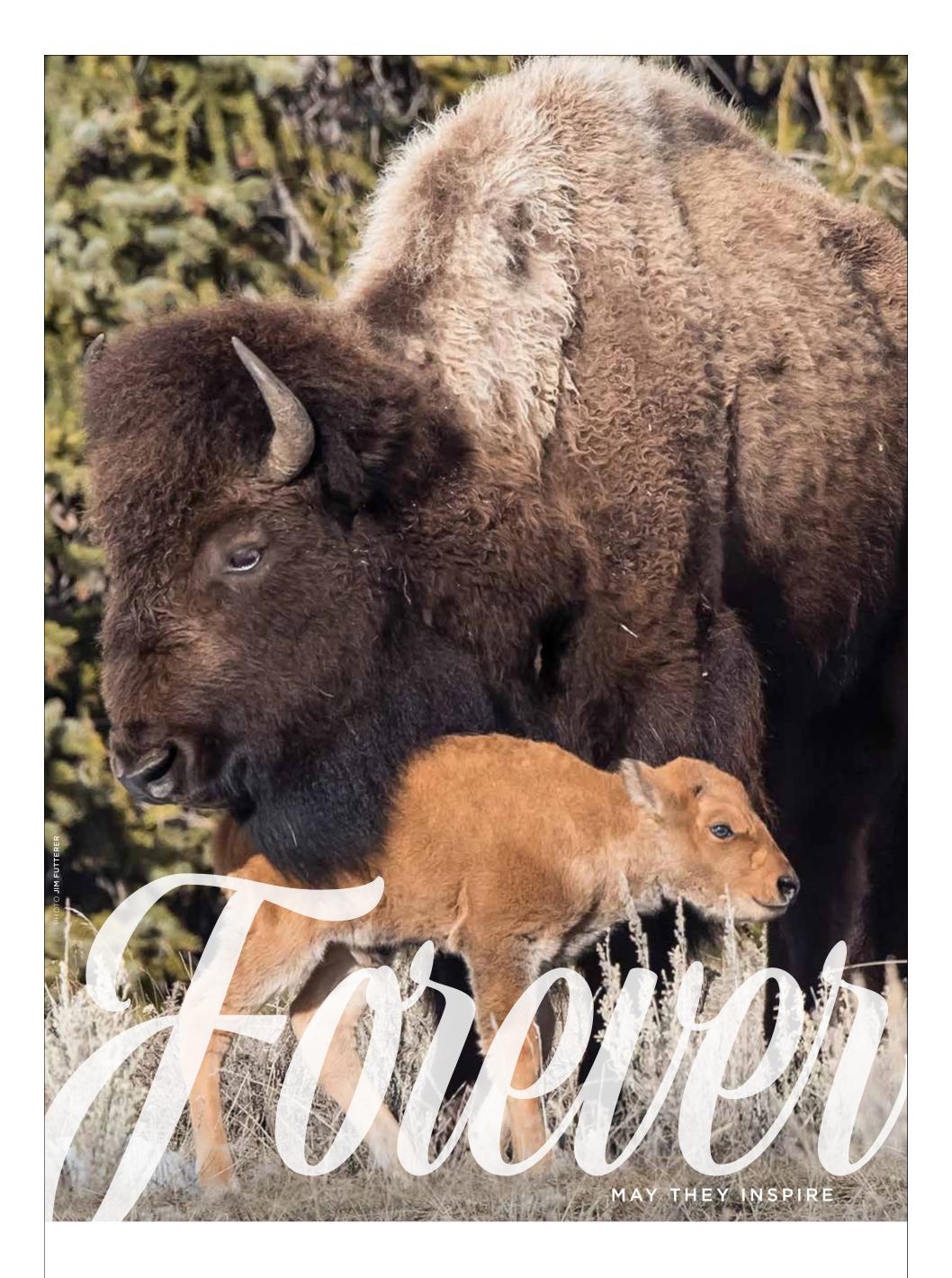
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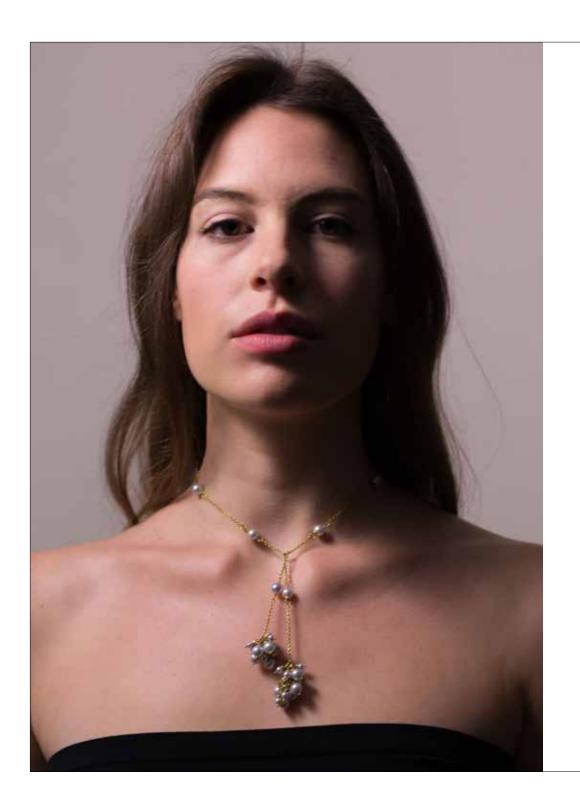
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The work of a forecaster

BY BELLA BUTLER EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It was mid-October when backcountry skier Elliot Natz set out to ski Gem Lake Couloir in the Bitterroot Mountains. Stubborn summer warmth lingered and it was a balmy 40 degrees and slightly stormy. As Natz approached the top of the chute, he heard the echoes of falling rocks. A series of small, wet snow slides cascaded down his path, burying him up to his waist. Suddenly alert, he wriggled himself out of captivation and escaped to safety.

Natz is more fortunate than the 25 to 30 people who die in avalanches each year in the United States. In fact, snow slides are reportedly the deadliest natural hazard in our national forests.

However, when people make the choice to venture into the backcountry in spite of the looming risks, even in the spring, they can rely on one key resource: avalanche forecasts.

Todd Glew is an avalanche forecaster for the West Central Montana Avalanche Center in Missoula. A few days a week, he and fellow forecasters throughout the state compose area-specific reports known as avalanche advisories. The advisory evaluates the safety of backcountry conditions on a scale from low to extreme and outlines the concerns of the day. It's bolstered with colorful graphics that even the most novice of users can interpret.

"Our role is super important," Glew said. "Checking the forecast is imperative to anyone heading into the backcountry."

The forecasters follow weather patterns closely, and when in the field, they perform a series of tests and observations that inform their reports. Their process is typically much more thorough than the average backcountry recreationist, making the avalanche advisory an essential tool.

As Montana transitions from winter to spring, forecasting practices change slightly.

"When we are in a full spring regime, we are digging pits and taking temperatures," said Doug Chabot, director of Bozeman's Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. By focusing on temperatures, the forecasters can establish if the snowpack is above freezing—a spring condition that can potentially instigate large and hazardous wet slides.

Chabot acknowledges that spring can be an ideal time for backcountry recreationists to set their sights on more aggressive lines, but risk is still present.

"People need to remember that all the standard rules apply," he said. "You want to always carry your avalanche rescue gear, you want to always have a partner and you want to always go one at a time." Chabot also recommends backcountry missions be limited to earlier morning hours, when the snowpack is still frozen. Getting caught in avalanche terrain as afternoon temperatures rise can put you at risk for triggering a wet slide.

Part of a forecaster's job is passing on their wealth of knowledge to others. Backcountry skiing is the first thing Glew remembers doing when he moved out west from his home in Boston, but he knew he wanted to do more than just ski.

"I realized I also wanted to teach," he said. Glew was able to combine his passions working as an educator for avalanche centers in the Salt Lake City area as well as Missoula. He continues to do community education through avalanche classes and public events.

Although Glew loves his job, avalanche forecasting comes with stresses. The avalanche advisory is no perfect science, though many people use it as such.



Avalanche forecaster and educator Todd Glew dissects a snowpack in the Bitterroot Mountains with a class. PHOTO BY BELLA BUTLER

"The spatial variability of it all is tough," Glew said. The West Central Montana Avalanche Center advises for over 900,000 acres of space. Conditions vary slope to slope, and they can differ tremendously.

Dealing with a complex snowpack that has been influenced by unique weather patterns also poses a challenge. Glew calls this a "grey area." "You're trying not to shoot too high [or] too low in your forecast," he said. After all, the consequences can be deadly.

Backcountry recreationists are encouraged to use the forecast as just one tool in their belt and to combine the information with their own observations and tests. Still, the margin for error or poor decisions can lead to the ultimate tragedy.

"You have to be okay with always knowing there are risks," he said, remembering many of his friends that have fallen victim to snow slides. For Glew, there have been instances after losing people he cared for when he wanted to give up his work with avalanches altogether. What keeps him in it is selflessness.

"I feel like I've been doing this long enough that if I were to leave, I'd be doing a disservice to the community," he said. "I definitely think you can take the bad stuff to heart, but you just try and do the best job that you can."

The National Avalanche Center estimates that in the entire country, there are only around 170 part-time and full-time forecasters, many of whom only work in-bounds at ski resorts. The pay isn't outstanding, Glew says, and many people are turned away because of this. There are few individuals who are outfitted with enough experience and education to be a qualified avalanche forecaster.

For more information or to check out the local avalanche advisory, visit mtavalanche.com.

Bella Butler is originally from Big Sky. She is currently in her second year of studying journalism at the University of Montana in Missoula.





Stewarding an icon

Management for the Yellowstone buffalo

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

LIVINGSTON – The story of the buffalo is well-known in legend and myth. A species highly regarded by native peoples, bison became an American symbol in 2016 with the passage of the National Bison Legacy Act. They are perhaps the most abundant animal in Yellowstone and are one of the few genetically-pure herds in the U.S., as many others hybridized with cattle.

Yet, the tale of today's Yellowstone bison is steeped in a mire of public opinion and policy centered on a disease that triggers abortion, and how we'll engage with and see these animals on the landscape in the future remains unclear.

An onerous dilemma

Bison are the largest land-dwelling mammal in North America, with males weighing up to 2,000 pounds and females reaching 1,000. Highly social animals, they form herds of about 1,000 individuals in July and August for the breeding season, though herds disperse into small groups for the winter. Three hundred years ago, prior to 19th century Euro-American settlement, tens of millions are thought to have roamed across our continent

Today, approximately 4,500 bison live within the bounds of Yellowstone National Park, though the Interagency Bison Management Plan, which guides the handling of Yellowstone bison, sets a population goal of 3,000.

When asked about bison management, officials respond unanimously that it's a very complex topic. Speaking specifically about quarantine, Yellowstone bison program coordinator Tim Reid described the conversation as "painful."

Unlike other wildlife, like deer or elk, bison aren't allowed to migrate freely across park lines due to livestock-producer and landowner concerns over brucellosis transmission, grazing and property damage. Montana Department of Livestock State Veterinarian



Stephens Creek serves as both a capture and holding facility, with approximately 80 bison that are being held long-term for quarantine.



Marty Zaluski said the spread of brucellosis, which causes miscarriage in bison, elk and cattle, could result in costly testing requirements and transportation limitations for the cattle industry. There's also a possibility of transmission to humans, he added.

Though there hasn't been a documented transmission of brucellosis from Yellowstone bison to cattle,

Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly says up to 60 percent of Yellowstone's bison test positive for exposure to brucellosis. "Identifying animals that do not harbor the bacteria is difficult and requires many months or years of quarantine. A single test is not enough," he wrote in an email to EBS.

To protect livestock producers, who contribute more than \$2.1 billion to the Montana economy, and to limit the spread of a disease that was first introduced to Yellowstone bison and elk by domestic cattle in the early 1900s, Montana law significantly limits the transportation of live bison and their natural tendency to migrate out of the park.

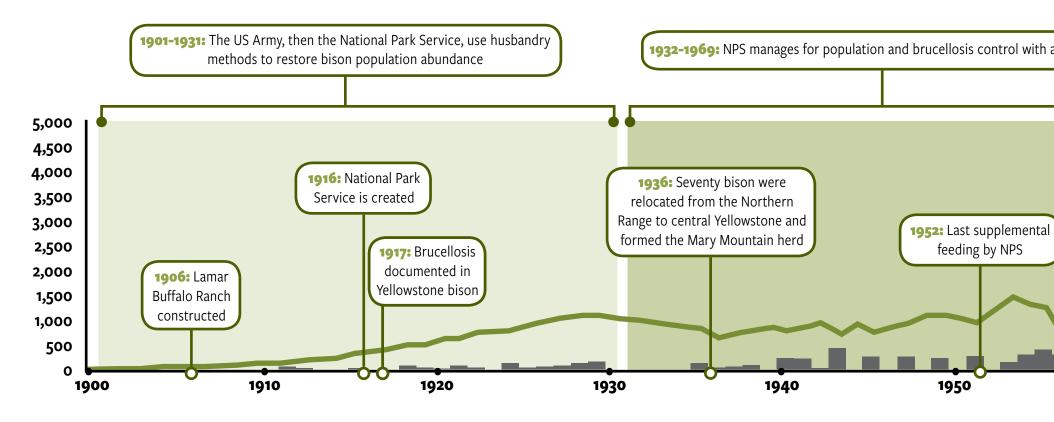
However, Yellowstone's bison population continues to grow at a rate of 10 to 17 percent each year and officials say unbound growth could lead to overgrazing and starvation within the national park.

Striving for a solution

"Until there is more tolerance for bison outside Yellowstone, the population can only be controlled by hunting outside the park and capture near the park boundary," Superintendent Sholly said.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks issues a limited number of public hunting tags, while some tribes exercise their rights to hunt bison that migrate outside of Yellowstone. In addition, Yellowstone officials capture groups of migrating bison as they move from high elevation to low elevation in the winter at a facility known as Stephens Creek near Gardiner and the North Entrance.

This year, capture efforts began on March 7. As of March 22, as reported by the park's





Blood is drawn from a bison at Stephens Creek for brucellosis testing.

Public Affairs Office, a total of 208 bison had been captured and consigned for slaughter. Following capture, bison are tested for brucellosis and then shipped to slaughter; the meat and hides are distributed among members of partnering tribes.

This spring, managers have a goal of removing 600 to 900 bison, though with the late capture start, they say it's unlikely that number will be reached. "It's all based on the winter," Reid said. "This winter got intense late, so the migration started late."

While capture efforts are guided by a multi-agency directive that includes input from Montana FWP, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Montana Department of Livestock and several tribal partners, some are critical of the territory control and culling initiatives.

"We adamantly, vehemently oppose the Interagency Bison Management Plan," said Stephany Seay, the media coordinator for Buffalo Field Campaign based in West Yellowstone. One of the most outspoken critics of Yellowstone's capture program, Buffalo Field Campaign would prefer to see bison that migrate freely in and out of Yellowstone and within Montana. Seay said she believes managers currently give livestock priority over bison due to competition for grass.

"We want to gain more habitat [for bison]," Seay said, "so buffalo can stay in Montana as long as they want and use the landscape like deer and elk." She added that the group is also opposed to quarantine programs, calling them a form of domestication.

In part, Superintendent Sholly agrees with some of Seay's sentiments. "For long-term conservation, Yellowstone bison need access to more suitable habitat outside the park," he said. "Yellowstone has long wanted to send bison to other conservation areas."

To further this effort, Yellowstone managers are working with the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes at Fort Peck in the northeast corner of the state to develop a quarantine program for bison. Animals that have proved to be brucellosis free after multiple years of testing will be eligible for release at the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

To aid with the multi-year quarantine process, the Fort Peck tribes constructed a quarantine facility in 2014 to the tune of about \$1 million, said Daniel Wenner of Elk River Law, who serves as the Fort Peck tribes' attorney. "The National Park Service wanted to

start the quarantine program and Fort Peck stepped up to make it happen," he wrote in an email to EBS.

Restoring a relationship

On Feb. 22, five bulls that were born in captivity as a part of a research program by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service were transferred to Fort Peck for a final year of quarantine after the initial phases were completed at Corwin Springs near Gardiner.

APHIS has approximately 50 more bison that could be eligible for relocation to Fort Peck and Yellowstone has about 80 that were captured from the wild and held for quarantine, with the intent of relocating them to Fort Peck in the future. Currently, Fort Peck has two herds and about 200 bison.

"Restoring that cultural, spiritual and traditional relationship with buffalo is incredibly important for tribes," Wenner said. "Historically, the federal government killed buffalo as a way to force tribes onto reservations. Bringing buffalo back helps [them] heal from those old wounds.

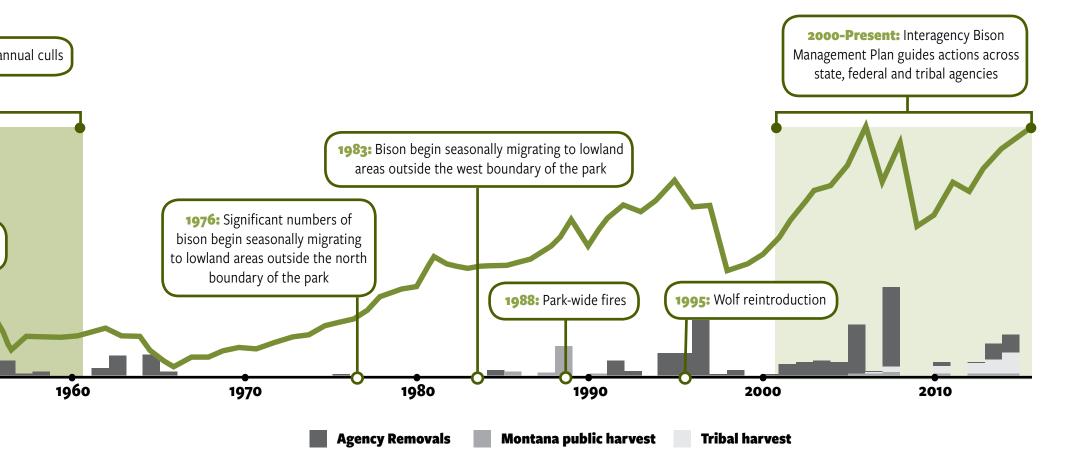
"Yellowstone buffalo are important to tribes because they have those pure buffalo genetics and are the descendants of the buffalo tribes lived with for thousands of years," he added. "This makes bringing buffalo out of Yellowstone National Park incredibly important. The tribes [at Fort Peck] want to see these buffalo expanded to other tribes as well."

Park officials concede that additional stakeholder involvement will be integral for future bison management. "It's our goal to find ways of expanding the quarantine program, at Fort Peck and other locations, to ensure a more regular and predictable number of bison can move through the pipeline," Sholly said.

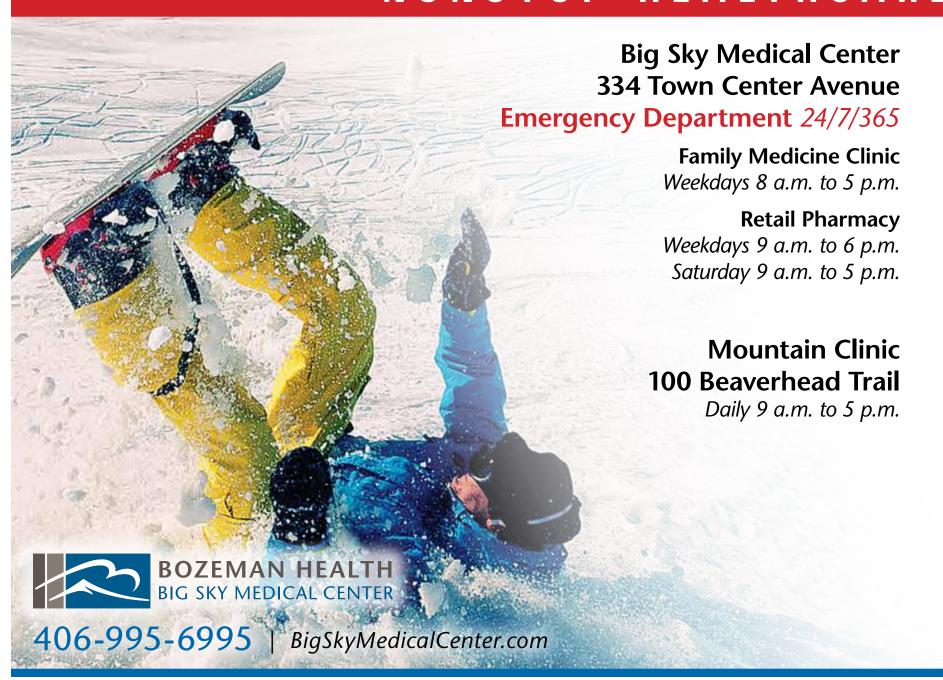
For more information on Yellowstone bison, visit nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/bison.htm, nps. gov/yell/learn/management/bison-management.htm or nps.gov/yell/learn/management/bison-management-faqs.htm.



Bison move through the sorting pens at Stephens Creek prior to shipment for slaughter.



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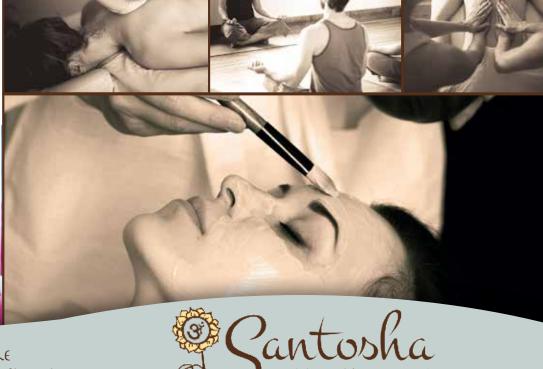
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TUESDAY

7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga

9:00-10:00am All Levels Yoga

5:45-7:00pm Heated Flow

WEDNESDAY

7:30-8:30am % 9:00-10:15

11:00-12:30pm The Practice (Level 2-3 Yoga)

All Levels Yoga

4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga

7:00-8:00pm Awareness Wednesday

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am Core Focused Yoga

9:00-10:00am All Levels Yoga

5:45-6:45pm Heated Flow

FRIDAY

9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga

12:00-1:00pm Heated Flow

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Bear Basics with Bernadette: The end of a long winter's sleep

BY KRIS INMAN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

It's spring, and bears are beginning to emerge from their dens. About this time every year, like clockwork, you can expect to hear about the first spring bear sighting, as was recently the case in Yellowstone.

In fact, clockwork has a lot to do with it. It's believed that photoperiod, or the lengthening of days, is a trigger for bears to begin to shake off their long winter's sleep and emerge from their dens. But like everything in life, there are many other factors that influence a bear's timing of emergence.

Males tend to be the first seen in the spring and, not surprisingly, females with cubs will stay in their dens longer, giving the cubs time to develop and get ready to move. In rare cases, some male bears won't even enter a den for the winter, or will only occupy one for a very brief time. This tends to happen in more southern climates, in low snow years when there is an abundance of food, such as in years with a good juniper-berry crop or, in worst-case scenarios when unsecured food like trash and pet foods are highly available.

While denning, a bear's heart rate and respiration slow, their body temperature drops only by a few degrees, and metabolism decreases almost by half while the bear lives off of fat reserves. The fat is converted into protein so the bear can make it through the long winter months.

New technology has helped us gain more insights into a bear's physiological changes and cycles. Subcutaneous heart-rate monitors in radio-collared black bears found heart rates follow a cycle. Heart rates are at the highest in summer with 70-90 beats per minute. As summer moves into fall, the rate begins a slow decline to approximately 40 bpm. During hibernation, heart rates are at their lowest—an average of 20 bpm—which incrementally rises to 30 to 45 bpm as bears emerge in the spring. A recent study in Alaska found it took two-to-three weeks for their metabolism to return to normal after den emergence.



It's believed the lengthening of days in the spring acts as a wake-up trigger for hibernating bears, causing them to emerge in March, April and May. NPS PHOTO

So as our days grow longer and bears are awakening, it's an excellent time to think about the chance of seeing bears again. Dust off your bear spray, check the expiration date and carry it while recreating. Be sure you have a bear-resistant trash can that is working correctly, and if it isn't, call your trash company to have it fixed—this is often built into trash-service fees. Do your part and be bear smart.

Don't forget to post photos of bear sightings on social media and tag #bernadettebear and follow Bernadette Bear on Instagram @bearsmartbigsky. Help support Bernadette in her campaign to create a more bear-safe and bear-aware community in Big Sky.

Kris Inman is the community partnerships coordinator for the Wildlife Conserva-

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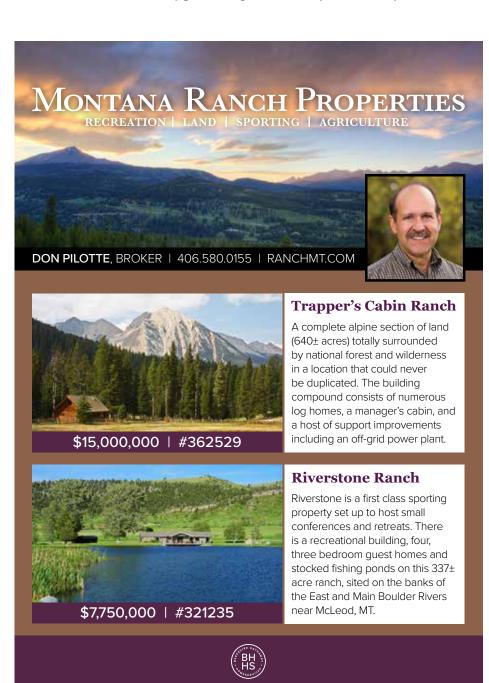
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On the Trail: Town Center trails

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

STORY AND PHOTO BY SARA MARINO EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Winter activities are winding down, but there's still fun to be had in the snow. With the help of volunteers, Big Sky Community Organization has had a successful inaugural season of winter trail grooming. Sunday, March 31, is the final scheduled grooming day, and is the perfect time to try out the Town Center trails.

These wide-open and easy trails loop for approximately 2 miles with short-cut options, as well as the opportunity to continue on the Ousel Falls Road trail if you'd like to add some mileage—approximately 1.5 miles one way.

There is room for everyone: cross-country skiers, snowshoers, fat bikers, walkers and dogs alike. For those with dogs, please respect your fellow trail users by making use of the provided dog-waste station.

The Town Center trails are easily accessible from the plowed parking lot by the ice rink at the intersection of Aspen Leaf and Simkins drives.

"It's been a fun winter and we've learned a lot about the grooming process," said BSCO Asset Manager Jeff MacPherson, who is responsible for managing the



Sammy, Sara Marino's pooch, runs on the dog-friendly Town Center trails.

area's trail grooming. "With the continued support of our volunteers and the community, we'll be doing it even better next winter."

The Town Center trails are open to the public free of charge, but there are many behind-the-scenes resources that make it happen. If you've enjoyed these trails all winter, consider joining BSCO as a Trail Partner with an annual donation. These funds help BSCO keep our community trails maintained all winter and summer long. From trail repair to waste management, we can't do it without the Big Sky community.

Warmer temperatures and longer days make getting out on the trails easy and fun. The Town Center trails are the perfect length for a lunch-time break or quick after-work stress reliever.

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.



Madison River committee extends rule-making process

BY JESSIANNE CASTLE

BOZEMAN – With tensions high and an air of exhaustion in the room, the ten-member Madison River Negotiated Rulemaking Committee came down to the wire on a decision on March 26 in Bozeman, taking the last minutes of the final meeting to plea for at least one more convening.

In December, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission appointed members of the public to the committee, tasking them with developing recommendations for managing recreation on the widely-popular Madison River. Since then, the group has met for a total of four two-day sessions, with March 25 and 26 slated as the final gathering before the committee presents recommendations to the Commission.

The highly controversial topic of managing recreation on the Madison, which surpassed 200,000 angler days in 2017 and sees the highest number of angler days of all the waterbodies in Montana, involves conversations about caps on commercial use, limitations on non-resident and resident permits, public access and the presence of boats.

The current rule-making process arose after the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks proposed a set of regulations for public comment during the April 2018 Commission meeting and many members of the public turned out to speak against the proposal.

In order to develop a management strategy that's approved by the public, the Commission rejected the April 2018 rules and established the committee comprised of fishing outfitters, anglers, a lodge owner, a non-angling outfitter and the director of the Madison River Foundation.

The initial meetings were spent discussing problems on the Madison and the final meetings considered potential solutions and their impacts. The afternoon session on March 26 saw evolved discussion as committee members considered what they were willing to sacrifice and what management they wouldn't tolerate.

"I'm willing to step up and be an example. I can take a haircut but not without everyone else willing to," said committee member Julie Eaton of Eaton Outfitters

in Ennis. Later she added that she joined the committee in good faith. "I believed in this when I showed up."

Some of the group's major sticking points were how new regulations might impact entrance into the guiding industry, the ability to procure a living as an outfitter, the monetization of the resource, the ability to wade fish without the presence of boats, and access to the river.

Toward the end of the meeting, facilitator Mike Mitchell asked the committee if they thought they'd be able to move forward. "I'm hearing more criticism than I am creation," he said, adding that based on the Commission's directive the group will have to reach a consensus decision at some point.

Consensus was that the group needed more time. "Some of these alternatives we've only seen in the last two hours," said angling guide Mike Bias, referring to their eight draft alternatives. Considered very rough drafts, these alternatives were not made available to the media.

The meeting concluded with the determination that a supplementary meeting would be scheduled in April, though a date had not been set as of EBS press time on March 27. Public comment stretched beyond 30 minutes as individuals commended the committee for continuing their efforts and imploring them to think about what impacts any recommendation will have.

It's unclear what the department and Commission would do if the committee fails to present their recommendations during the April 25 Commission meeting, though committee member Don Skaar, who is FWP habitat access bureau chief, said the department would petition the commission to continue with the committee process.

Regardless of the exact strategy for rulemaking, any decision will be made using a public process. According to a FWP press release, a public comment period and open meetings would be held prior to adoption of any rules.

For more information visit fwp.mt.gov/recreation/management/madison/nrc.html. Check on explorebigsky.com for more information about upcoming meetings.







Life 101: Is there too much chaos in your life?



BY LINDA ARNOLD EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Do you feel like your life is on autopilot, spinning out of control?

Juggling all those demands on your platter along with information overload in our warp-speed society can make you feel like you're a pinball machine on tilt. On the other end of the spectrum, it could be that constant chatter of the inner critic in your head that's sapping your energy.

When you have too much going on, your circuits can get overloaded. Just like your smartphone and computer, you need to unplug, reboot and recharge. If not, you'll start to forget things, lose sleep and feel like you're treading water just to keep up the frenzied pace.

Here's a tip: Your outer world is a reflection of your inner world. Until you deal with the inner chaos, you won't be able to change your external environment.

I've noticed some of these signs lately and I'm stopping to pay attention. I always know I'm headed for a crash and burn when I get overscheduled by booking too many speaking engagements, overcommitting to projects or experiencing back-to-back travel assignments.

How many of you have started your day with the intention of accomplishing everything on your to-do list, either at work or at home, and then something comes out of left field to derail you? Of course, we all need to stay open to spontaneity in our lives, although I often like to plan mine.

When I feel like I'm going on tilt, that's when I reach for my own version of vitamin B: bandwidth. I stop to examine what, if anything, could be rescheduled. Often, I find I'm the one putting the most pressure on myself. Sound familiar?

I have my emergency self-care toolkit to provide some quick balance while I work on longer-term issues. My go-to cure is a hot bath. Twenty minutes of soaking works wonders. Comfort food helps, too, as well as connections with soul friends.

Lots of times it doesn't take that much. Our souls can become so starved that tossing a few crumbs at self-care is all it takes to push our reset buttons. My bandwidth checklist includes a quick scan for major culprits leading me astray.

Recently when I hit that wall, I made a mental note to redouble my efforts in the following arenas:

- Limit the scheduling of back-to-back commitments
- Allow for extra travel time to meetings
- Assess other ways to get tasks done
- Evaluate whether every task really needs to get done
- Build in time to restore my soul by reading inspirational articles, watching movies and taking time for reflection, meditation and walks in nature. My dog, Chloe, sees to it that I have plenty of time for that last item.

The stronger your foundation, the better you're able to handle the curve balls that get thrown at you. It's not just your physical forces that contribute to a strong immune system. Your emotional health needs bolstering as well, especially when you work yourself into a frenzy.

When you're too close to a situation and can't see any light at the end of the tunnel, you've likely become more of a "human doing," rather than a human being. Bandwidth and balance can help restore your soul, as well as your mind, body and spirit.

Reboot, recharge and remember, "this, too, shall pass."

Linda Arnold, M.A., M.B.A., is a syndicated columnist, psychological counselor and founder of a multistate marketing corporation. Reader comments are welcome at linda@lindaarnold.org. For information on her books, go to lindaarnold.org or amazon.com.







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SECTION 3: SPORTS, BUSINESS, **DINING & FUN**







Championship season for the Big Sky Ski Team

BY LUKE KIRCHMAYR

EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The Big Sky Ski Team had two very busy weeks. Four U19 Big Sky racers qualified for the Western Regional event in Alpine Meadows, California. With perfect bluebird conditions, the young U19 team came away with incredibly good results. It was 6 days of full-on racing, and after all the ski tuning, video analyzing and school homework, the exhausted racers were ready to come back to Montana after a successful trip.

The same weekend six U16 Big Sky racers qualified for the Western Regional event in Sun Valley, Idaho. The conditions in Sun Valley could not have been better—hard snow and ample sun on a very steep slope. This regional event had a Super G, GS and Slalom and the team did well, besides a few unfortunate crashes.

While the U19 and U16 team were on the road, Big Sky was hosting the Youth Ski League championship. If you skied on Andesite Mountain that weekend most likely you saw a few racers, as over 240 young racers from Montana and South Dakota competed. The Big Sky Ski Team crushed the weekend and took advantage of racing on their home mountain. The YSL event was open to racers from age groups as young as 6 and up to 16 years old.

The following weekend we had two more important races, the Tri-Divisional race in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, was for Northern, Intermountain and the Pacific Northwest Division. We had six Big Sky racers qualify for the event. Jackson is always a fun, steep race, and the team brought home a win and a few podiums.

While the Tri-Divisional competitors were in Jackson, four of Big Sky's U14 athletes qualified for the U14 Western Regional event in Big Sky. Hangman's was busy, with the 60 best U14 racers fighting for spots on the podium. We saw some very fast skiing and the U14 team did very well with many top-10 finishes in a competitive field.

There are two more races left this season. Next weekend Bridger Bowl will host the OHG race. Always a strong field, Bridger is expecting the MSU ski race team to set the pace for all of the racers. The final race of the season will be the Northwest Cup finals at Steven's Pass, Washington.



Dane Ueland having a solid 2nd GS run in YSL Championship PHOTO BY MARSHALL TATE / BIGSKYPHOTOS.COM.

RESULTS

Big Sky YSL Champs 3/15/19 U10 Girl's 1 Run GS

4. McRae, Maeve (1:11.60) 11. Schreiner, Paige (1:17.52) 13. Wolfe, Olive (1.21.71) 14. Olsson, Violet (1:24.05) 17. Cook, Adaline (1:25.52)

U12 Girl's Super G

1. Davis, Sophia (58.75) 11. Emmert, Grace ((1:05.46) 12. Skogen, Cecelia (1:05.73) 14. Cook, Alice (1:06:54) 16. Olsson, Piper (1:07.52) 17. Manka, Dylan (1:07.81) 21. Hardan, Cate (1:11.49)

U14 Girl's Super G

1. Brown, Brooke (54.54) 2. Brown, Lili (55.07) 4. Unger, Chloe (55.94) 5. Manka, Skylar (55.99) 6. Klug, Carson (57.89)

8. Vap, Morgane (58.38) 10. Schreiner, Graycon (59.77) 12. Johnson, Allene (59.03) 14. Hoover, Myla (59.86)

16. Davis, Margaret (1:00.15)

U8 Boy's 1 Run GS

1. Swain, Weston (1:14.48)

3. Klug, Gus (1:16.99) 4. Johnson, Rex (1:21.58)

6. Schreiner, Michael (1:31.55) 7. Johnson, Jesse (1:34.74)

U10 Boy's 1 Run GS

3. Bertelson, Mac (1:04.83) 4. Bartoszek, Owen (1:05.91) 5. Ditullio, Dominic (1:07.23)

6. Sheil, Cullen (1:10.91) 9. Harder, Elijah (1:12.11)

13. Mittelstaedt, Ty (1:13.97) 15. Frank, Emerson (1:14.52)

U12 Boy's Super G

1. Wenger, Ryan (59.13) 3. Bourret, Cooper (59.56) 4. Pecunies, Ian (1:00.01)

5. Ditullio, Anthoney (1:00.27) 7. Klug, Fin (1:01.23) 14. Brown, Walter (1:06.26)

U14 Boy's Super G

2. Switzer, Fia (1:57.28)

2. Ueland, Cameron (57.94)

3/16/19 U8 Girl's GS

3. Bartoszek, Grace (2:01.40) 6. Sheil, Myla (2:07.58) 7. Bedell, Tatum (2:08.82) 8. Switzer, Ella (2:11.28) 9. Bibbins, Olive (2:16.06) 10. Thompson, Kate (2:20.42)

U10 Girl's GS

2. Wenger, Peyton (1:39.57) 3. McRae, Maeve (1:40.88) 14. Olsson, Violet (1:53.13) 15. Cook, Adaline (1:53.20) 16. Schreiner, Paige (1:54.27) 17. Wolfe, Olive (1:56.12) 19. Langlas, Ileana (1:57.27) 24. Walkup, Lavinva (2:10.32) 25. Givens, Brooklyn (2:19.37)

U14 Girl's GS

2. Brown, Brooke (1:21.12) 3. Manka, Skylar (1:21.35) 4. Unger, Chloe (1:24.35) 5. Ditullio, Drew (1:24.91)

6. Klug, Carson (1:25.17) 8. Vap, Morgane (1:26.98) 9. Schreiner, Graycen (1:27.19)

10. Davis, Margaret (1:27.34)

13. Hoover, Myla (1:30.97)

U8 Boy's GS

1. Swain, Weston (1:40.94) 3. Klug, Gus (1:43.14) 4. Johnson, Rex (1:52.91) 5. Carrico, Becket (1:57.75) 6. Schreiner, Michael (2:01.14) 8. Johnson, Jesse (2:18.69) 9. Swoboda, Carson (2:22.36)

U10 Boy's GS

3. Berelson, Mac (1:31.09) 4. Ditullio, Dominic (1:31.97) 7. Harder, Elijah (1:38.91) 8. Mittelstaedt, Ty (1:40.11) 10. Sheil, Cullen (1:41.81) 13. Barker, Liam (1:44.99)

14. Frank, Emerson (1:45.33)

24. Foster Chase (2:08.00) 25. Varness, Quinn (2:10.56)

U12 Boy's GS

2. Wenger, Ryan (1:26.41) 3. Pecunies, lan (1:26.69) 4. Ditullio, Anthony (1:27.43) 5. Klug, Fin (1:27.98) 6. Bourret, Cooper (1:28.04) 12. Brown, Walter (1:32.36) 13. McRae, Finnegan (1:3270) 18. Gale, Eli (1:34.83) 24. Romney, Miles (1:41.52) 25. Clack, Jed (1:42.09)

27. Ueland, Dane (1:44.83) 28. Efferson, Dylan (1:46.41) 29. Winters, Michael (2:15.15)

U14 Boy's GS 3. Ueland, Cameron (1:24.05)

U8 Girl's Slalom

2. Switzer, Fia (1:47.56) 5. Bedell, Tatum (1:52.81) 7. Bibbins, Olive (2:04.56)

U10 Girl's Slalom

1. McRae, Maeve (1:23.30) 3. Wenger, Payton (1:32.25) 9. Wolfe, Olive (1;38.27) 12. Olsson, Violete (1:40.41) 13. Cook, Adline (1:42.18) 14. Langlas, Ilena (1:43.01) 16. Schreiner, Paige (1:47.10) 17. Pirist, Alexa (1:47.67) 22. Walkup, Lavinya (1:54.79) 23. Givens, Brooklyn (1:58.69)

U12 Girl's Slalom

7. Manka, Dylan (1:22.77) 8. Skogen, Cecelia (1:23.82)

10. Emmert, Grace (1:25.54)

11. Cook, Alice (1:25.97) 13. Davis, Sophia (1:26.86) 14. Olsson, Piper (1:28.16) 22. Hardan, Cate (1:38.62)

U14 Girl's Slalom 1. Manka, Skylar (1:09.52)

2. Klug, Carson (1:10.46) 3. Davis, Margaret (1:10.75) 4. Unger, Chloe (1:11.75) 5. Vap, Morgane (1:12:34) 6. Hoover, Myla (1:12.35) 7. Brown, Lili (1:15.24) 8, Schreiner, Graycon (1:15.81) 15. McEldowney, Cameron (1:44.77)

Alpine Meadows Western Regionals 3/12/19

U19 Women's GS 22. Winters, Madison (2:09.45) 31. Winters, Mackenzie (2:13.00)

U19 Men's GS

52. Johnson, Sam (2:24.51)

3/13/19 U19 Women's Slalom

16. St. Cyr, Maci (1:54.06) 36. Winters, Mackenzie (2:04.26)

U19 Men's Slalom 64. Johnson, Sam (2:20.09)

U19 Women's Slalom 15. St.Cyr, Maci (1:56.02)

31. Winters, Mackenzie (2:02.58) 36. Winters, Madison (2:04.31)

3/15/19 U19 Women's GS

32. Winters, Madison (2:16.03) 37. Winters, Mackenzie (2;17.19)

44. Johnson, Sam (2:06.16)

3/16/19

U19 Women's GS 27. Winters, Madison (2:10.70) 28. St.Cyr, Maci (2:10.80)

U19 Men's GS

41. Johnson, Sam (2:11.80)

3/17/19

U19 Women's GS 22. St.Cyr, Maci (2:16.74) 23. Winters, Madison (2:16.79) 36. Winters, Mackenzie (2;21.35)

Sun Valley Western Regionals 3/15/19

U16 Girl's SG 33. St.Cyr, Franci (56.76) 44. Carisch, Gracie (57.38) 63. Davis, Hillary (59.48)

U16 Boy's GS

21. Beatty, Ryan (1:47.96) 38. Hassman, Kjetil (1:50.99)

3/16/19 U16 Girl's GS

22. St. Cyr, Franci (1;53.80)

U16 Boy's SG 61. Hassman, Kjetil (1:10.47)

3/17/19 U16 Girl's Slalom

58. Davis, Hillary (1:43.10)

U16 Boy's Slalom

24. Hassman, Kjetil (1:29.88) 26. Kirchmayr, Luke (1:30.26)

Big Sky Western Regionals 3/22/19 U14 Girl's SG

10. Manka, Skylar (55.19) 12. Brown, Brooke (55.67) 25. Brown, Lili (57.15)

U14 Boy's SG

42. Ueland, Cameron (57.76)

3/23/19 U14 Girl's GS

18. Manka, Skylar (1:46.25) 25. Brown, Brooke (1:46.55) 30. Brown, Lili (1:48.33)

U14 Boy's GS

41. Ueland, Cameron (1:48.65)

3/24/19 U14 Girl's Slalom

5. Brook, Brown (1:12.24) 18. Manka, Skylar (1:13.92)

Jackson Hole Tri-Divisionals 3/22/19 U14 Girl's SG

1. Vap, Morgane (56.14) 7. Unger, Chloe (57.08) 11. Klug, Carson (57.63) 38. Ditullio, Drew (1:02.15) 43. Davis, Margaret (1:03.60)

U16 Girl's SG

13. Johnson, Winter (56.58)

U16 Boy's SG

13. Hoover, Miles (56.61)

3/23/19 U14 Girl's Slalom

5. Ditullio, Drew (1:24.23) 12. Klug, Carson (1:26.01) 23. Unger, Chloe (1:30.98) 25. Davis, Margaret (1:32.15)

U16 Girl's Slalom

17. Johnson, Winter (1:25.87)

U14 Girl's GS

2. Unger, Chloe (1:50.27) 14. Klug, Carson (1:53.66) 17. Vap, Morgan (1:56.25) 30. Davis, Margaret (1:59.70)

U16 Girl's GS

13. Johnson, Winter (1:49.41)



RESORT ROUNDUP

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

Big Sky Resort announces additional workforce housing beds

BY DOUG HARE **EBS STAFF**

On March 26, Big Sky Resort announced plans to construct additional seasonal workforce housing. The resort plans to add 75 new beds located in Mountain Village with pedestrian access to Big Sky Resort.

Construction is slated to commence in spring 2019, with units opening for the winter 2019-2020 ski season. With this expansion, Big Sky Resort will have produced over 500 affordable accommodations within the Big Sky community.

A press release from the resort said: "For more than 25 years, Big Sky Resort has been committed to accommodating seasonal workers by constructing, acquiring, and expanding housing campuses in the Big Sky community without relying on public funds."

The new housing project will offer occupant-friendly designs and modern features. Located within the Mountain Lodge campus, workers living in the accomodations next winter will be able to walk to the resort for convenience and not burden transportation infrastructure.

"This is not a one-shot deal," said Taylor Middleton, Big Sky Resort president and general manager. "It's just another step in the long-term

MOUNTAIN LODGE EAST



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

commitment that Boyne Resorts and Big Sky have made toward creating affordable and convenient housing options."

"Dorm-style housing like we build gives seasonal workers an affordable and safe place to land," says Brian Wheeler, Big Sky Resort vice president of real estate development and member of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust. "Providing these temporary housing options better suits the needs of seasonal workers and frees up more beds in the community for others."

UPCOMING EVENTS AT BIG SKY RESORT

MARCH 30-31 2019 Big Sky IFSA FWQ 2* Competition

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MARCH 31 Ski for MS

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APRIL 6 Wild Skills Junior Ski **Patrol**

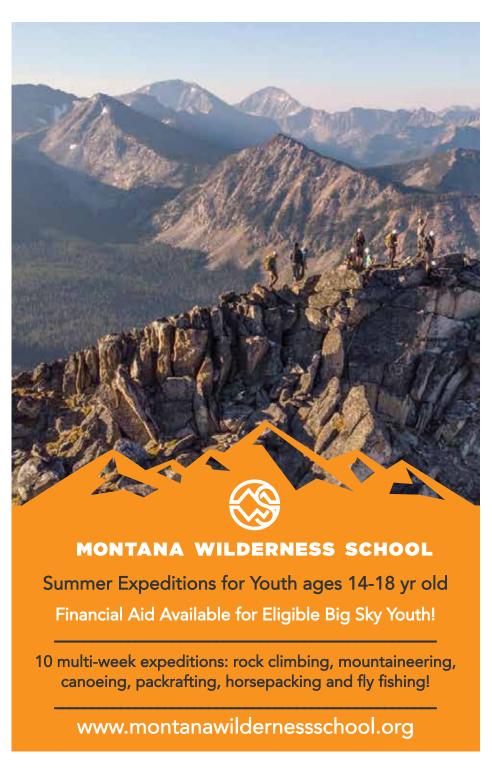
Join SheJumps for a day camp where young girls learn mountain safety and first aid while working the strong women of our ski patrol community. This event is intended for intermediate to expert skiers/snowboarders ages 8-17.

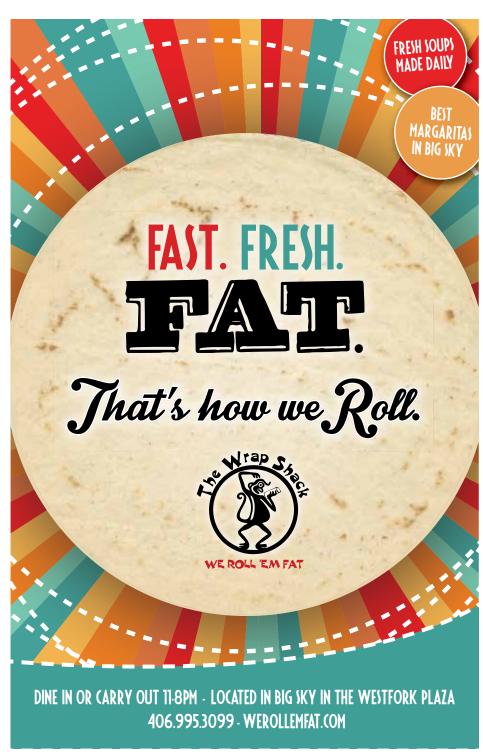
APRIL 6 **Galactic featuring Erica** Falls

Kick off April with a free concert at 4:30 p.m. in the Mountain Village Plaza, snow or shine.

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Babick commits to play football for Wheaton College

BY DOUG HARE **EBS STAFF**

On March 26, Lone Peak High School senior Kegan Babick signed a letter of commitment to play strong safety for the Wheaton College football program. This year, Babick was a standout running back and defensive back for the Big Horns.

Babick said that the Christian liberal arts school in Illinois has always been at the top of his list of colleges he wanted to attend. His mom went there, his uncle wrestled there, and his friend will be team captain next year. "When I visited [Wheaton], I knew that it was the place for me."

Babick transferred to LPHS this year from southern California. "It was great to have him, if only for one year," said Adam Farr, head coach for the Big Horns football team. "When I found out we were getting a 205 lb. fast, super-strong addition to the team, it was a good day."

"I'm happy that he ended up choosing a Christian school. I just know that he will find men and mentors there that will enlarge his worldview," said Kim Babick, Kegan's mother. "People don't realize how international Wheaton [College] is. There are students and teachers from almost every country in the world."

"Wheaton is getting a good one, and we were lucky to have him, too," said LPHS Principal Alex Ide. "He brings a lot of character to the field and he knows how to compete."

Athletic Director John Hannahs also complimented Babick's character and athletic prowess: "It's always great to have one of our athletes go on to play at the next level. And I think Kegan has all the tools to succeed in college athletics as well."



signs a letter of commitment to play football for Wheaton College. PHOTO BY DOUG HARE

Babick intends to major in the Applied Health Science program and he will also receive a scholarship for participating in the ROTC program. After graduation, the talented footballer says he is considering joining the military. The senior said he has already received a detailed workout regimen specifically geared towards his position. Babick will report for preseason training in early August.



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THE LONE PEAK PLAYBOOK



Big Sky Futbol Club fills up rosters in first year

BY DOUG HARE EBS STAFF

This December, the Big Sky Futbol Club, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit, received three grants totalling \$8,000 from the Moonlight Basin, Spanish Peaks and Yellowstone Club community foundations. In past years, Big Sky soccer players were typically playing as an affiliate of the Bozeman Blitzz FC and driving to practice in Bozeman. Not anymore.

With those funds, the BSFC was able to purchase equipment and uniforms, secure opportunities to play this spring, and pay to certify coaches and referees. According to their website, the mission of the new soccer club will be to "promote and foster a love of the international game of *futbol* for players ages 4-19 years who live in the Big Sky community and surrounding areas."

Club Director Kim Dickerson said she was overwhelmed by the interest in Big Sky having its own soccer club, initially expecting about 60 players and one travel team, registration closed this year with more than 110 players on rosters, enough for four travel teams and a total of seven teams with full rosters.

"We really were able to build off the momentum from the successful season of the coed high school soccer team this fall, coached by Tony Coppola," said Dickerson. "I'm excited that we'll be able to play and practice in our community this year. It's going to be nice to have some home games. I just want the kids to have fun."

"Kim really did some great work getting us to the point where we could form a board of directors and start gauging interest from the community," said Club President Anita Romine. "We've received so much support from the community that our rosters are nearly maxed out."



Sophia Cone playing outside midfield on a sunny day in Big Sky Community Park. PHOTO COURTESY OF KIM DICKERSON

Beginning in April, the BSFC will offer programs ranging from the Mini-Challengers, a five week clinic exposing 4-5 year olds to the game, as well as recreational non-travel and travels teams for older participants.

Many children have already been participating in futsal, a variant of indoor soccer, at the Ophir Elementary School gym during the evenings. But with the snowpack slowly melting, the teams are hoping to be practicing on grass in the Big Sky Community Park by mid-April.



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Cottonwood Crossing #9 1,854 SQ FT / \$525K

BIG SKY



Lot 40 Half Moon Court .81 ACRES / \$325K



Lot 16 Andesite Ridge .756 ACRES / \$259K



Gallatin Rd. Tract 4 1.4 ACRES / \$254K

BOZEMAN & GREATER MONTANA



SxS Ranch Bozeman, MT 483.78 ACRES / \$7.5M



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



Homestead at the Beacon Butte, MT 640 Acres / \$1.65M

RECENTLY SOLD



Yellowstone Ranch Preserve List Price: \$19M



Big Sky Corner Property List Price: \$3.24M



Crail Ranch Unit 40 List Price: \$1.35M



Black Eagle Lodge Unit 30 List Price: \$1.35M



Osprey Cove Lakehouse List Price: \$1.25M

RECENTLY SOLD



Elevation 600 Unit 1 List Price: \$759K



12 Ruby Range List Price: \$755K



136 Juniper Berry List Price: \$595K



Summit 911/912 List Price: \$595K



21 Antler Drop List Price: \$459K



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Lot 39 Diamond Hitch 1 ACRE / \$595K



64 Lodgepole 6,160 SQ FT / \$3.895M



Kandahar at Beehive Basin 5,409 SQ FT / \$3.45M



30 Beehive Basin Rd. 6,203 SQ FT / \$2.9M



245 Rain in Face 3,446 SQ FT / \$1.695M



118 Rose Hip Circle 1,940 SQ FT / \$489K



Mountain Meadows 120 Acres / \$3.495M



Big EZ Lot 42: \$339K / 20 ACRES Lot 43: \$375K / 20 ACRES Combined: \$589K



Lot 4 Beaver Creek West 20 ACRES / \$539K



Lot 2 Big Buck Road 20 ACRES / \$485K



Lot 3 Joy Rd. 6.83 ACRES / \$395K

BELGRADE



115 Teita Drive 1,909 SQFT / \$420K

PRIOR PERUO



35 Woodman Drive 1,732 SQ FT / \$335K

COMMERCIAL



78 Meadow Village Dr. *Big Sky, MT* 4,769 SQ FT / \$2.1M



Marketplace Unit 104 *Big Sky, MT* 1,204 SQ FT / \$560,920



Marketplace Unit 202 Big Sky, MT 966 SQ FT / \$389K



Airport Garages Bozeman, MT \$24.9K per unit Taking reservations for building G



2078 Little Coyote List List Price: \$1.079M



Ski Tip Lot 10 List Price: \$975K



130 Sandhill Road List Price: \$895K



70 Upper Whitefish Dr. List Price: \$895K



Crail Ranch Unit 68 List Price: \$850K



Lot 63 Silverado Trail List Price: \$390K



11 Lone Peak Dr. 205 & 207 List Price: \$339K



Firelight D-10 List Price: \$324.9K



Iron Mountain Storage Unit 150-D List Price: \$285K

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Making it in Big Sky: Lone Mountain Sports

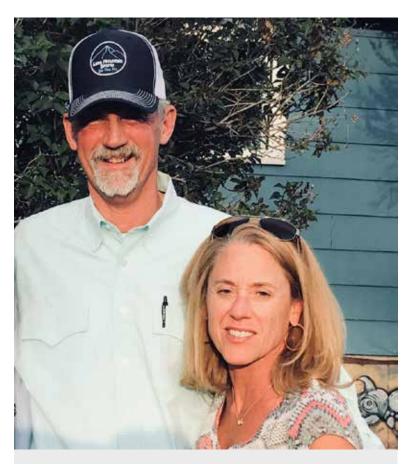
BY SARAH GIANELLI

BIG SKY - Lone Mountain Sports has been in business since the opening day of Big Sky Resort in 1973. The original owners were Harry Ring and Russ Jones, both former ski instructors at Bridger Bowl. At the time, it was the only ski shop at the resort and originally located in the Mountain Mall.

When their 10-year lease was up, they moved the shop off the mountain for one year. Lone Mountain Sports moved into its current location in the Arrowhead Mall when the retail complex was completed in 1984.

Scott and Carey Foster began working for Ring and Jones that year. Scott became the manager of the rental shop and Carey worked in the retail shop and became a buyer. They eventually bought the business in the fall of 1992.

Lone Mountain Sports continues to be the only privately-owned, full-service ski and rental shop and retail location at the resort. While the business has grown, Carey said they have stayed true to their roots, offering helpful service and great equipment to locals and visitors alike.



In 2017, Carey and Scott Foster celebrated 25 years as the owners of Lone Mountain Sports, a rental and retail shop that opened on the same day as Big Sky Resort in 1973. PHOTO COURTESY OF CAREY FOSTER

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

C.F.: We have been extremely lucky in our 25 years. It used to be that if we had snow, we were busy. We did have a few years that were lean. We've been busy, especially the last couple years, because Big Sky has gotten so much bigger and people know how great it is. Obviously, this year is the perfect storm—we have snow and other places don't.

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

C.F.: We have been in Big Sky since 1981. There have been so many memorable moments over the years. We've seen people from all over the world and all walks of life come to Big Sky and love it. We got married and started a family here. We've had employees get married and start families of their own here. We've seen Big Sky go from a little place to a world-class ski resort. It's been fun for sure.

EBS: Why do you think so many new businesses fold relatively quickly?

As part of this ongoing series, Carey shared her thoughts with EBS on the reasoning behind their success and longevity operating as a Big Sky small business.

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

Carey Foster: Our success is largely due to our employees. We have a great group of folks, with a core that has been together for quite a long time. Our location is also a big part of our success. We have a captive audience on the mountain. We back that up with great, friendly employees that are knowledgeable.

EBS: What are the biggest obstacles to operating a small business in Big Sky?

C.F.: I think the biggest challenge is finding affordable housing in Big Sky. The cost of doing business is much greater than when we first started.

EBS: How has the business landscape changed since you started out?

C.F.: There are more sporting stores at Big Sky [Resort] now, which is great for the customer. The advent of internet shopping has changed the buying nature of the consumer. That hurts us in some ways but is helpful in others. We see a lot of folks who have purchased boots online and need help with the fit. Or they bought a ski that seemed perfect for them and wasn't.

C.F.: It's hard for new businesses. Getting a loan isn't easy and the price of leasing retail space is steep. There is more competition now, especially in the Meadow.

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

C.F.: Treat your employees like family. They are the face and heart of your business. Realize that you will need to put in countless hours of work to reap the benefits of being self-employed.

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

C.F.: Believe in what you do. Be happy, you are selling fun.

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

C.F.: That's hard to say. We've been at Big Sky for 37 years and owned Lone Mountain Sports for 25 seasons. Time will tell ...

This installment of "Making it in Big Skys" was repurposed from an earlier version published in the Feb. 16, 2018 edition of EBS.

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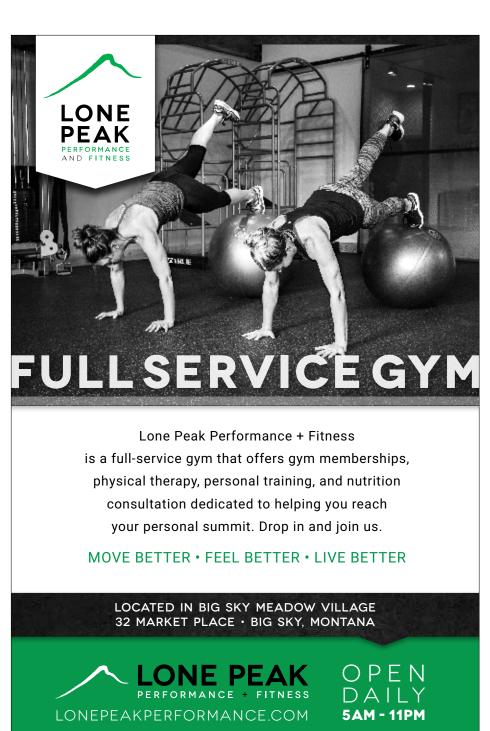


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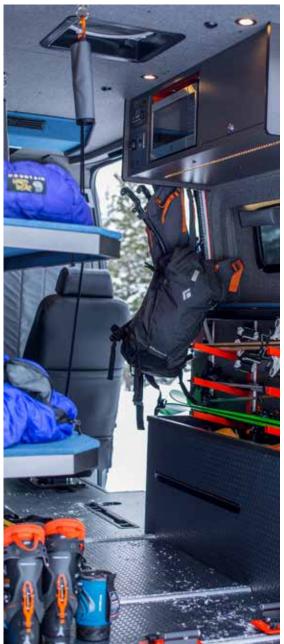




GET IN & GO







American Life in Poetry:

Column 7

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

Perhaps you've seen miniature portraits enclosed in lockets. Well, here's a little portrait enclosed in the pages of a chapbook by Pennsylvania poet Paul Martin called Mourning Dove, from The Comstock Review Press. Here, the subject is not frozen in its pose, but alive, up in the morning, coughing, beginning to move around.

Turning Over By Paul Martin

In zero cold the engine's slow to turn over, coughing awake like my father sitting on the edge of the bed staring at the blue linoleum floor, coughing again, lifting his heavy body into another day on the railroad section gang, the icy wind through Lehigh Gap blasting down on him as he raises the sledge hammer and strains against the crowbar. But now he's drinking coffee, looking toward the dark window, thinking of what? Maybe watching Friday Night Fights or ordering tomato seeds, maybe the ghostly face in the window staring back at him.

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.

CROSSWORD PUZZI 38 Destiny 40 Amer. ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE **ACROSS** Tree SUBJ IDAS Automobile Jar Orinoco NARK Assn. (abbr.) 42 Wolframite tributary 12 Wash 13 Jewish month 43 Scot. exclamation 45 Globe 14 Tennis stroke 47 Arabic script L U X D N A D H A G E N O B O L D T A D D P O L O 15 Cheater's notes 16 Harsh breathing 50 Greek letter 51 Tumor (suf.) 17 Berne's river 52 Coptic GENOA AEC BAG 18 Able-bodied clergyman 54 Water-filled seaman (abbr.) 20 Spoken SCUTUM ADValphabet letter 22 Firm 25 Belonging to 58 Marble PAD 59 Nipple 60 Eight (Lat.) (suf.) 26 Office of DAL 61 Luzon people 62 Verb-forming SACK Economic care (abbr.) Group of seven (suf.) Development Fruiting spike Birds (pref.) 9 Axillary 10 Animal sound 63 7th incarnation of Vishnu (abbr.) 27 Hindu title 11 Work (Sp.) 19 Bureau of Labor Meat on a 29 Delay 33 Title of Athena Statistics Amok 35 Kilowatt-hour (abbr.) 21 City in Judah Diminutive (abbr.) 37 Wife of Vulcan **DOWN** (suf.) 7 Honey and wine Tender loving 22 Saturate 23 Web 24 Maple genus 28 Hawaiian frigate bird 30 Flavor 31 Ananias 32 Rockies peak 34 Frenzied 36 Spear-shaped 39 Agate stone 41 Braz. tree 44 Dancer/choreogr apher 46 Nature 47 Gangrene precursor 48 Vent 49 P.I. food 53 Cistern 55 Edible root 56 Atmosphere (abbr.) 57 Poly. beefwood ©2019 Satori Publishing



AMUSE-BOUCHE

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

The true identity of any restaurant



BY SCOTT MECHURA EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

The moment you walk into any restaurant or bar, you immediately begin to formulate an opinion of your surroundings. In other words, within a few minutes, at least for me, you assess whether the establishment has the concept of a McDonald's, Applebee's, Buck's, or The French Laundry.

You look around. You size up the décor, analyze the uniforms, take in the patrons around you and the overall atmosphere you

feel once inside. It's usually readily apparent, but not always.

Are the maître'd's in jeans or dresses and slacks? Is there a manager immediately present and are they in a suit? How many kids are in the tow of parents? Is there an overall uniform from waitstaff and bartenders, such as t-shirts or polo shirts? Or button shirts, ties and long bistro aprons?

But once you sit at that bar or table, the true identity of your new home for the next hour becomes more apparent than anything else thus far.

It's not the staff—uniforms can be ambiguous.

It's not management—they have a whole other pride and passion that may not always reflect the rest of the team.

It's not ownership—because some ownership can be absent altogether.

It's the menu.

This document is the very soul of any restaurant. And this extends to the cocktail menu of any bar as well.

My wheels started to turn. What is this document related to? On a micro scale of course, it reminded me of one of history's greatest documents from our founding fathers.

It's not really our Amendments, or Bill of Rights, which are the first 10 Amendments.

Then I thought maybe a menu is like the Federalist Papers. While you could make an argument that a changing menu or revised menu is a more accurate comparison to these papers, as one historian wrote, the Federalist Papers are considered one of the most important sources for interpreting and understanding the original intent of the Constitution.

So too is a menu an important source for the quest to interpret and understand a restaurant's intent and vision.

And while this is a close one, it somehow still wasn't quite making the complete connection in my mind. Then it occurred to me the connection was to the document of all documents.

A menu is like the Declaration of Independence.

Basically, the purpose of the Declaration of Independence is just that. It's a statement of independence and individuality. And what other identifier in a restaurant or bar says, "this is who we are," better than a menu?

It sets you apart. It establishes separation from the others with respect to style, quantity, price and theme.

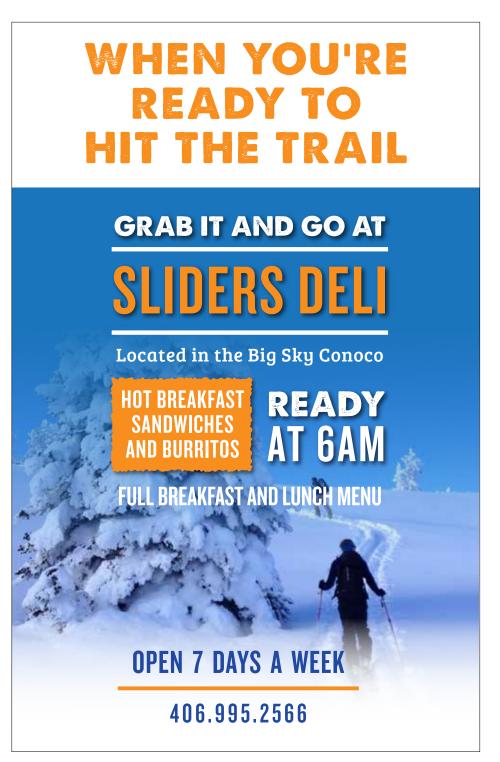
Our founding fathers tried their best to create this piece of paper—his decree, to inform the old world that the colonies had chosen to separate themselves. That they, we, had our own individuality and that we were not beholden to the thoughts, laws and ideals of others before us. That we now had a document, in writing, that told the world who we were and what we were about.

Is that not, at the end of the day, exactly what a menu does? It is the document that defines a restaurant or bar. That tells the public who they are, what they do and how they do it

So, the next time you patronize a bar or restaurant, wait a few minutes to pass judgement. Let the busy, scrambling staff settle in, have a seat, order a cocktail and see what's on the menu.

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.





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SECTION 4: ENTERTAINMENT







ARTventure immerses Big Sky students in Seattle art scene

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

BIG SKY – On March 7, twelve juniors from Lone Peak High School traveled to Seattle for five days as part of the ARTventure program, created and organized by Executive Director of the Arts Council of Big Sky, Brian Hurlbut, and Megan Buecking, a middle and high school art teacher with the Big Sky School District.

Debuting during the 2016-2017 school year, the ARTventure program was designed to introduce students to the world of art and culture through a series of field trips for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. While freshmen- and sophomore-year ARTventures occur locally, juniors head to Seattle for several days of "experiential creative thinking that transcends any academic curriculum," according to Buecking.

"We have some great artists in Big Sky but compared to any city we have limited access to galleries, studios and creative outlets," Buecking said. "I saw the ARTventure program as an opportunity for my students to experience art in person on a whole new level."

What makes ARTventure unique from other programs that take students on trips to see art is its flexibility in programming. Because Hurlbut and Buecking plan and organize the event, specific experiences and topics relevant to individual students who participate in the program can be attended.

Further, the trip can open students' eyes to different and unique opportunities in the creative field. "When I was younger, nobody really told me about these interesting careers that were out there," said Hurlbut. "We want to make sure that our students have the opportunity to broaden their horizons with interesting, educational and cultural experiences."

"Another difference between the program and others that may be similar is the realness," said Buecking. "We don't get a candy-coated version of Seattle and only visit tourist destinations. We go off the beaten path to visit a lot of different neighborhoods and venues."

Some highlights from this year's Seattle trip include visits to the Seattle Symphony, Chihuly Garden and Glass, Seattle Pinball Museum, Seattle Art Museum, Olympic Sculpture Park, a Hugo House writing workshop, and Photographic Center Northwest, among others. "The theater production we went to this year was incredible. It was 'American Junkie,' based on a memoir written by a Seattle musician and his struggle with heroin addiction," said Hurlbut. "We had the students read the book beforehand and then compare it to the play."



Students reflecting on Jeffery Gibson's exhibit at the SAM. PHOTO COURTESY OF



ARTventure students posing for a photo in front of a pop-art installation. PHOTO COURTESY OF MEGAN BUECKING

Another aspect of the Seattle trip, according to Hurlbut, is its goal to introduce students to creative career paths that aren't thought of everyday, such as lighting and sound design, gallery curation and public art administrators.

"A common misconception about the Seattle trip is that it is only for really invested visual arts students," said Buecking. "It is actually a trip focused on the creative arts, which is an umbrella term for all types of creativity. Concepts we focus on during the trip are music, creative writing, theater and drama, technology design, architecture, visual arts, society and culture, critical thinking and the dynamics between all of these things."

ARTventure is also an avenue for participants to see and visit a new place, especially for students who haven't traveled far from their hometown or state. For some students, the Seattle trip meant leaving Montana, seeing the Pacific Coast or flying on an airplane for the first time. "We want to get kids out of Big Sky and let them experience a vibrant urban area, something many have surprisingly yet to experience," said Hurlbut. "We think it's important for them to see how other people live and experience the cultural and societal differences one encounters in a large urban area."

"Regardless of the student's previous travel experiences, they have never been on such an immersive experience in a city's art culture," said Buecking. "It is a lot to take in, but I think that they all carry with them a deeper understanding of the arts and culture after the trip. Sharing the experience with their friends and peers adds another dimension and gives them an opportunity to build new and stronger bonds."

BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

FRIDAY, MARCH 29 - THURSDAY, APRIL 11

If your event falls between April 12 and April 25, please submit it by April 17 by emailing media@outlaw.partners.

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

Live Music Choppers, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

Seventh Annual Auction for the Arts

Moonlight Lodge, 6 p.m.

Live Music Choppers, 6 p.m.

Wonderheads WMPAC, 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

Ski for MS Big Sky Resort, 8 a.m.

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

Easy Riders Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

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

MONDAY, APRIL 1

Yellowstone Park Cycle Only Day Yellowstone National Park, all day

Pints with a Purpose Bridger Brewing, 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

Author Event with GennaRose Nethercott Country Bookshelf, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

Resort Tax Board Meeting Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, 8 a.m.

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.

WORTH THE DRIVE



WHITEFISH, MONTANA

North American Ski Golf Championship

Whitefish Mountain Resort | April 6, April 20, 9 a.m. - noon

Be a part of this two-day event at Whitefish Mountain Resort. On April 6, teams will take part in a giant slalom race, including both skiers and snowboarders. On April 20, teams will play a 9-hole scramble tournament at Whitefish Lake Golf Course. All points will be averaged to give a team their final score. The goal of the event is to raise money for the Flathead Valley Ski & Education Foundation and the Gary Norby Junior Golf Foundation. The cost is \$160 per team, which covers mountain and course fees. Visit fvsef.org for more information.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

Nathan North Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

Live Music Choppers, 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

Live Music Choppers, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

Wild Skills Junior Ski Patrol Big Sky Resort, 9:30 a.m.

Live Music Big Sky Resort, 4:30 p.m.

Live Music Choppers, 6 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

Charles Ellsworth Band Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 8

Yellowstone Park Cycle Only Day Yellowstone National Park, all day

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

Author Event with Michael Earl Craig Country Bookshelf, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

Eggs & Issues: Government Big Sky Resort Talus Room, 8:30 a.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 11

Dinner & A Movie Fork & Spoon Homestyle Kitchen, 5 p.m.

13th Annual Big Sky Big Grass

Big Sky Resort

Sundance & The Wilds Bozeman Hot Springs, 7 p.m.

A.A. Meeting Big Sky Chapel, 8 p.m.

Auction for the Arts silent auction features three local artists

ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

This year's Auction for the Arts, sponsored by the Arts Council of Big Sky, includes the sixth annual silent auction. The auction, now a juried event to ensure the best artwork from each participant and a broad array of art items are available for bidding, has evolved into a key feature of the Auction for the Arts and is a major fundraising source for the Arts Council.

This year's silent auction includes ten new artists, but is sustained by the ongoing support and contribution of long-time "regulars." Three well-known local artists – Shelly Bermont, Ryan Turner and Jill Zeidler– have supported the silent auction since its inception, always submitting popular, sought-after pieces.

Shelly Bermont

Shelly Bermont Fine Jewelry, Inc. offers fine jewelry designed for any lifestyle with hand-made pieces incorporating South Sea & Tahitian pearls, exotic stones, raw diamonds, fine silver and 18-22 karat gold. Most of Bermont's designs incorporate the use of leather in the making of necklaces and bracelets. Shelly was the highest seller in the 2018 Auction for the Arts silent auction, and she is a longtime supporter of the event and Arts Council.

Bermont's piece for this year's auction is a \$4,400 value, a handmade closure adorned with natural raw edge kunzite crystals (a pink or light-purple gem variety found in only a few localities in transparent gem form) and 18 karat yellow gold. One hundred percent of the donation will go to the Arts Council.

Her work can be found at her retail store located at 32 Market Place, Suite 2 in the Meadow Village shopping center.

Jill Zeidler

Jill Zeidler is a Big Sky-based ceramic artist who uses stoneware and porcelain clay to create her art form, carefully stretching slabs of clay by hand by repetitively tossing them onto a wedge table. Zeidler does not use slip casting or wheel-thrown techniques, and her designs are original and one-of-a-kind.

Zeidler then glazes the pieces with bright colors, a continuation of the contemporary feel of her work; the relationship between the forms and glaze colors lead to a sense minimalism, a salient theme of her work. Zeidler's greatest passion is making large-scale sculptural pieces that serve as utilitarian fine art.

Zeidler's silent auction piece is a ceramic 21-by-5-inch twig vase valued at \$600. "This is a new design for me, as I just started this line last summer," she said. "I love the color wash on top—it reflects the natural blues and whites of Big Sky."

Zeidler's work can be seen at her studio in Big Sky or at the Gallatin River Gallery in the Big Sky Town Center.

Ryan Turner

Ryan Turner, a Montana adventure photographer, shoots stunning skiing, hiking and fly-fishing action shots, picking up notes of the landscape, lifestyle and "the unexpected" along the way. Turner is an award-winning photographer who has been working primarily in Montana for over 20 years. His adventures and photography have taken him to places such as Alaska, Hawaii, Arizona, Canada, France, Mexico and countless others in between.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Ryan Turner's "The Horse Drive" is a 20-by-30 giclee on canvass framed in reclaimed barn wood, valued at \$695. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARTS COUNCIL OF BIG SKY

Shelly Bermont's piece is a 18-karat kunzite crystal necklace, valued at 4,400.

Jill Zeidler's "Twig Vase 2018" is a ceramic 21-by-5 piece valued at \$600.

Turner prefers Nikon camera bodies and lenses, and is a Nikon Professional Services member, as well as a member of the American Society of Media Photographers. "Ever since I can remember, I have always been fascinated by photography, or the thought of using light to create art or document a memory," said Turner.

The photographer, a loyal supporter of the Arts Council, has been a mainstay of the event since the first silent auction. His silent auction piece, the 20-by-30 "The Horse Drive," is edition two of 75 in a series and is a giclée on canvas framed by reclaimed barn wood, valuing at \$695.

Turner's work can be found on his website, ryanturnerphotography.com, or at his gallery at the shopping center on 47995 Gallatin Road Big Horn in Big Sky.

For tickets and more information for the Auction for the Arts silent auction, visit bigskyarts.org.



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BIG SKY, MT



Resort to host 13TH Annual Big Sky Big Grass

BIG SKY RESORT

Big Sky Big Grass music festival, a springtime staple of Big Sky, returns for its 13th year for the dates of April 11-14. This year, Big Sky Big Grass launches later than it has historically, bookending and celebrating a season of great skiing with great music.

The four-day festival will include a mix of small-stage and large-venue shows at Montana Jack, Chet's Lounge, the Carabiner and Missouri Ballroom. Attendees are encouraged to spend the day on the slopes before spending the evening tracking up the dance floor.

As always, Big Sky Big Grass delivers an all-star bluegrass lineup for 2019. Nationally known acts include: Big Sky seasoned veteran Sam Bush Band, Nashville's The Travelin' McCourys, the Drew Emmitt Band featuring the dynamic

lead singer and mandolin player from Leftover Salmon, Jeff Austin (formerly of Yonder Mountain String Band). Jacob Jolliff, a mandolinist for Yonder Mountain String Band, will also play. Also included: Grant farm, an Americana band from Boulder, Colorado and stomp-grass tunes from Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs.

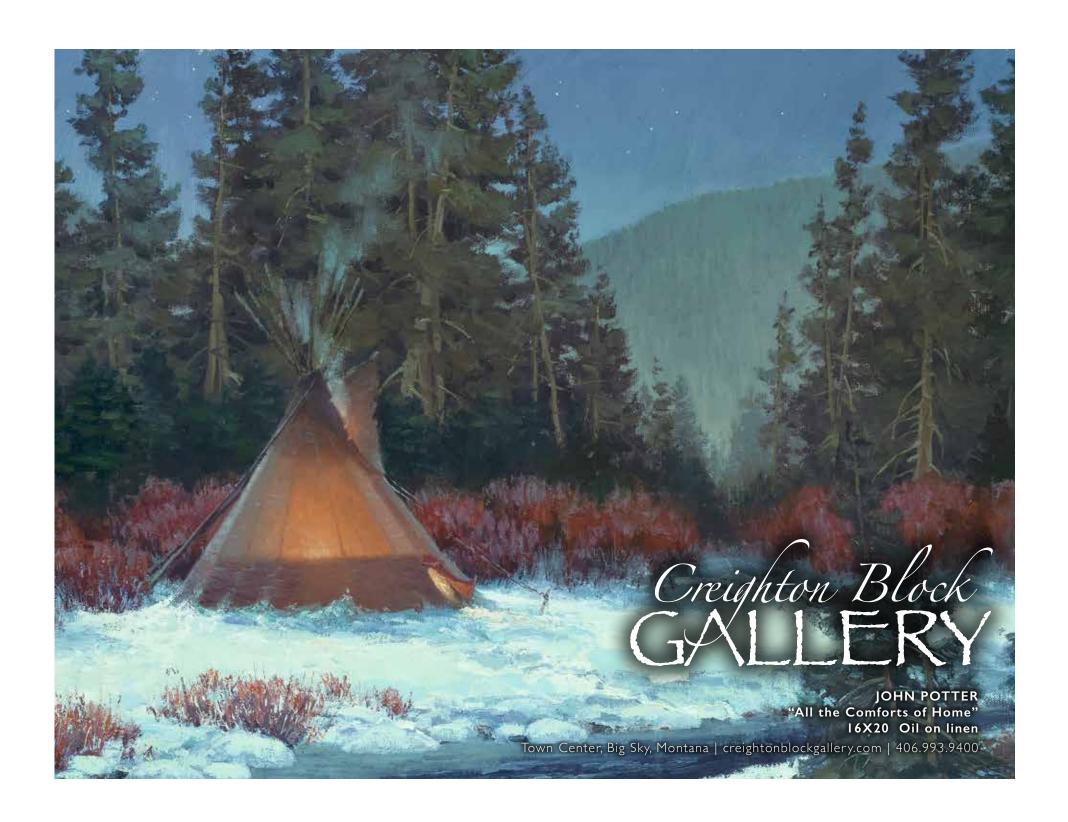
Montana's finest bluegrass talent will also perform, starting with The Lil Smokies, Bozeman roots-rock band The Hawthrone Roots and the talented local acoustic group, Lone Mountain Trio.



Big Sky Resort will host bands like Sam Bush, The Travelin' McCourys, The Lil Smokies, among others, during the 13th annual Big Sky Big Grass music event. PHOTO BY GABE PRIESTLEY

On Thursday, April 11, live music will commence in Big Sky Resort Mountain Village and continue through Sunday, April 14. Tickets will be sold a la carte for each event, and a limited number of Live Big festival passes will be available for sale, allowing access to every show throughout the weekend.

For more information about the festival and to purchase tickets, visit bigskyresort.com.



Stacy Ossorio

Broker I Advisor

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INTERMOUNTAIN OPERA BOZEMAN

Tchaikovsky's monumental Russian opera, "Eugene Onegin," comes to the Wilson Auditorium in Bozeman for the first time with performances on Friday, April 26 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 28 at 3 p.m. Based on Pushkin's sweeping story of love, jealousy and aristocratic life in Imperial Russia, this opera transports the audience to a time of sparkling ballrooms, lush country estates, duels and romance. The arrogant Eugene Onegin brings chaos and tragedy to a small country village while attracting and shunning the adoration of Tatyana.

Sung in Russian with English supertitles, Intermountain Opera Bozeman's production will feature internationally-renowned guest artists and an orchestra and chorus of the region's finest musicians, directed by Nathan Troup of the Boston Conservatory and conducted by Adam Turner, artistic director of the Virginia Opera.

"Eugene Onegin" is known for its several large dance scenes. The cast will be joined by dancers and choreographers from the Raison D'etre Dance Project, Bozeman's new contemporary dance company.

Guest artists for "Eugene Onegin" have performed with the best opera companies in the United States. Sarah Tucker, who will play Tatyana, performed with the Santa Fe Opera and San Francisco Opera, while Mark Womack, who plays Eugene, has performed with the Boston Lyric Opera. Additionally, Stephanie Sanchez and John Riesen have respectively performed with the Sarasota Opera and Opera Birmingham.

Visit intermountainopera.org or call 406-587-2889 for ticket information.



Summit View Phase 2, Lot 9 | MLS# 218470 | \$360,000

Capture the BIG, spectacular Lone Mountain and surrounding mountain range views from this elevated, large 3.17 acre corner lot located in the highest point of Summit View. A gated entry and protected conservation land contiguous to the lot provides the ultimate in privacy. Summit View is an excellent location to access world class Big Sky or Moonlight Resorts.



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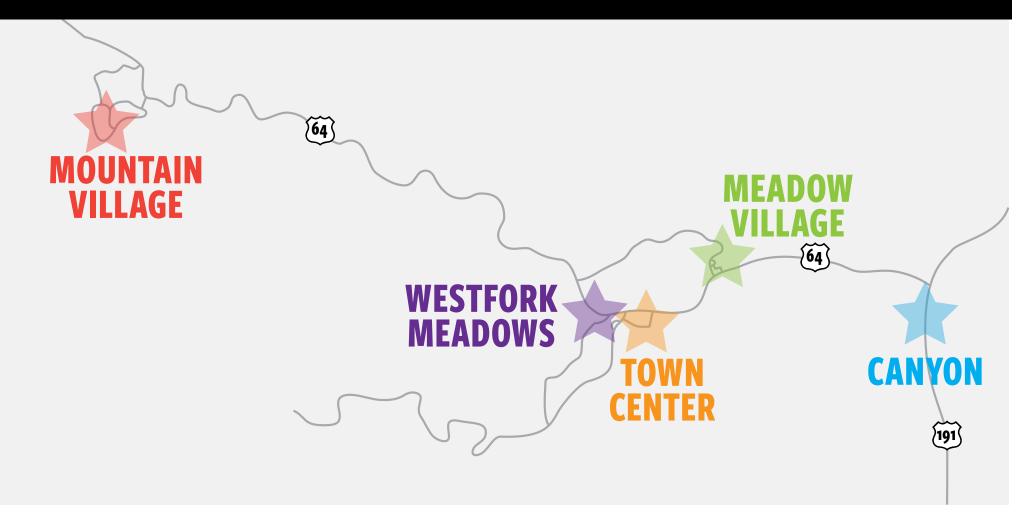
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Gallatin River Gallery displays "Expansive Skies"

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

BIG SKY – It's almost too fitting that a Montana gallery is showcasing a collection of paintings titled "Expansive Skies."

The Gallatin River Gallery in Big Sky is currently hosting the Bay-area based artist Carole Pierce's work through April. Pierce creates landscapes that focus not necessarily on concrete vistas and subjects, but rather on the *feeling* of space and time.

"The root of my work has to do with memory and has a dream quality," said Pierce. "It's never been about a particular place. People assign a place to my painting, wherever it is that speaks to them. I don't want to insist that my paintings be or mean something for someone else."

Pierce grew up in Texas, where she spent countless hours in a plane with her dad, a flight instructor and pilot for the United States Air Force during the Korean war. While in the air, Pierce experienced a unique view of the landscape, sky and weather that has since shaped her paintings and perception of the world.

"As a pilot, my dad was always talking about the weather and we spent a lot of time together painting for fun during my early years," said Pierce. "That shaped the way I perceive the atmosphere and environment and create my own paintings today."

Pierce's work is impressionistic and abstract. Although she worked from concrete subjects while studying in art school, Pierce's source of inspiration kept returning to childhood memories of Texas' vast spaciousness. "I did a little series on the sky and its formation in college," said Pierce. "I don't think I've ever painted a traditional landscape since then."

Since graduating from the California College of Arts & Crafts with an MFA in printmaking as well as a BFA in painting from Southern Methodist University, Pierce's work has been showcased in creative hubs such as New York City, San Francisco and London, among others.



Pierce's "Ghost Clouds," oil-on-canvas, 30-by-40. P



Pierce's "At the Break of Dawn," oil on canvas, 60-by-72. PHOTOS COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER GALLERY

Her work has also been featured in the Goldman Sachs International Collection, Harvard University and the United States Embassy Residence in Nairobi, Kenya, among other prestigious locales. Now, the Gallatin River Gallery, a 20-year feature of the Big Sky community, has been showcasing Pierce's work since February and will continue to do so through the ski season.

"I knew about Carol from working at a previous gallery in California," said Julie Gustafson, Gallatin River Gallery's owner. "Her work is timeless and has sustained over time, which not all work does. Her work is alluring to a lot of different people."

Gustafson is no stranger to the art world—she is also an artist, and has worked in and owned various galleries throughout the country. With all of her experience viewing and curating countless artists' work, she is a trustworthy source when speaking highly of Pierce's paintings.

"People really respond to the quiet of her work and her respect for nature," said Gustafson. "I think people also greatly enjoy the beauty and simplicity of her work."

Pierce insists that, now more than ever, we as a society need the calm and solitude of an empty space. "I think we are getting more and more congested in this world we live in, and that even our wild spaces are being invaded," said Pierce. "I just want everyone to be aware that we do have spaces we can escape to and be in. All you have to do is look up."

To view Pierce's current showing, visit the Gallatin River Gallery at 114 Ousel Falls Road.







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"Captain Marvel"

BY ANNA HUSTED EBS FILM CRITIC

"Captain Marvel" proves that moviegoers want to see a female-led superhero movie from Marvel, and that Marvel can make a compelling, clever and gratifying female-led movie. During opening weekend, "Captain Marvel" made \$153 million, making it the seventh most lucrative opening-weekend film for the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), according to Box Office Mojo. Clearly, we need more female-led superhero movies.

An inter-galactic war reaches Earth when Vers (Brie Larson) crash lands after escaping The Skrulls, aka the bad guys. She has never been to Earth before and finds the year 1995 on Earth to be primitive and exhausting. Her mission is to find a Dr. Lawson in order to figure out why the Skrulls want this doctor so badly. It is imperative that she gets to Dr. Lawson first.

While uncovering the mystery behind Dr. Lawson's research, Vers discovers her true identity is that of a human, not an alien species. She is Carol Danvers, U.S. Air Force fighter pilot and all-around hero even before she got her superpowers. One of the most unique parts to "Captain Marvel" is that we discover Vers' origin story while she also is finding out about her past, making "Captain Marvel" a mystery film as well as superhero story. Containing multiple twists; a female-dominated soundtrack, featuring Gwen Stefani in a climactic fight scene; and my favorite of the furry friends, a cat named Goose; "Captain Marvel" surprises and delights at every turn.

"Captain Marvel" also cleverly gives us two MCU origin stories, that of Danvers who becomes Captain Marvel, and Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson), who we know as the creator of the Avengers. The wonderful thing about origin stories is you don't need the MCU background to follow along.

The complex story of Vers is laid out clearly and efficiently whether you've seen a Marvel movie before or not. As a human, Danvers is constantly told by the men around her that she will never make it as a pilot because she is physically weaker and too emotional. After she accidentally absorbs superpowers and lives on an alien planet, she is told she cannot let her emotions get in the way of using her powers. Being too emotional is something every woman has heard from a man at some point in their life, and I love that "Captain Marvel" addresses emotions as the thing that makes us who we are. Everyone has emotions and shutting them off makes us weaker.

Prior to "Captain Marvel" and "Black Panther," Disney Studios did not have a great track record of diversity in the MCU. Not one other Marvel movie has a lead that is a female or person of color. After the success of these two films, hopefully Disney won't just see "Captain Marvel" as a response to DC Comics' successful "Wonder Woman," but will invest in a diverse future

Even if you're not watching the MCU films or if you suffer from superhero fatigue, "Captain Marvel" is worth watching. And if you're up to date with every MCU film except "Captain Marvel" then you can't miss it before "Avengers: Endgame" comes out on April 26. "Captain Marvel" fills in some gaps that "Avengers: Infinity War" left in its wake.

I don't want to ruin the surprise by uncovering the entirety of the movie's fantastic supporting cast or dive deeper into Fury's origin story, which involves that kitty named Goose. You'll just have to discover the rest for yourselves.

"Captain Marvel" is now playing in theaters.

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.



Brie Larson plays the charming and driven Captain Marvel in the latest Marvel Cinematic Universe film. PHOTO BY MARVEL

In the spotlight: Mathias

BY TIMOTHY BEHUNIAK

Mathias's passion for performing originated when he received a guitar on his 10th birthday. Today, the Bozeman-based singer-songwriter has been playing music in Big Sky Country for over two decades, but is also known around the world for his lively performances, powerful vocals and percussive guitar style.

In 2010, Mathias released his debut album, "Walk Alone," after working in the studio with Emmy-award-winning producer Jeremiah Slovarp. The following two years, Mathias traveled internationally, entertaining crowds in Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore and Chiang Mai, among others. Mathias, 41, spoke with EBS about his music career, reasons for moving to Montana and his love for the Beatles' "Norwegian Wood."



Mathias performing during Groovin on the Gallatin at Cinnamon Lodge. PHOTO COURTESY OF MATHIAS.

Explore Big Sky: Why did you start playing music? Is guitar your main instrument?

Mathias: When I was a kid I always had a song in my head. I could often be heard humming a tune, whether it was a Billy Joel song or the theme to "Star Wars." I guess it was a natural progression to pick up an instrument. There was a catalyzing event involving a friend and myself playing air guitar on hockey sticks to Twisted Sister's, "We're Not Gonna Take It." That sort of sealed the deal. I went home telling my parents I had to have a guitar. Eventually I received one for my 10th birthday after fulfilling an agreement to take piano lessons as a prerequisite. Shortly thereafter I began playing percussion in band as well. I feel piano and percussion were the ideal foundation for playing guitar. Your right hand keeps the rhythm while your left works with the chords and melody.

EBS: How long have you been playing for?

M: Just over 30 years. It's been my sole occupation for over nine years now.

EBS: Did you grow up in Montana? If not, where are you from originally?

M: I grew up in Williston, ND, but my family homesteaded on both sides of the border, so my Montana roots are deep. And save a couple years, I've called Montana home since I graduated high school.

EBS: What made you decide to come here?

M: I originally came out here to study film and to live simply in the mountains. Bozeman and Big Sky had been common stops on family vacations en route to Yellowstone when I was young. My older brother attended Montana State University, which furthered my connection to Bozeman. By the time I moved here, I was already in love with the area.

EBS: How would you describe your style?

M: Ah, the dreaded question. I suppose I would say it's acoustic folk and rock with everything from country to funk mixed in. My guitar style is very percussive. If there's something that sets me apart stylistically, it's my utilization of open strings to produce a fuller sound—it's a sort of faux 12-string technique. I feel my vocals can run the gamut from the airy and intimate side to a more full and assertive voice.

EBS: Does the Montana lifestyle affect your songwriting and playing? If so, in what way?

M: In some ways I've gotten slightly more Americana and country over the years. While I don't think the average patron of a local watering hole in rural Montana would classify me that way, they hear it instantly in Europe or Asia. And of course, I've written a lot of my lyrics about Montana and my experiences here.

EBS: Where have you performed?

M: I've played all over Montana, especially the Bozeman, Big Sky and Livingston areas. When I hit the road it's usually for a run of gigs around Flathead and Whitefish, back home to North Dakota or down to Stanley and Ketchum in the Sawtooth's of Idaho. I've also played a couple seasons in the Florida Keys and one on Koh Tao in Thailand. In addition, I try to work a few gigs into my travels and have now performed in a dozen countries around the globe.

EBS: What are some of your personal favorite songs you enjoy performing?

M: I love the songs that lend themselves to a flow state. For instance, I do my own rendition of "Norwegian Wood." It's actually about 80 percent original material that I've gradually written around the Beatles' classic. It's in drop D [tuning] so there's a nice drone to improvise over. The song just creates a great space to explore. I have half a dozen little variations and jams I've written off of it over the years, and it's constantly evolving. I love that about it. Some nights it's not a matter of whether I play "Norwegian Wood," but rather which version I should do.

EBS: Which artists or bands do you draw influence from?

M: Dave Matthews Band, Paul Simon, Coldplay, The Beatles, Weezer, the Grateful Dead, Vampire Weekend, Mumford & Sons and Phish.

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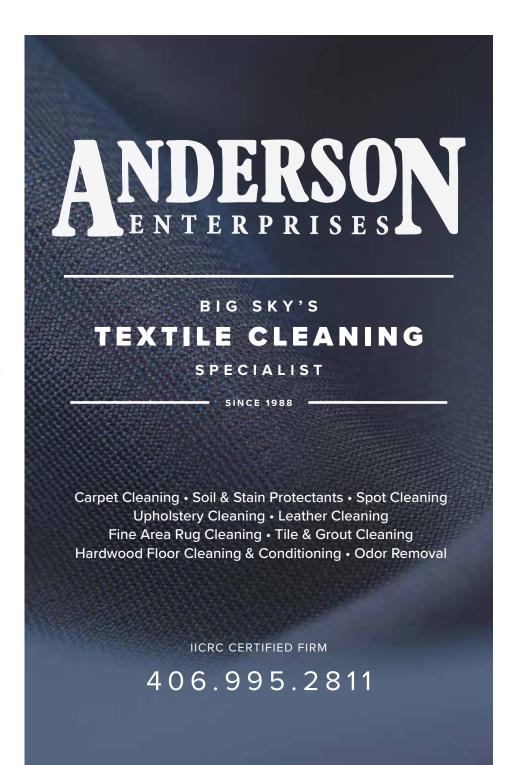
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