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# Big Sky

Nov. 20 - Dec. 3, 2020  
Volume 11 // Issue #24

**Big Sky Resort  
opening day preview**

*BSRAD finalizes  
first fall allocations*

**Porcupine Wildfire  
burns 680 acres**

**Waldazo finds a home**

**LPHS volleyball's historic  
season concludes**

  
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# OUTLAW

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## ON THE COVER:

Big Sky local Erik Morrison snowboards through powder under the Powder Seeker chair at Big Sky Resort last March. Big Sky Resort will open for the 2020-2021 season on Nov. 26. PHOTO BY JONATHAN FINCH

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## Big Sky Resort opening day preview

Big Sky Resort will officially open for the season on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26. First chairs will spin at 9 a.m. and EBS has you covered with what you need to know—mask requirements, chairlift capacities and more—prior to hitting the slopes for the first time this season.

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## BSRAD finalizes first fall allocations

On Nov. 12 the Big Sky Resort Area District concluded their first ever fall allocation cycle, awarding approximately \$3 million to local organizations and nonprofits. Rather than considering requests strictly based off the organization as in years past, this allocation cycle, for the first time organizations were asked to submit applications defined by project with the accompanying amounts.

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## Porcupine Wildfire burns 680 acres

The Porcupine Wildfire ignited on Nov. 5 at approximately 1 p.m. south of Big Sky. According to U.S. Forest Service officials the wildfire burned an estimated 680 acres before its full containment on the morning of Nov. 8. The cause remains under investigation at this time.

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## Waldazo finds a home

Waldazo, the iconic, metallic bison sculpture who resides at Fire Pit Park in the Big Sky Town Center, was recently purchased for \$55,000 after a two-year loan by artist Kirsten Kainz, allowing him to remain at his current post for generations to come.

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## LPHS volleyball's historic season concludes

This season, the 2020 Lone Peak High School Lady Big Horns varsity volleyball team became the most successful volleyball team in school history. They finished with a nearly perfect, 11-1 regular season record before advancing to the divisional tournament championship. The season also included a milestone victory over the Gardiner Bruins, whom LPHS hadn't beaten in four years.

### Opening Shot



Jim Buonomici and his sons Brett and Domenick, on holiday ski trip to Big Sky in 1993. Jim and his wife April retired and moved to Big Sky full time where Jim works as a resort host. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUONAMICI FAMILY

## EDITORIAL POLICIES

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

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For the December 4, 2020 issue:  
November 25, 2020

### CORRECTIONS

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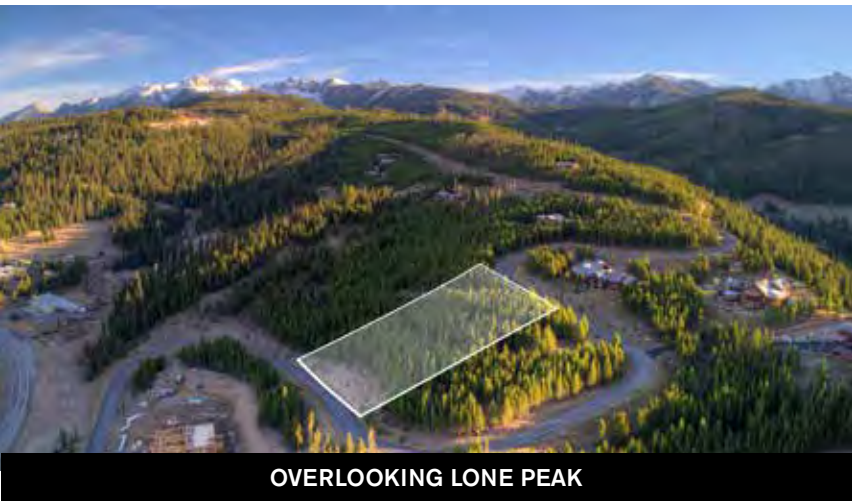
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Are you traveling to see your family this Thanksgiving? If not, how will you celebrate virtually with them?



**Kourtnie Ethel**  
*Salt Lake City, UT*

“I will be traveling to California to visit my family for about a week. And that seems like a good amount of time to be able to spend with everyone. And we’ll probably just probably take Thanksgiving photos, funny family photos and cook on Thanksgiving and watch football and nothing too crazy.”



**Becky Brockie**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“No, I’m not traveling for Thanksgiving. I’m selfish and I love to ski, and that’s the day the resort opens so that’s where I will be... [I’ll] Probably [do] a Friendsgiving. Apparently, I only care about skiing because that’s the only real plan I have.”



**Garrett Kemberling**  
*Big Sky, MT*

“This Thanksgiving we’re hosting some close friends and relatives for a very small get together. Maybe, smoking a turkey on our Traeger and frying a turkey outside.”



**Matthew Nogueras**  
*Tampa Bay, FL*

“Definitely something different, that’s for sure. I don’t have the opportunity unfortunately to go back home and spend the time with my family. However, I did come up here with my best friend, she was here before me, she came back in the summer. And she’s the whole reason I came up here so we’re gonna have our own little orphan’s Thanksgiving, I suppose.”



LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Support new ‘Wild and Scenic’ legislation

To the Editor:

With Sen. Jon Tester’s recent announcement of the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, all Americans have a tremendous opportunity. This made-in-Montana legislation would designate parts of 17 streams and 336 miles of waterways in Montana as “Wild and Scenic,” including 39 miles of the Gallatin River.

The Gallatin is the lifeblood of the Big Sky community, and Wild and Scenic designation will help ensure that this cultural icon and economic driver continues to be at the center of Big Sky’s future as a clean, cold river full of wild trout and sought-after whitewater. Big Sky is shifting into a year-round, full-time community, so now is the time to add these protections.

As the former owner of a Gallatin Canyon hospitality business, I’ve seen firsthand the value of the Gallatin and the Wild and Scenic designation will help ensure this visitation is sustainable over the long term. Though we consider the Gallatin our backyard waterway, its importance and influence stretches far beyond the confines of our headwaters community. Downstream municipalities, farmers, ranchers, small businesses and residents all depend on the river’s clean, cold water. While the Wild and Scenic designation would not extend beyond the confluence with Spanish Creek, by ensuring a healthier Upper Gallatin the act would

protect downriver users as well. The same can be said for all the rivers included in this bill.

From agriculture to angling, rivers are Montana. The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act would safeguard that heritage for generations to come. Visit [healthyriversmt.org](http://healthyriversmt.org) to join me in endorsing this landmark legislation.

Mike Scholz, former Buck’s T-4 owner  
*Big Sky*



The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act will be sponsored by Sen. John Tester and, if passed, will protect 336 river miles in Montana including 39 miles of the Gallatin River. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER





# BETTER TOGETHER

A monthly District bulletin

Greetings Big Sky,

Since the pandemic began, our community response to COVID-19 has kept Big Sky healthy and safe. We've forged unprecedented partnerships through Big Sky Relief – ensuring summer recovery and resiliency for the upcoming ski season. Winter is knocking at our door and it feels a bit like we are looking over a large cornice getting ready to ski a run with unknown terrain. I'm confident we will rise to meet the challenges ahead by collectively exercising patience, compassion, and empathy.

In addition to our pandemic response, the District Board continues to work towards ensuring Big Sky's public funds are strategically invested to address community needs. I encourage you to visit our website and review the results of our recent Fall award cycle. As always, we welcome community participation and feedback at any of our meetings. During our recent board meeting, the Coordinating Council of Big Sky provided the first annual report on community strategies. The group continues to focus on addressing the goals of the Community Strategic Plan.

Lastly, as we open for winter operations, please adhere to the health guidelines set forth by the county, state, and CDC. Each of us has a responsibility to wear a mask, socially distance, quarantine and isolate, and participate in community surveillance testing as available.

We are Better Together,

Daniel Bierschwale, Executive Director  
Big Sky Resort Area District

## Did you know...

The District Board typically meets monthly and all meetings are open to the public. Public comments are welcome and encouraged.

Dates & Agendas available at:

[ResortTax.org](https://ResortTax.org)



### Annual Business Registration Deadline: 12.31.2020

All businesses operating within the District must register each year, whether or not they collect resort tax. To register visit:  
[ResortTax.MuniRevs.com](https://ResortTax.MuniRevs.com)

### FY21 Fall Funding Awards

To view complete FY21 Fall award results please visit:  
[ResortTax.org/Funding](https://ResortTax.org/Funding)

### Report on Community Strategies

To view community report card and update visit:  
[ResortTax.org/About/Community-Vision-Strategy](https://ResortTax.org/About/Community-Vision-Strategy)



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## Giving Tree program will be slightly different this year

**EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – The Rotary Club of Big Sky, with the help of the Big Sky community, is once again sponsoring the Christmas Giving Tree with a few slight changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Giving Tree is an annual program that helps families during Christmas by providing gifts for the children and a Christmas dinner for a family in need.

To accommodate for extra delivery time, the dates have been moved up and the tree will be up a week earlier in the Big Sky Post Office this year. Additionally, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community, the Rotary Club will not be wrapping the gifts this year and will instead provide a bag and wrapping supplies to the recipients of the gifts.

For families in need of support, you can pick up a Santa Letter from First Security Bank, American Bank, Big Sky Food Bank or The Country Market. Completed letters are due no later than Dec.1.

To donate, pick an angel with specific requests from children or a boot, which is a way to donate dollars towards gifts, off the tree located in the Post Office lobby. If you pick an angel, purchase the gifts requested, and return the gifts to one of the bank entryways.

All families that submit a Santa Letter will receive a Christmas dinner basket in addition to any gifts.

“The community has been extremely generous...it’s the holidays and that’s an important time for everybody to enjoy,” said Mia Lennon, the coordinator of the program.

According to Lennon, “in 2018 we had approximately 15 families and 40 kids. In 2019 we had 30 families and 70 kids... so there is a need.”

## WMPAC announces 2021 Winter Season

**WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

BIG SKY – It come as a surprise to no one that the world of performing arts has faced changes and challenges over the past year. To prepare and adapt for the upcoming Winter 2021 season, WMPAC built a new, high-quality streaming infrastructure to seamlessly broadcast performances to its audiences, providing the option for audiences to buy either a virtual or in-person ticket to almost every performance.

Guests who prefer to keep their distance but still engage from home will log in to the virtual platform, wmpac.live, while in-person attendees can be assured of the utmost safety at WMPAC with seating capacity limited to 25 percent, with groups seated six feet apart from each other. Masks are required for the duration of the time indoors, and each performance has eliminated an intermission to reduce foot traffic in the lobby.

“Giving up was never an option,” said John Zirkle, executive director of WMPAC. “We knew it would be difficult and require insane flexibility and creativity, but we knew we could do it. We’ve changed absolutely everything about our model, from ticketing to seating to the types of performances we bring. But we are confident that we’re still providing incredible arts experiences to the Big Sky community—it just looks different than it used to.”

WMPAC has booked a series of artists including Broadway musical star Bobby Conte Thornton, Manual Cinema’s creative 2020 adaptation of Dickens’ classic “A Christmas Carol,” stand-up comedy, performances by Kronos and Cascade Quartets, perennial favorites James Sewell Ballet, and much more.

*Both virtual and in-person tickets are on sale now. The full performance lineup, information about Covid safety measures, and tickets are available at warrenmillerpac.org.*

## GVLТ seeks input for Triangle Trail Plan

**GALLATIN VALLEY LAND TRUST**

BOZEMAN – The development of a master trail system, named the Triangle Trail Plan, for the area between Bozeman, Belgrade and Four Corners is moving forward and looking for citizen direction. The Gallatin Valley Land Trust will host a Virtual Open House to learn where people want to go and how they want to get there.

The Virtual Open House incorporates easy, fun interactive surveys and images and maps in order to gather public responses that will create an inspirational plan to guide trail connectivity as the area develops. The Virtual Open House will be open 24/7 through Nov. 23, 2020 and can be accessed at <http://www.triangletrailplan.com>. The Virtual Open House will direct the major elements of the trail plan that will be returned to the community to additional review in early 2021.

“This plan is the missing link between trail plans in Bozeman and Belgrade,” said explained Mark Kehke, chair of the GVLТ project committee. “It will ensure that we have safe recreation and transportation choices as we move throughout the Triangle area and between neighborhoods, schools and town centers.

## LPHS NHS completes 2nd annual ‘Thanksgiving in a Bag’ food drive

**EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – For the second consecutive year, Lone Peak High School’s chapter of the National Honor Society completed their ‘Thanksgiving in a Bag’ food drive. From Nov. 2 to Nov. 16 the students accepted donations at the school of canned and other non-perishable items, before sorting and boxing the items for delivery at the Big Sky Community Food Bank on Nov. 17.

As this year’s food drive concluded, with help from K-12 students as well as BSSD staff, the drive was able to collect more than 1270 food items for the food bank, a nearly 50 percent increase in comparison to last year’s grand total of approximately 850 food items. Due to COVID-19 safety precautions only four students, roughly half of the amount that assisted last year, were able to assist in the delivery of the food items to the food bank.

Classes from each grade grouping that collected the most food items pied staff members in celebration of their achievement. Third grade representative Mayla Sheil pied Superintendent Dr. Dustin Shipman. Sixth grade representative Boone Jorgenson pied secondary science teacher Dr. Kate Eisele. The senior class representative Jackson Lang pied sixth through 12th grade Principal Dr. Marlo Mitchem. Lastly, because the staff collected a greater quantity than the high school students, NHS President Michael Romney was pied by staff representative Lindsey Hurlbut.

## 14 LPHS athletes receive various All-State, All-Conference recognition

**EBS STAFF**

BIG SKY – 14 different athletes, spread across three of the four fall varsity athletic teams at Lone Peak High School, recently received various All-State and All-Conference recognition. Between both the boys and girls soccer teams, 11 athletes were honored as well as three volleyball players. The All-State and All-Conference football team honorees have yet to be released as the season has not concluded.

From the volleyball team, senior Ivy Hicks was selected to the All-State team. Hicks, along with fellow senior Chloe Hammond, was also selected to the All-Conference 1st team. Rounding out the honorees from the volleyball team was sophomore Maddie Cone, who was selected to the All-Conference 2nd team.

In their inaugural season, both the Big Horns and Lady Big Horns soccer teams had a wealth of representation on the All-State and All-Conference teams. Seniors Evan Iskenderian and Sara Wilson were selected to the All-State teams. Iskenderian and Wilson were joined by senior Michael Romney and junior Sofia Cone on the All-Conference 1st teams. Seniors Nolan Schumacher and Miles Hoover and juniors Tony Brester, Carly Wilson and Tristan Clack were selected to the All-Conference 2nd teams. Lastly, senior Jackson Lang and sophomore Josie Wilcynski were recognized with honorable mentions for the All-Conference teams.



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# Gov. Bullock offers business, unemployment relief in wake of new statewide restrictions

BY MIRA BRODY

HELENA – Motivated by what Governor Steve Bullock calls a “breaking point in our hospitals,” he announced at a Nov. 17 press conference that he would be implementing new restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19. Starting Friday, Nov. 20, the statewide mask mandate is required for all Montana counties, minus any exceptions regarding case numbers with businesses, government buildings and indoor spaces all required to follow and enforce these mandates.

In addition, public gatherings are limited to 25 people or fewer where social distancing is not possible, and restaurants, bars, breweries, distilleries and casinos can operate at a maximum of 50 percent capacity and must close no later than 10 p.m. Tables will be limited to six people per table and establishments are still required to maintain social distancing.

“These are decisions that I don’t take lightly, though they are a necessity,” said Bullock. “We all have to collectively recognize that this virus won’t stop spreading through our communities anytime soon unless we take action to stop the spread. The responsibility of doing that lies in each and every one of us.”

To offset lost revenue in the wake of these new restrictions, Bullock also announced additional funding for businesses affected by COVID-19 as well as additional payments for those on unemployment. From the CARES Act fund, he is allocating \$75 million for additional Business Stabilization Grants.

Businesses who have already received a grant will receive an email inviting them to accept a third round of funding. To be eligible for funding, businesses must agree to comply with all state and local COVID-19 orders including the implemented mask requirements, social distancing, capacity and closing time restrictions.

Bullock will also be providing \$25 million to the Montana Department of Labor & Industry to help unemployed Montanans. This will allow for an additional \$200 per week payment, on top of regular Unemployment Insurance payments, beginning the week ending Nov. 8 through the week ending Dec. 19.

Bullock is also allocating \$30 million to the state’s food banks and food assistance programs to help those families concerned about putting food on their table this holiday season. He also announced that 100 healthcare workers will be coming to the state to help alleviate hospital staff shortages and will announce additional details on this program early next week.

# DEQ approves Big Sky wastewater treatment plant capacity

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – After six months of communications and document exchanges, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality has approved Big Sky County Water and Sewer District documentation demonstrating the available capacity at the wastewater treatment plant.

DEQ sent a letter to Ron Edwards, the general manager of the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District, with their findings on the capacity of the treatment plant and with a proposal to institute a quarterly review system to continue proving capacity.

The water and sewer district board will meet this week to review the DEQ letter and craft a concurrence letter in response, confirming that the district accepts DEQ’s capacity findings and the quarterly review system.

Once the water and sewer district accepts the quarterly review system along with capacity numbers, the DEQ will resume reviewing Certificate of Subdivision Approval applications. The current understanding with DEQ, according to the district’s General Manager Ron Edwards, is that the district will not have to resubmit COSA applications that were under review before the pause.

Moving forward, the water and sewer district will be required to submit quarterly reports to DEQ to continue proving that they’re within the wastewater treatment plant’s available capacity. This system of reports will ensure that the district does not exceed its capacity before the new wastewater plant upgrade is complete in summer 2022, according to Terry Campbell, an environmental engineer for DEQ.

Edwards provided documentation on additional capacity commitments that are not yet connected, but those commitments will not exceed remaining available capacity, according to Campbell.

“I’ve been tracking permits and new connections since I’ve been here,” Edwards said. “I actually started doing the system back in 1996, so all this tracking we’ve been doing really proved useful for the work we did with DEQ.”

DEQ’s approval of the district’s capacity follows an earlier approval of a “deviation request,” which gave the water and sewer district permission to continue using its differing methodology of Single Family Equivalents to measure capacity.

The discrepancy between the metrics used by the district and DEQ to measure plant capacity in part led to the confusion requiring Big Sky to document its plant capacity.

Campbell said that DEQ allows Big Sky to use their SFE system because it makes sense for the community’s unique situation.

“It’s different than what our design standards call for but in Big Sky ... they have such a low percent of occupancy compared to most residential communities,” Campbell said. “That’s hard for them to use a per capita basis for establishing flow so they use the single-family equivalency methodology.”

According to the DEQ letter Edwards received, “the remaining or available treatment capacity of your facility is approximately 100,000 gpd.”

That figure takes into account the commitments the district has made but not yet connected, which are equal to almost 49,000 gpd.

According to Edwards, DEQ found that Big Sky’s wastewater treatment plant’s capacity was slightly lower than what he had estimated. The district estimated its own available capacity was closer to 140,000 gpd, Edwards said, but noted that the numbers can change depending on what criteria is considered.

The water and sewer district is moving forward on the new wastewater treatment plant upgrade as scheduled, and will be sending out a bid advertisement in late November.

Initially, the plant upgrade was estimated to cost \$35 million, Edwards said, but recently, in part due to high costs of concrete, that estimate has increased to \$43 million. Funding for the project will partly come from Big Sky Resort Area District tax, which will pay for up to \$27 million of the upgrade costs, according to Edwards.

At its Nov. 17 board meeting, the water and sewer district discussed funding streams for the project. Terry Smith, the financial officer with the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District, estimated they would be able to cover the upgrade with internal funds through June 30 of 2021 before running into financing issues. This date serves as a six-month deadline for when the board needs to have more funding streams secured.

Previously, the board was talking with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation about obtaining funding through a State Revolving Fund. According to Smith, based on comments made by the board’s bond counsel, Dan Semmens of Dorsey & Whitney, the DNRC does not currently have the funds to support the wastewater plant upgrade.

The board will now look at a variety of banks to obtain a loan in a bond format to fund the project. Ideally, the board will start work on this immediately and have something secured within 90 days. If that deadline is not met, the water and sewer district does have the internal funds to keep the project moving forward until that June 30, 2021 deadline.



# ‘Teacher of the Year’ awardee recalls roots in Big Sky

BY MIRA BRODY

POLARIS, MT. – Teaching in a one room schoolhouse in an unincorporated town with 132 residents requires many hats as Kristi Borge can attest. On top of teaching nine students each day, Borge, Polaris’ only K-8 teacher, preps for five different grade levels, covering topics in every subject, all while answering phones, fixing computers, shoveling snow and changing light bulbs.

“You have to be really self-sufficient when you run a one room school,” Borge said.

Borge’s work in the classroom recently earned her the distinction of Montana Teacher of the Year, an award that recognizes one teacher in every state for their exemplary work in their classroom and community. Superintendent Linda Marsh, who oversees Beaverhead County’s six schools, nominated Borge last spring, receiving word that Borge was a finalist just before school started in the fall. To break the news, school board members, Borge’s husband, students and a news crew waited outside her classroom one day to surprise her.

“I was in class, learning how to log into one of our math programs, when the school board chair came to the door and told the students they had to do a special drill and made them all go outside,” Borge said. “They said, ‘Ms. B, you have to wait here and then you can come out.’”

Borge is a Big Sky native who attended Ophir Elementary School from Kindergarten through eighth grade. Her father was a ski instructor at Big Sky Resort the year it opened in 1973. She attributes much of her success as an educator to her time in the Big Sky School District, particularly to her fifth through eighth grade teacher, Alex Nisbet.

“I do think it was being in a small school environment and having such a positive experience at Ophir that makes me love school and learning,” Borge said. “It wasn’t until I was an adult teaching that I realized why [Mr. Nisbet] was so pivotal because he really worked to build and maintain relationships.”

Borge continues to create the welcoming atmosphere she remembers from Ophir and Big Sky as a community to her own classroom in Polaris. After graduating from Montana State University and four years of teaching middle school social studies and language arts at Monforton

School in Four Corners, Borge and her husband, Erik, were ready to return to the small town, community atmosphere again.

Polaris is a recreationist’s paradise located along the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Although some families own vacation or second homes in the area, a lot of the core community originates from remaining ranches or those who grew up in nearby Dillon. It’s a tight-knit community and has been nothing but welcoming from the moment the Borge’s arrived.

“All these teachers working in these one room schools are working super hard,” Borge said. “When you work in a small district, the funding is much smaller they are getting paid a lot less, but they’re also in these beautiful communities.”

“I just want to emphasize how great a community it is out here,” she said. “When you get an award it always is a collective effort of a lot of people—mentors teachers and community members who welcomed us to Polaris. It takes a village.”

Their first two years in Polaris, the Borge’s were living in a 1992 Bounder RV in the parking lot of their new investment, Maverick Mountain Ski Resort. After a friend told them that Maverick was up for sale, Erik, with a degree in business marketing—who Borge says has an eye for ‘the bigger picture,’—started calculating their options, and although it wasn’t a glamorous start, they were a couple driven by their passions.



Kristi Borge, a Big Sky native, was recently awarded the Montana Teacher of the Year, an award that recognizes one teacher in every state for their exemplary work in their classroom and community. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTI BORGE

“Before the sale I knew that in order to be happy out here I needed to pursue my teaching career because that’s what I’m most passionate about,” she said. She was offered the teaching position at Polaris School shortly after the sale of the mountain.

Today, when she isn’t in her classroom, she coaches her own nonprofit ski team, watching as her students fly down the same mountain, in the same race bibs as she did when she was a child. Borge herself was a former competitive ski racer on the Montana State University ski team, until an ACL tear transitioned her into coaching.

Despite the workload, Borge says working in a schoolhouse is gratifying because you watch your students grow and get to know their families.

“My third graders, most of them I’ve had since Kindergarten when they didn’t know how to read and then all of a sudden they’re reading paragraphs to you and it makes you really proud,” she said.



Kristi teaches five different grades in Polaris’ one room schoolhouse. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTI BORGE



Kristi, as a young competitive ski racer, at the bottom of Remely Run at Maverick Ski Resort in 1996 (at 8 years old). PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTI BORGE



# BSSD aims to return more students to the classroom

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – At a Nov. 17 Big Sky School District school board meeting, the board discussed the possibility of returning more students to the classroom with the end goal to return 100 percent of the student body to the classroom every day.

The board established that at least 65 percent of students of each grade grouping—elementary, middle and high school individually—would need to consent to weekly surveillance testing in order to begin a phased return of more students to campus each day.

“I mean the board’s goal has always been 100 percent in-person learning, to continue to fulfill the mission of the district,” said BSSD Superintendent Dr. Dustin Shipman.

If 65 percent of students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade—elementary grade levels—consent to weekly surveillance testing efforts, then an increased number of students could begin returning to the classroom in those grade levels daily. Middle school grade levels, sixth through eighth, would follow. Once 65 percent of the student population in those grade levels consented to weekly surveillance testing, they would begin to return more students in-person daily, followed by the high school, grades ninth through 12th, with the same surveillance testing commitment threshold.

“But really the point of getting kids back in the classroom, safely and with testing, is to ensure that we are keeping our kids at or above grade level, you know, the entire student body,” said BSSD Board Chairman Loren Bough.

“I mean it’s the reason that I’m in the business is to have students in the classroom,” Shipman said.

The phased reintegration would begin with elementary grade levels, then middle school grades with the high school students returning in full last.

Approximately 36 percent of students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade have provided consent for surveillance testing currently. Nearly 49 percent of middle school grade level students have agreed to take part and nearly 44 percent of students in the high school grade levels have opted into

surveillance testing. Cumulatively, roughly 42 percent of the overall student body has agreed to take part in surveillance testing as of EBS press time on Nov. 18.

“... So we’ll start that campaign today and just continue to monitor it and make decisions based on that participation level,” Shipman said. Some capacity of the surveillance testing consent campaign will likely be conducted via email.

The board also discussed possible thresholds that they would like to exceed regarding staff consent to surveillance testing. Shipman said he’d like to see staff consent, “as high of a number as possible.” Approximately 56 percent of staff members have provided consent to the weekly surveillance testing so far.

Beginning the week of Dec. 7, thanks to a commitment from the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, BSSD will have the ability to test 320 students and staff each week with results anticipated to be returned in one day or shorter, free of charge. The tests will likely begin being processed at a location in Big Sky Town Center, according to Bough.

“We’re convinced that with this kind of testing .... you can deliver the results that parents are expecting,” he said.

The school board also discussed the possibility of implementing a COVID-19 dashboard on the school district’s website. The dashboard went live on Nov. 18, displaying the percentage of students in each grade tier and staff who have agreed to take part in surveillance testing as well as previous surveillance test results.

“I think ... we’re going to be responsive to the weekly test results,” Bough said. “If there’s a big outbreak, as a result of getting all the kids back in school, we can go back to our cohort models.” He added that the testing data will be key when making decisions in the future.

As of EBS press time on Nov. 18, BSSD has experienced three cases of COVID-19 out of the 112 tests that have been completed, translating to an approximately 3 percent overall positivity rate.

*To view BSSD’s COVID-19 dashboard, visit [www.bssd72.org](http://www.bssd72.org)*



The Big Sky School District school board is launching a campaign to acquire consent from students to partake in weekly surveillance testing in an effort to return more students to the classroom.  
PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



# Big Sky Behavioral Health Coalition aims to help increasing mental health need in community

BY MIRA BRODY

**BIG SKY** – Like many mountain towns, Big Sky has a behavioral health epidemic, much of which has been deteriorated further by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this existing and growing need, the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, supported by partners in both Madison and Gallatin counties, announced this morning, the formation of the Big Sky Behavioral Health Coalition.

“Behavioral health, and the services that our community needs, are obviously lacking,” said Ciara Wolfe, vice president of philanthropy at the YCCF. “They were lacking before the pandemic, and I think as you heard from everyone today, the pandemic only has exasperated that. Our board of directors has identified behavioral health as one of our top priorities and ... the work that the partners shared here today is showing us a clear path forward on how we can best support the work of behavioral health.”

Partners in this effort, who each presented at the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce’s bi-annual Eggs & Issues meeting on Nov. 18, included: Maureen Womack, systems director of Behavioral Health at Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital; Michael Faust, director of Western Montana Mental Health Center; Taylor Rose, director of Clinical Services & Operations at Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center; Allen Rohrback, CEO at the Madison Valley Medical Center and Norman Feazell, director of Marketing and Program Development at Providence Mental Health.

Other supporting partners include the Spanish Peaks Foundation, the Big Sky Resort Area District, the Human Resources Development Center, Community Health Partners, Women In Action, Charlie Health and Bridger Care. The YCCF is serving as the backbone of the coalition and will begin the hiring process for a director in the coming weeks, as well as, help coordinate the involved community partners and provide direct community outreach. Big Sky Behavioral Health Coalition will have an office located in Town Center.

Behavioral Heath in Big Sky has been a widely-researched topic, and data reveals that needs are apparent and dire. There are a number of factors contributing to these staggering statistics, some of which include the ski town culture, isolation, its seasonal nature, our high altitude and cold winters and economic disparities. Factors preventing many from seeking help include transportation, cost, lack of resources and one of the biggest: the stigma.

“As humans were just a beautiful mess,” Faust said. “It’s OK that we’re messy, but what we are attempting to do today ... is to try and unpack just what those issues are.”

“I really just call it discrimination,” Faust continued. “Stigma is a way that we discriminate against others to say, ‘hey, let’s not talk about that.’ Stigma is preventing us as a society from getting us to where we want to be.”

In Montana, suicide is the sixth leading cause of death and we have the third highest suicide rate per capita in the country. On average, an employer, often the first line of defense when it comes to mental health and substance abuse crisis, has to call law enforcement 20 times before a wellness check occurs. These numbers have only increased since the onset of the pandemic—weekly average reports of anxiety or depression went from 35 to 40 percent in July alone. Feazell says at Providence, who has locations in Bozeman, Belgrade and Three Forks, they saw an increase from 600 to over 1000 clients a month.

Big Sky Medical Center currently has telehealth services available to those who need it and are in the process of onboarding two mental health advisors, Dr. Patrick Maidman who is board certified in adolescent and adult psychiatry, and Dr. Kathy Damberger DNP, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner. They are currently recruiting for a mental health specialist.

*For those who need immediate mental health care, or are looking for the services available in the community, the hotline 2-1-1 is available 24/7.*



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# BSRAD awards \$3 million in funds to Big Sky organizations

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – This year, the Big Sky Resort Area District added a fall allocation cycle for the first time ever. Over \$4 million in total requests were submitted for the fall allocation cycle and at their Nov 12. meeting, the BSRAD board awarded \$3 million in funds to various organizations.

In this special fall cycle, the application process remained the same but the way the board assessed the applications was new. In their review process, the board considered each project individually instead of considering each organization as a whole as they have in the past.



The Big Sky Resort Area District added a special fall allocation cycle this year due to the unstable situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF BSRAD

This cycle went smoothly since most of the applications were already seen by the board during the spring cycle.

The board fully funded the requests of the three government entities, the Big Sky Fire Department, the Big Sky Transportation District and the Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office.

The rest of the requests were split into two categories, community projects over \$100,000 and community projects under \$100,000.

In their Nov. 10 meeting, the board discussed each of the six community projects over \$100,000 individually. Of those six, five were funded based on the staff recommendation and one was placed in a pending status, the first time the board has ever placed a project in that status.

The application from the Big Sky Community Housing Trust for \$1.4 million for future property development was labeled as pending and a working group was formed to gather more information about the project. The group will work with Laura Seyfang, the executive director of the BSCHT, and Lone Mountain Land Company to understand the scope of the project.

“We just didn’t have enough [information] to say yea or nay right now and we need to make sure that we have a full understanding of how those dollars are going to be used,” said Daniel Bierschwale, the executive director of BSRAD.

Bierschwale predicts that the BSCHT project will come back to the BSRAD board sometime in January or February of 2021, meaning the organization will not need to wait until the next allocation cycle to hear the board’s decision.

Another project that sparked further discussion by the board was Visit Big Sky’s request of \$353,432 dollars for their project to promote Big Sky as a tourist destination. Bierschwale noted that the board is seeking additional details from Visit Big Sky on their project and what the future needs of that particular project would look like.

One community member felt that the decision to fund Visit Big Sky to hire an external advertisement agency was not the best use of community funds in the current uncertain situation.

Mark Davidson explained that when he saw the list of all the requests, the large sum for the Visit Big Sky project caught his eye as it was the third largest amount.

“At the current moment, I feel like those dollars can be better spent in the community, solving issues that are already current rather than bringing in more people and not solving them,” Davidson said.

But while he may differ in opinion on funding for that specific project, Davidson appreciates the work done by the board for the Big Sky community.

“Overall, I’m very happy with what the Resort Tax Board does for sure...I think they do a very good job of being fair with everybody, and I’ve got no critiques there,” he said.

Also included in the Nov. 10 board meeting was a community report card assessing the progress of the Community Strategic Plan rolled out approximately a year ago by BSRAD. The goal of the plan is to look ahead and anticipate community needs and implement strategies to meet those needs.

Moving forward, the board is trying to wean community organizations off of long-term dependence on resort tax dollars. In addition, the next awards cycle will be the first time that the application process is changed to reflect the board’s new review strategy.

“The board is moving away from broad based funding of an organization and will focus more on the impact of a project and what it accomplishes and how it meets community needs,” Bierschwale said.

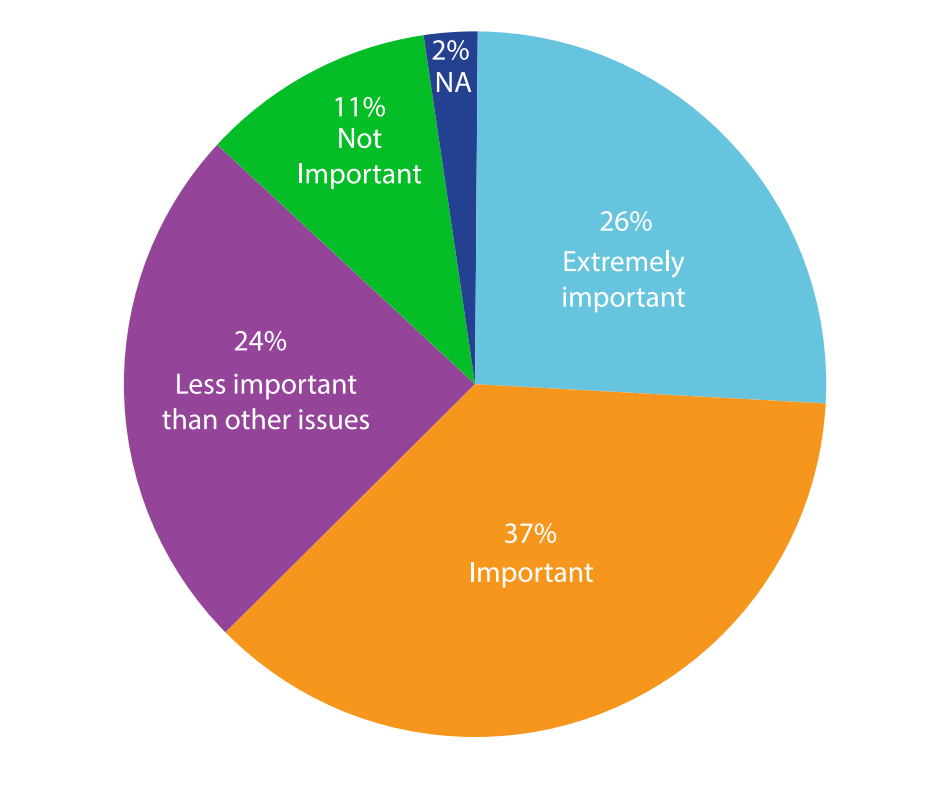
In the future, organizations will have to provide specific information on each project in the application process. The current plan for BSRAD is to return to only having their spring awards cycle, as long as collections are not interrupted this coming winter.

According to Bierschwale, “for instance, if an entire month of revenue is lost because the resort has to get shut down because of an outbreak [of COVID], that would be the type of thing that would cause us to really have to think through whether or not we want to spend our money for a full year all at once or keep to the two [cycles].”

This year was unique for BSRAD, with an extra allocation cycle, and the first instance that the board ever placed an application on a pending status.

To see the full BSRAD Fiscal Year ‘21 awards visit [resorttax.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Copy-of-Fall-Award-Final-11-12-20.pdf](https://resorttax.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Copy-of-Fall-Award-Final-11-12-20.pdf). To view the results of an EBS survey gauging the importance of funding each proposed project with Big Sky community members feedback visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-J8625BF67/>.

BSRAD Fall 2020 Allocations EBS Survey Results



EBS asked the Big Sky community how they want to see their tax dollars spent. We asked them to rate each organization that applied to the Big Sky Resort Tax District on a scale of not important to extremely important. Above are the overall results for each answer.



# Porcupine Wildfire burns approximately 680 acres near Big Sky



The Porcupine Wildfire began on Nov. 5 south of Big Sky. PHOTO BY ERIC LADD

BY BRANDON WALKER

**BIG SKY** – The Porcupine Wildfire ignited on Nov. 5 at approximately 1 p.m. south of Big Sky. According to U.S. Forest Service officials the wildfire burned an estimated 680 acres before it’s full containment on the morning of Nov. 8.

The U.S. Forest Service is currently carrying out an investigation to determine the exact cause of the Porcupine Wildfire with the aid of the Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office. At a Nov. 10 Virtual Town Hall Meeting, hosted by the U.S. Forest Service, Gallatin County Sheriff Brian Gootkin said there is no estimate regarding how long the investigation may take.

“There is no timeline,” he said at the Nov. 10 meeting. “... You never know how long it’s going to take when you get more information tomorrow and that could lead to another week’s worth of work.”

The wildfire, managed jointly by the Big Sky Fire Department and the U.S. Forest Service, began near the Porcupine Trailhead. Flames originated about one mile south of the U.S. Highway 191 and Highway 64 intersection near Big Sky, after a prescribed burn was being conducted by the forest service between the Porcupine and Twin Cabin Creeks in the Lemon Drop area, approximately one mile away.

The initial burn estimate was roughly 400 acres on the evening of Nov. 5 by the U.S. Forest Service, but a flyover by forest service personnel on the morning of Nov. 6 provided a more accurate estimation, resulting in a final, 680 acre estimate. On the evening of Nov. 5 the fire was reportedly 30 percent contained, increasing to 50 percent containment on Nov. 6, before becoming fully contained on Nov. 8

The Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office initially issued pre-evacuation notices to Big Sky residents whose homes were located within two miles

of the fire’s perimeter along the eastern bank of the Gallatin River, but no mandatory evacuation notices were ever issued.

Firefighting resources from the Big Sky, Bozeman, Yellowstone Club, Hyalite and other rural fire departments as well as Custer-Gallatin National Forest Service officials, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Highway Patrol and the Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office all responded to the Porcupine Wildfire.

The wildfire occurred in a portion of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks designated, 8,611 acre Gallatin Wildlife Management Area, which is closed to recreationists from Dec. 1 through May 15 and is a known wintering area for elk. Approximately 42 percent of the roughly 1,564 acre Porcupine portion of the Gallatin WMA was burned in the blaze.

“This fire happened at a bad time for the Porcupine elk this winter, but in the long term, the burn may serve to improve the habitat on the WMA for elk,” said Bozeman Area Wildlife Biologist for MTFWP Region 3 Julie Cunningham in an email to EBS.

Using tracking data, Cunningham estimates that between 200 and 300 elk typically winter in the Porcupine portion of the Gallatin WMA. The elk could seek other areas to spend the winter, contingent on the availability of food. She said, depending on the severity of the coming winter months, the effect on the elk could be minimal or lead to a greater winter kill with possibly more human-elk interactions if the animals need to seek alternative food sources.

Cunningham added the importance for the public to obey the WMA closure period, “... which are designed to reduce stress for wintering wildlife. Due to this fire, elk may be nutritionally stressed this winter, and they will need greater consideration than ever,” she said via email.



OUTLAW

News from our publisher, Outlaw Partners

# TEDxBigSky returns in 2021 with the theme of “Awakening”

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

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

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

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



Bode Miller delivers his talk at TEDxBigSky in 2020. This year, the crowd in the WMPAC will be much smaller and the entire 2021 Big Sky Ideas Fest will be virtual. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

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

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TED has created a program called TEDx. TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At our TEDxBigSky event, TEDTalks video and live speakers will combine to spark deep discussion and connection within the community. Just like TED event speakers, TEDxBigSky presenters will have up to 18 minutes to deliver their talk to the audience. Outlaw Partners brought TEDx to Big Sky for

the first time in 2017 with the theme “Big Ideas Under the Big Sky” which featured six speakers.

This year, the 2021 Big Sky Ideas Festival will focus on the Awakening process that the country has gone through in 2020. As the world emerges from the lockdown, there are many stories of how people changed their lives, businesses pivoted their plans and focus, and incredible examples of humanity and community building.

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

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

**Eight speakers will be presenting this year:**

- Cathy Whitlock, Regents Professor in Earth Sciences at Montana State University
- David Leuschen, Co-Founder and Senior Managing Director of Riverstone Holdings LLC
- Josh McCain, Founder and President of Big Sky Bravery
- Lane Lamoreaux, photographer and videographer
- Rob Balucas, owner of babaLucas Creative
- Jim Salestrom, singer/songwriter
- Max Lowe, photographer and director for National Geographic
- Megan Duggan, Olympic Gold medalist

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

## Outlaw Partners’ staff Thanksgiving plans

**EBS STAFF**

Many families will have to get creative with their Thanksgiving celebrations this year. Traveling is risky due to the COVID-19 pandemic and family gatherings may involve at-risk family members. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released guidelines for celebrating Thanksgiving safely. Some of their suggestions include enjoying a virtual meal with family members located far away, having a celebration with those in your immediate household, or hosting a meal outdoors.

We asked our Outlaw Partners team what they are doing to celebrate Thanksgiving this year, here are their plans:

**Mira Brody, New Media Lead:** “I am powder diving at the resort in the morning, then staying local and gathering with a few close friends and dogs for a Friendsgiving with lots of yummy homemade food.”

**Treston Wold, Controller:** “Our extended family lives all over the U.S. and we won’t be traveling due to COVID. This year, we plan to spend Thanksgiving skiing as a family and meeting some friends outside on the ski slopes.”

**Sam Brooks, Business Development Lead:** “I am hosting my whole family at my place for the first time ever. This is very different, we always did it at my house my entire life and in the last two years I just skied and ate oven pizza but this year I get to be back with my family again.”

**Joe O’Connor, VP Media and Editor in Chief:** “It’s a tough time with the pandemic. We wanted to see family back East but are doing the next best thing: driving to Lake Tahoe to see our old crew for a good old-fashioned Friendsgiving. Some of our best friends in the world live there.”

**EJ Daws, VP Sales & Marketing:** “Our celebration will be a bit smaller this year, with just my core family. In the past we have played a neighborhood flag football game, ‘The Turkey Bowl’, but this year it will just [be] my immediate family at dinner. Also, my 96-year-old grandmother won’t be able to celebrate with us due to restrictions.”

**Ersin Ozer, Media and Events Director:** “Thanksgiving will feel the same, with a smaller group. We made the hard decision that this year wasn’t the

best year for grandma to come visit from Texas. We will be celebrating with gratefulness, family and food.”

**Marisa Opheim, Lead Designer:** “I will be spending Thanksgiving skiing on opening day and then dinner with my boyfriend’s family!”

**ME Brown, Graphic Designer:** “It’s usually just my parents and I in Florida for thanksgiving since our extended family is all over the country. We usually go out to brunch/liner [lunch/dinner] for thanksgiving but this year we are staying home and cooking and having a small liner with our neighbors.”



Thanksgiving will look different this year for some families but there are plenty of creative ways to still enjoy the holiday. PHOTO BY S.J. ON UNSPLASH

**Megan Paulson, Co-Founder and CFO:** “We are having a family dinner and we also plan to go skiing at Big Sky Resort. We’re celebrating like usual as my family lives here and we always spend it together, and we like to ski on opening weekend.”



From our table to yours,

Happy Thanksgiving!



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**14 SWIFT BEAR ROAD | \$2,995,000**

With easy ski access and panoramic Lone Mountain views, this gorgeous custom home is located on a 1.5-acre property in Cascade Highlands. The groomed ski trail runs right past this furnished residence which offers primarily one-level living with large windows in every room of the home, a pond and circulating stream in the backyard, a large back patio and deck, a hot tub, and a free-standing sauna. The ADU can be accessed either through the garage or through a private entrance (along with a private driveway area), and offers 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, a living room, a dining area and a kitchen. // **SANDY REVISKY | 406.539.6316**



**32 LOW DOG ROAD | \$2,300,000**

Nestled in the trees, this private ski-in/ski-out home offers 4 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms in 2,759± sq.ft. of very comfortable living space. Located at the base of the Wardance ski run at Big Sky Resort, this charming home is within close proximity to all that the Mountain Village has to offer. The open floor plan is ideal for entertaining, and the back patio can't be beat! Offering 2 master suites, a family room, radiant in-floor heating, a gas fireplace, large laundry room and a recent remodel that included new appliances, new exterior paint, new metal roof, as well as a gorgeous furniture package. // **SANDY REVISKY | 406.539.6316**



**499 SPRUCE CONE, UNIT B | \$875,000**

This 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom condominium is a peaceful getaway for you in beautiful Big Sky! Located in South Fork just minutes from all Town Center amenities and attractions, it is an easy walk to dining, shopping, the farmer's market, music events and the ever popular fire pit. The main level features the kitchen, dining and living areas, which open with two different two sliding doors to a patio, open backyard, and adjacent open space complete with trails. The upper level contains all three bedrooms, including the master, and two full baths, along with a charming vaulted loft bonus area. // **MARY WHEELER | 406.539.1745**



**60 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD, UNIT 10313 | \$595,000**

The Summit offers the best lodging location at the Big Sky Resort! Centrally situated in the base area with the new Ram 8 and Swift Current lifts right out the door, the Summit offers the services of a fine hotel with the advantages of private condominium ownership. This condo has one king room, one double queen room, kitchen, three baths, with three separate lock-off configurations for the utmost in rental flexibility. Seller to pay off special assessment with accepted offer. // **MARY WHEELER | 406.539.1745**



**48 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD, UNIT 389 | \$339,000**

Views, Location, Views! Directly facing Lone Mountain and adjacent to the ski hill, this studio with one bath condominium is centrally located in Big Sky Ski and Summer Resort's Mountain Village. Enter from the Mountain Village courtyard - the hub of Big Sky's restaurants, shops and activities - and head to the 3rd floor to your own ski getaway. Go down to the second floor and out the back door and you are on the ski hill. This fully furnished condominium has a propane fireplace and a private deck that looks directly at Lone Mountain and overlooks the outdoor pool and hot tub. // **LYNN MILLIGAN | 406.581.2848**



**85 PRIMROSE LANE | \$210,000**

Build your Big Sky dream home on this flat lot in a wonderful neighborhood! This is the best priced lot currently available in Big Sky. Located in the Ramshorn View Estates Subdivision adjacent to area schools and next to multiple recreational areas. Enjoy hiking and biking right out your front door and fly-fishing across Highway 191 or explore the many activities, restaurants, and shops in Big Sky's Town Center just 5.5 miles north. Head south to Hebgen Lake and Yellowstone National Park for additional outdoor fun only an hour's drive away. // **BRENNA KELLEHER | 406.581.3361**

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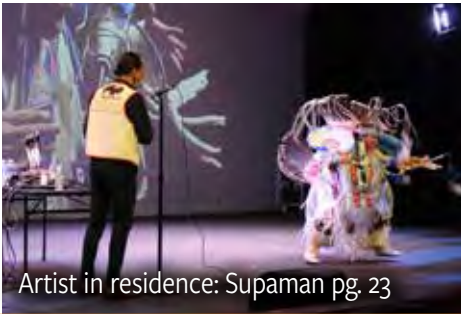
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SECTION 2:  
ENVIRONMENT &  
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THE NEW WEST



BY TODD WILKINSON  
*EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST*

We're losing this place.

This capital city of Greater Yellowstone, along with Gallatin County, are becoming poster children for how not to develop a corner of America's Serengeti.

Piece by piece, in the face of impacts being rapidly manifested by human population growth, it's happening faster than our already overwhelmed sensory perception can detect. And yet, we are behaving as if urgency and unprecedented vision aren't required to address what's right before our eyes.

This week, the Bozeman City Commission is meeting and expected to approve what can colloquially be called a new "growth plan." Having read the document now a couple of different times, it lays out an aspirational "strategy" for pondering growth, yes, and identifies several real growth issues. But experts I've asked to review it say it is utterly lacking in spine, gut and, most importantly, vision that acknowledges our novel setting in the world.

Yes, we are living astride of, and woven into, a marvel: the American version of the African Serengeti and we're letting it slip away.

If you haven't heard, let's repeat again something you've read before: Bozeman and Gallatin County are among the fastest-growing micropolitan places—meaning "small urban areas"—in all of America.

Were we located in the middle of Iowa or as part of the expanding megalopolis of the Wasatch Front (Greater Salt Lake City) or the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies (the blighted and droning Fort Collins to Denver to Pueblo corridor), what's happening here wouldn't matter. The assets in play here were eroded there years ago and they are never coming back.

Bozeman and Gallatin County represent the crown and a natural crossroads for the last best wildlife-rich ecosystem remaining in the Lower 48.

The window for taking action, if you listen to scientists, is small and narrowing. The upshot is that we have an opportunity to prevent disintegration from happening, but it requires thinking out of the box which, to date, no local, county, state or federal land management agency has demonstrated that it has the capability or will to do.

Before recent Bozeman Mayor Chris Mehl left office, he and I met outside in a Bozeman park and discussed some of the troubling trendlines.

Prior to becoming mayor, Mehl worked as a policy/communications expert at Bozeman-based Headwaters Economics which delivered a report this year chronicling what is undeniably evident: we are losing wildlife habitat, open space and ag lands at a fast clip in southwest Montana.

Here is the question I posed to Mr. Mehl and it is one we ought to be directing to every member of the Bozeman City and Gallatin County

# Opinion: Is Bozeman losing the nature of its place?

commissions and their overwhelmed planning staffs: How do you protect something important and of value if you fail to acknowledge it exists?

Bozeman/Gallatin County presently have 110,000 people. At current growth rates—now between 3 and 5 percent—that number will double by the time a baby born here today graduates from high school, and double again by the time that child reaches her/his early 40s. Do the math. It's not merely a matter of human population, but rather the footprint of human presence and where it's located.

In defense of the city, any growth strategy that considers and avows to protect nature will not succeed without sincere cooperation from Gallatin County.

What are some of the casualties that currently factor little into the thinking about impacts of growth?

Wildlife. Migration pathways. Protection of riparian corridors: those ribbons of habitat located along rivers that are the richest reservoirs of biological diversity. These are things that set Greater Yellowstone apart from every other region, save for Alaska.

Those in the Bozeman and Gallatin County planning offices can't tell us what's already been lost from a wildlife ecological perspective, what is likely to be lost because of development plans already approved, and neither do they and elected officials have any sense of what, how or why the new planning document is likely to save or sacrifice habitat. That's a problem.

Former Mayor Mehl admitted that a prosperous city and county where people want to be and where taxes are rapidly rising ought to be able to afford hiring a top-flight ecologist who could advise staff and the commission.

The most ecologically damaging and economically costly form of sprawl is happening on rural lands in places that press right up to the Forest Service boundary. Many of those neighborhoods are at high risk of burning in a wildfire and millions upon millions of dollars will have to be spent defending the structures, often at huge cost to the Forest Service and at the expensive of other programs.

Rural development that occurs in what's called the "wildland-urban interface" also degrades the ecological function of those places for wildlife.

It would be one thing if city, county and land management agencies could claim they didn't know better, but they do.

We're going to lose the nature of this place. The opportunity where hope resides is that we don't have to; the tragedy is that we probably will because, as of right now, there is no evidence our elected officials and the professional bureaucrats with the Forest Service are interesting in mapping out a different strategy from the one they claim is inevitable. And when you have that attitude, you ensure destruction of nature becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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



# Water Wisdom

BY DAVID TUCKER  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

Skiers, rejoice! 2020 may have a silver—or white—lining, after all.

Projections from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predict an 85 percent chance of a La Niña cycle returning to southwest Montana this winter. That should make all of us who ski and snowboard here at Big Sky Resort very happy.

La Niña cycles tend to favor our mountains, bringing above-average snowfall to our beloved Lone Peak. Sounds like it's time to get the powder boards tuned and start working on some dryland training—opening day is nearly upon us.

While arcing knee-deep turns down Marx should give us all something to look forward to, a robust snowpack brings more than goggle tans to our mountain town. In Big Sky, our water supply depends on snow. Further downstream, in the Gallatin River, consistent winter snowfall means healthy summer stream flows, good news for trout and the anglers who pursue them.

This connection between winter snow and summer flow is part of the Water Cycle, a fragile hydrologic relationship that determines when and where water is available. As the snowpack builds throughout the winter, water is safeguarded in its frozen state, waiting for warmer weather and the sweet release of spring. The more snow that piles up, the more water there is to be released. And that's a good thing, right?

Well, not so fast. In the last several decades, a deep snowpack hasn't guaranteed an abundant summer water supply. Why? You guessed it, global climate change. This human-caused phenomenon is inextricable from every natural process on Earth, and the Water Cycle is no different.

In the Treasure State, as temperatures continue to trend higher, our snowpack continues to decrease, according to the recently published Montana Climate Assessment. Not only that, but spring is arriving earlier, causing what snow we

## What does La Niña have in store?

do get to melt rapidly and flow quickly out of the watershed, without recharging our underground aquifers. In Big Sky, we all draw our household water from these aquifers, whether we're connected to the Big Sky County Water and Sewer District, have our own onsite wells, or benefit from a shared community system at our housing developments.

This trend is concerning for many reasons, chief among them the negative effects an inadequate water supply can have on the ecological integrity of our surface waters. In fact, the largest threat to Big Sky's water quality might just be Big Sky's water quantity. The two are related, and less of the latter means big trouble for the former.

Lower flows lead to higher concentrations of pollutants because there isn't enough dilution. Pollution doesn't necessarily increase, but its impact can when water supply is inadequate. Knowing this, every skier and snowboarder in Big Sky should be a water conservationist. Changing your water-consuming behaviors won't bring more snow to our mountain town, but it could help keep more water in the upper watershed longer, adding essential resiliency to our fragile water supply.

Conservation strategies are numerous, and can be implemented on scales both large and small. Instead of a five-minute shower, take a three-minute shower. Consult an environmental engineer before building an addition to your home so as to avoid disturbing a wetland. Upgrade all the appliances in your home to water-saving models (the Gallatin River Task Force has a rebate program with cash incentives). Or consider restoring streambanks on your property to a more natural state. All these efforts can make a difference and they'll be essential for the future of a sustainable Big Sky.

At lower elevations, in warmer climes, people have their rain dances. Here, we pray for snow. This winter, it appears the gods have heard us. If they deliver the goods, let's return the favor come spring, and for every spring from here on out. Let's keep what water we can in the upper watershed by committing to water conservation.

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



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# Drought moves one state toward water speculation



BY DAVE MARSTON

There’s a concept called “demand management” in the news in Colorado, and here’s a simple definition: Landowners get paid to temporarily stop irrigating, and that water gets sent downstream to hang out in Lake Powell.

It’s an idea long talked about because of increasing drought and the very real danger of both Lake Mead and Lake Powell dropping into “dead pool” where no hydropower can be generated. But fears keep arising about what water markets mean. To some rural people, the idea of separating water from the land sounds like heresy.

Here’s how Andy Mueller, general manager of the Colorado River District sees it: “Just talking about demand management has already attracted deep-pocketed investors, whose motives are money and not for maintaining a healthy river.”

But James Eklund, former head of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and who shares credit for creating Colorado’s version of demand management, thinks setting up demand management in Colorado is crucial.

“We need to act now,” he said. “Last winter and spring, where 107 percent snowpack turned into 52 percent runoff, was proof we’ve entered a deadly phase where millions of acre-feet of water need to be stored in Lake Powell.”

These days, Eklund is a lawyer for the New York investment company, Water Asset Management (WAM), whose land purchases in Mesa County have sounded alarms about outsiders speculating on water. State Sen. Kerry Donovan, Democrat from Vail, has co-sponsored what could be called an anti-WAM bill, aimed at beefing up the state’s water anti-speculation laws.

“If we don’t do demand management correctly,” Donovan warned, “we are going to create a commodity-based situation where water goes to the highest bidder.”

Eklund’s rejoinder: “Like it or not, we live in a capitalist system.”

Gary Wockner of the non-profit Save the Colorado has a different approach. He supports following the West’s existing water laws that took root in scarcity and drought. “If Lake Powell requires more water to keep functioning, why not curtail junior users across the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico rather than employing expensive water purchases?”

Critics of Wockner’s plan say that by then it’ll be too late, that after multiple dry years Upper Basin reservoirs will be empty.

Jim Lockhead, president of Denver Water, argued that by not putting demand management into place, increasing drought could bring about a crisis: “Water rates would spike in cities, just as farm income and output would plunge region-wide.” Without demand management, Lockhead predicted, there would be “an economic black hole.”

To test demand management, four municipal water districts, including Denver Water, funded a pilot program in 2015-2019. It stored 175,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead by paying irrigators in Arizona, California and Nevada to fallow fields and forgo cultivation.

Applications rose annually, according to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which funded 53 percent of the study. The rest, 47 percent, came from the four water districts and the Walton Family Foundation. Eklund wants the same players to back Colorado’s program, the first of the Upper Basin states to attempt demand management.

“BuRec built all the dams possible (and) they should steer into conservation,” Eklund said.

But to gain participation in the pilot program, water prices were set at levels that boosted farm incomes above what agriculture alone would produce. That raise in income also increased the value of their land.

Mueller doesn’t like what that could lead to.

“That will squeeze out future mom-and-pop operators. Ninety-five percent of Western Slope irrigators are owner-operators and we don’t want that declining,” he said.

Although the Colorado Water Conservation Board hasn’t ironed out how to “shepherd” the water downstream or who will round up willing sellers, investors from outside of Western Colorado are already buying up land with senior water rights.

“We are seeing large, well-financed purchasers—ostensibly agricultural organizations—coming into the Gunnison basin,” said Steve Anderson, who manages the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association, a canal company in Montrose County. In Delta County, the Conscience Bay Company, operating out of Boulder, bought the 3,000-acre Harts Basin Ranch, with senior water rights on the Grand Mesa.

Yet, the new owners are hardly quick-buck artists. They have expanded the cattle herds, improved irrigation and hired locals.

For the new water owners, it’s a waiting game until demand management exists and water comes with a price. As drought worsens, the owners of these senior water rights—whether they are from New York City or Texas—could well be sitting on a fortune.

*Dave Marston is the publisher of Writers on the Range, [writersontherange.org](http://writersontherange.org), a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West.*

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# Big Sky Town Center’s permanent sentry

## Waldazo’s long journey to Fire Pit Park and the community that made it possible

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – More so now than ever, Big Sky has become a haven for recreationists and families from all over the country and world in search of a quieter pace of life among the mountains. Perhaps an apt symbol of this collective migration and its formation into a sound community, is Waldazo, the iconic bison sculpture who calls Fire Pit Park home.

Waldazo is the centerpiece to many visiting family photos. It is made from a hodge-podge of metal parts and stands, unmoving, against gale-force winds, mountains of snow and the beating sun. It represents the success of the Arts Council of Big Sky’s public arts program as well as the skilled craft of local artist Kirsten Kainz. Waldazo’s story, however, began with Steve Johnson in San Antonio, Texas.

Johnson was a teacher of history and sociology as well as the founding member of the Chain Gang, a motorcycle club who devoted their time in retirement to traveling all over the U.S. while volunteering their time to those in need. When they weren’t riding, they were serving food at local homeless shelters and heading up fundraisers to benefit local family-oriented charities and single mothers.

After his daughter, Katherine Johnson, relocated to Bozeman in 2008 with her family, he’d make the trip to visit whenever possible. After a Stage 4 cancer diagnosis in 2016 left him with limited time, Katherine says her father made the decision to move to Bozeman to spend his final days with her family.

“When we moved up here that was really hard because I was the only child,” said Johnson of her father. “He would come visit sometimes. He definitely liked to be off the beaten path. He would tell people that he came up here to die—he wanted to spend his last time with us.”

After he passed, Johnson was left cleaning out her father’s garage. He was a collector—Johnson has vivid memories of her father scouting out old tire weights on the side of the road—and the garage was filled with rusty chains, tools, screwdrivers, piles of scrap metal and furniture.

“My dad would find value in everything, things that seem useless to other people,” she said. “He used to joke about how he could fix a VW with a tuna can. Most everything was just things he found value in and would save.”

While perusing the selection at the Architect’s Wife in Bozeman one day with her husband, Johnson spotted a light fixture made of reclaimed metal by Kirsten Kainz. She contacted the artist to see if she would be interested in some of the “junk” left by her father. Kainz, who had already been commissioned by the Arts Council to build a public art sculpture, came by with a truck to collect what she refers to as “treasures.”

“Katherine had reached out to me and let me know she had a whole lot

of treasure from her father when he had passed away, and wanted to see it go into a beautiful structure because she had seen my work,” Kainz said. “It’s a great process. I’ve been scouring junkyards for 35 years because it’s so satisfying just going through mounds and mounds of metal and I look for items that have a magical tone to me, a shape or texture. Those become my palette and when I’m building and it’s going really well, the right pieces find the right place.”

After Kainz finalized the sculpture, finding a home on the corner of Ousel Falls Road in Town Center, the bison needed a name. They settled on “Waldazo,” Steve Johnson’s pen name when he’d write poetry.

Waldazo was on loan for two years, and following a successful fundraising campaign led by Arts Council volunteer Patty Rhea, they were able to raise a total of \$55,000 so the sculpture could remain in Fire Pit Park permanently.

“We at the Arts Council are so glad that Waldazo is now a permanent fixture in Big Sky,” said Megan Buecking, education and outreach director at the Arts Council. “It is one of our most beloved sculptures and I think this piece in particular embodies what public art is all about. The fact that the local artist didn’t just use donated tools to create the piece, she captured the personal history and meaning behind each tool and tied it all together with the donor’s namesake is a powerful reflection of the artist’s skill and the legacy the donor has left behind.”

The Arts Council’s public art program, as well as the purchase of Waldazo, was made possible entirely by the community in which it resides. Buecking says donations poured in from individuals ranging from local children who contributed pocket change during the farmer’s market,

to major donations from generous patrons. The generosity of Waldazo’s permanent existence in Big Sky, she says, is reflective of the value the community places on art, artists and culture.

“I’m super happy that it’s staying there and that it’s kind of an iconic thing for people to really rely on it always being there,” Kainz said. “I think it’s really fun for visitors, I see a lot of good energy there. It’s part of the experience being in Big Sky.”

Johnson says she and her family like to stop by and say hello to her father’s memory when they come to Big Sky to ski on weekends.

“It was really awesome to go up afterwards and see,” Johnson said. “It was cool to walk around and see all these things put to use. It was really cool to find out that it was going to stay there. He would definitely think it’s super awesome that it’s like this community attraction sort of thing.”

Waldazo will have an official unveiling and dedication in December during which they will also designate the sculpture a birthday: Oct. 10—the same birthday of Waldazo the poet.



Thanks to a successful fundraising campaign by the Arts Council of Big Sky as well as immense community generosity, Waldazo the bison will be a permanent fixture of Fire Pit Park. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



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# Supaman brings tradition, storytelling, song and dance to the stage for LPHS students

BY MIRA BRODY

BIG SKY – In an hour-long performance, Supaman is able to transcend his audience through a multitude of emotions and valuable lessons, both personal and historical. The Apsáalooke rapper and dancer, dressed in traditional Crow regalia, mixes rap and traditional Crow song and dance with stand-up comedy, as well as stories of his troubled childhood growing up on the Crow Reservation, including battling alcoholism and the foster care system.

Supaman, whose given name is Christian Parrish Takes the Gun, was part of the Arts Council of Big Sky’s Artist in Residence program with Lone Peak High School on Nov. 16 and 17. The Arts Council coordinated with history and social studies teacher Tony Coppola as well as Shane Doyle from the Montana State University Office of Public Instruction, who is an educational consultant on Native American Studies.

“We strive to use the Artist in Residence program as a way to expose the students to diversity and culture through the arts,” said Megan Buecking, the Arts Council Outreach and Education Coordinator. “Supaman combines music, dance, traditional regalia to engage his audience with the concepts of contemporary Native American culture.”

Supaman is featured alongside the Black Eyed Peas’ Taboo in the music video “Stand Up /Stand N Rock #NoDAPL” earning him an MTV Video Music Award in 2017. Along with his success, Supaman produces his own albums, which he feels ensures its authenticity.

“We listened to these rappers, we listened to what they were saying,” Supaman said, remembering his early days as a DJ. He spoke of the oppression Native peoples have faced and continue to face in the U.S. “What they were saying kind of resonated with a lot of Native Indigenous people because they were talking about being oppressed ...we can relate.”

Supaman spoke to the high school students seated in the auditorium about the importance of passing down traditions and of keeping the language of his people alive. He performed the “Men’s Fancy Dance,” as well as the “Crow Hop,” explaining the different elements of his regalia and spoke of the annual Crow Fair. Most of all though,

Supaman shares his stories to connect with his audience—to ensure they know they are not alone in their endured hardships.

“When you’re vulnerable, like I was on stage telling my story about my childhood, there’s people in the crowd who listen and they might be able to relate to that story,” he said. “You never know how far your music goes out and touches people, you know, or their situations or whatever it is, as long as you stay open to that, you know, and you give yourself in a genuine way, it impacts people. That’s bigger than any award or money or anything like that.”

The Artist in Residence program is funded by a grant from the Montana Arts Council and the Indian Education For All program. Due to COVID-19 the performance and workshop was spanned over two days so the students could all see Supaman perform in-person at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. The show can be viewed on the Arts Council’s YouTube channel.



Supaman performs a traditional Crow “Men’s Fancy Dance” with Shane Doyle on the drum.  
PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY



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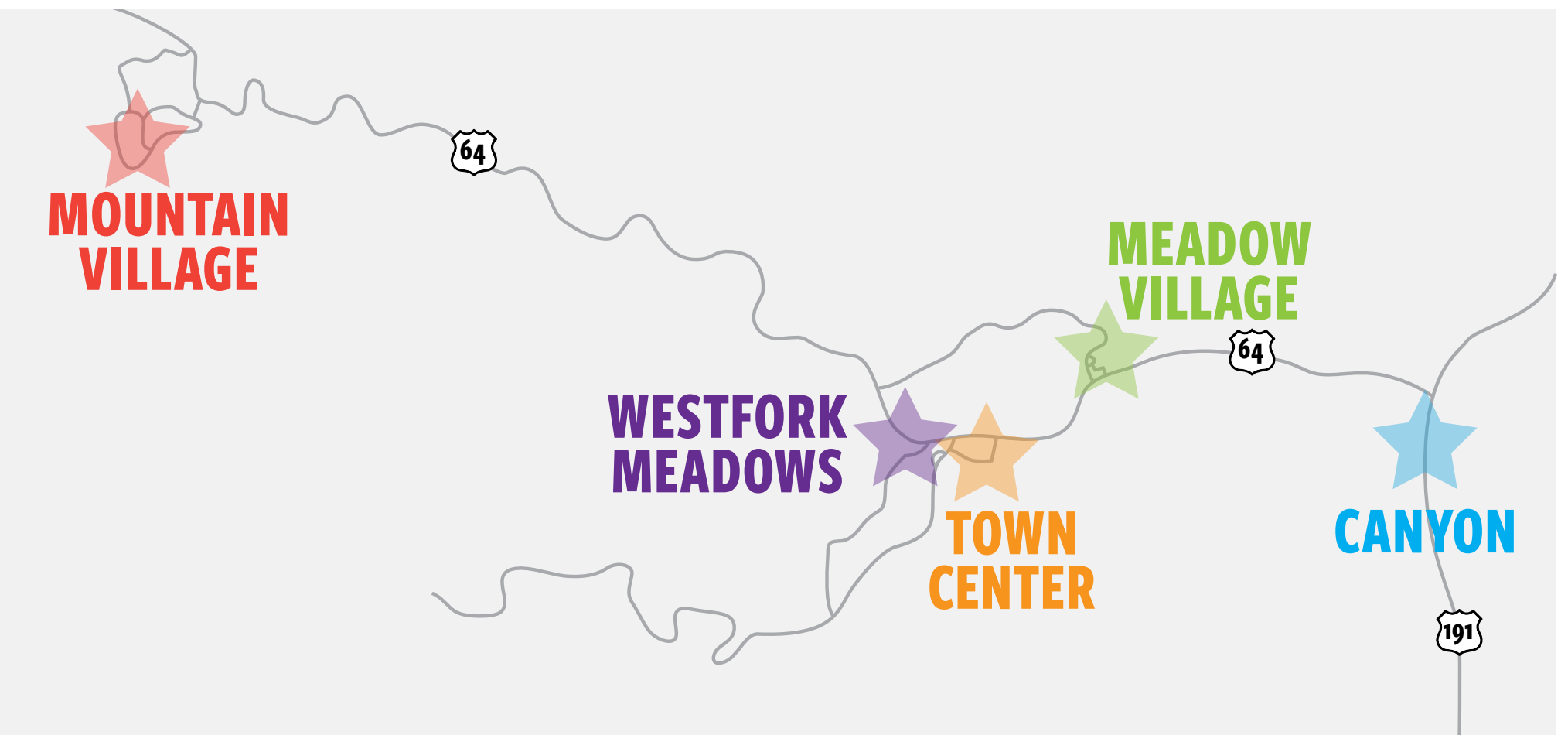
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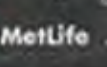
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# Album Review: “Hey Clockface” – Elvis Costello

BY SAMUEL ORAZEM  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR



Whoever said that rock ‘n’ roll was a young man’s game might have a bone to pick with Elvis Costello. The 66-year-old, British musician has been releasing music since the 1970s and his latest work, titled “Hey Clockface,” is his 31st studio album. Over the past four decades, Costello has put out studio-length albums on a nearly perennial basis and, for the most part, they have been well-received. His work has consistently demonstrated that an old dog can indeed learn new tricks and this latest effort continues to establish him as a sort of living record of rock’s trends, tangents and evolutions.

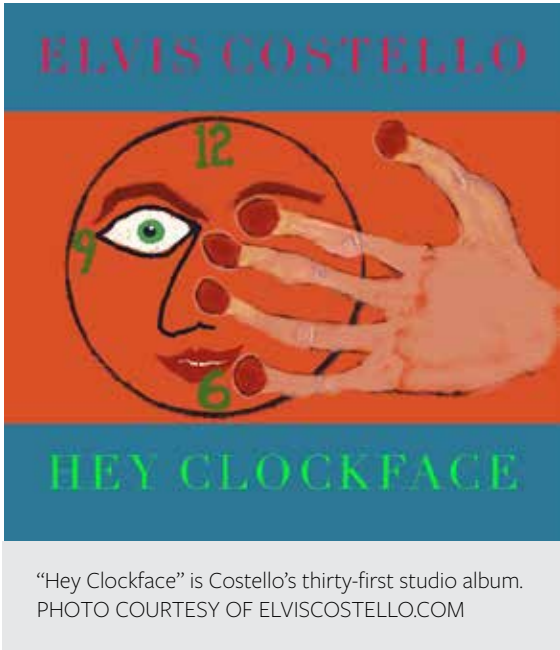
“Hey Clockface” opens with “Revolution #49” and it is immediately clear that Costello’s daily rotation is comprised of more than songs from the anglophone West. The track is written in a harmonic minor key, a signature usually associated with Middle Eastern music, and the opening melody is played through a reed instrument backed by plucked lutes and foreign-sounding percussion. Costello’s voice provides a poetic narration about love over the exotic instrumental as he incorporates synths and more traditional Western instruments into the background. “Revolution #49” is an atypical introductory track for a rock album and in that way, it foreshadows the remainder of the album. The record does not heavily rely on Middle Eastern tropes, but every track is somehow unexpected.

The second track, “No Flag,” is the lone, truly high-energy track on “Hey Clockface.” Costello’s ever-increasingly gritty voice is matched with blown-out electric guitars and nostalgic kick and snare drum pattern. It feels like a satisfactory, albeit slightly contrived moment for Costello to prove that he will not let his age limit his music. His aging voice has a similar timbre to that of The Strokes’ Julian Casablancas. It sounds like there is a distortion module somewhere in the vocal chain despite there clearly being minimal processing.

The remainder of the album haphazardly jumps between sonic aesthetics and demonstrates Costello’s incredible range. The Strokes’ influence reappears on “Newspaper Pane” where he fuses muted vocals with jazzy saxophones and trumpets. Jazz scatting provides the intro for the title track, “Hey Clockface/ How Can You Face Me?” where Costello sounds like he’s serenading a small crowd in a dingy, underground speakeasy. That jazz influence permeates throughout the album and makes many of the more impersonal tracks feel as homey as the Christmas carol sounding “The Last Confession of Vivian Whip.” Meanwhile, on “Hetty O’Hara Confidential,” Costello keeps up with the

times with funky, synthy rock that sounds like it belongs on the title credits for an 80s movie.

If that overview makes you think “Hey Clockface” is a disjointed mess, you are technically correct—objectively, it is a nonsensical compilation of sonic threads that should not work as an album. However, hearing a 66-year-old explore the limits of his artistic capabilities with such youthful exuberance and disregard for the rules is a truly intoxicating experience.





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# BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Nov. 20 – Thursday, Dec. 3

If your event falls between Dec. 4 and Dec. 17, please submit it by Dec. 2 by emailing [media@outlaw.partners](mailto:media@outlaw.partners)

**Friday, Nov. 20**  
**Menu Drop**  
Moving Mountains, Big Sky, 8 a.m.

**Music and Margaritas**  
Santa Fe Reds, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 21**  
**Small Business Saturday**  
Downtown Bozeman, 10 a.m.

**Saturday Sweat, Free Community Workout**  
Moving Mountains, Big Sky, 8 a.m.

**Contactless Santa Photos**  
Gallatin Valley Mall, Bozeman, 12 p.m.

**Sunday, Nov. 22**  
**Gallatin Valley Food Bank Thanksgiving Box Distribution**  
Bus Barn, 1812 N. Rouse, Bozeman, 2:30 p.m.

**Brunch and Live Music**  
Pine Creek Lodge, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

**Monday, Nov. 23**  
**Pint Night**  
Bridger Brewing, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

**Trivia Night**  
Pinky G’s Pizzeria, Big Sky, 7 p.m.

**Tuesday, Nov. 24**  
**Community Acupuncture**  
Santosha Wellness, Big Sky, 11 a.m.

**Comfort Food During a Pandemic**  
Online Event Hosted by Museum of the Rockies,  
Register Here: [https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UnjNhYGiTxEgTH-7Kua8Edg](https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UnjNhYGiTxEgTH-7Kua8Edg)

**Wednesday, Nov. 25**  
**2nd Annual Friendsgiving**  
The Wilson Hotel, Big Sky, 4 p.m.

**Gratitude Bath With Sound**  
Santosha Wellness, Big Sky, 7 p.m.

**Thursday, Nov. 26 (Thanksgiving)**  
**Big Sky Resort Opening Day**  
Big Sky, 9 a.m.

**Thursday Night Ice Climbers**  
Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

**Friday, Nov. 27**  
**406 Holiday Show**  
Gallatin Valley Mall, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

**Holiday Tree Harvest**  
Hyalite Canyon, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 28**  
**Pumpkin Drop**  
Gallatin County Fairgrounds, Bozeman, 9 a.m.

**406 Holiday Show**  
Gallatin Valley Mall, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

**Bozeman Icedogs vs. Butte Cobras**  
Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, Nov. 29**  
**Trivia Night**  
Bar IX, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

**Elevated Hockey Skill Development**  
Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 8:30 a.m.

**Monday, Nov. 30**  
**Pints With Purpose: Team River Run**  
Bridger Brewing, Bozeman, 5 p.m.

**Live Trivia**  
Wildrye Distilling, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

**Tuesday, Dec. 1**  
**Basic Avalanche Awareness Class**  
Yellowstone Motorsports, Bozeman, 6:30 p.m.

**Giving Tuesday**  
Bozeman Public Library, Bozeman, all day

**Mini Mosaic Class**  
Biome Slow Craft Collective, Bozeman, 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, Dec. 2**  
**Christmas Stroll Reimagined**  
Downtown Bozeman, 10 a.m.

**Live Music: Jesse Atkins**  
Bozeman Taproom, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 3**  
**Sunrise Karaoke**  
Eagles Bar, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

**Christmas Stroll Reimagined**  
Downtown Bozeman, 10 a.m.

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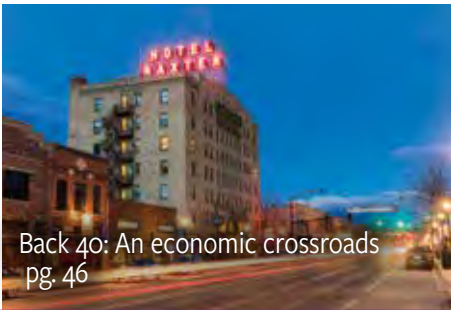
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Back 40: An economic crossroads pg. 46

# Lady Big Horns conclude historic season

BY BRANDON WALKER

CHARLO, MT. – On the road for a match the fourth time in seven days, the Lone Peak High School Lady Big Horns faced the Charlo Vikings on Nov. 9 with the victor punching their ticket to the state volleyball tournament. The Vikings surfaced victorious following a competitive match, winning three sets to one—25-19, 26-24, 18-25 and 25-21—ending the Lady Big Horns’ season.

“I think if we played them again, we’d win and then they’d win the next one and we’d probably go back and forth for a long time,” said LPHS Head Coach Missy Botha. “It was very evenly matched.”

In their final game in a Lone Peak uniform, seniors Hannah Dreisbach, Ivy Hicks and Chloe Hammond all led the team in one statistical category. Dreisbach paced LPHS with her nine kills in the match, Hicks pitched in 26 assists, and Hammond added 22 digs. Junior TJ Nordahl made her presence known at the net, leading the Lady Big Horns with four blocks against the Vikings, while sophomore Maddie Cone found her touch serving the ball, accounting for five of the team’s 13 aces.

“Even though they lost it was one of those games where you come off the court knowing that you’ve put it all out there [and] you’ve played your best,” Botha said.

LPHS came into the contest with Charlo having fallen to Manhattan Christian in straight sets on Nov. 7 in the Western Class-C divisional

volleyball tournament championship, while Charlo advanced to face Lone Peak by defeating Hot Springs in straight sets that same evening.

The Lady Big Horns season was historic with the team advancing farther in the postseason than any other volleyball team in Lone Peak history, and they did so having previously dealt with a pause of their season due to a two week COVID-19 quarantine. LPHS concluded the regular season with a nearly flawless 11-1 record, highlighted by a victory over rival Gardiner—the team’s first victory against the Bruins in four years—with the lone blemish coming after the two week layoff at the hands of Manhattan Christian.

After a busy postseason schedule, Lone Peak concluded the year with a 15-4 overall record and third place finishes at both the district and divisional tournaments. The Lady Big Horns will graduate six athletes from this season’s team—Dreisbach, Hicks, Hammond, Reilly Germain, Nadia Benjdid and Ruth Blodgett.

“It was tough because these seniors, you know, they gifted me with this historic season and gave me some of the best times of my life,” Botha said of watching the six LPHS seniors leave the court one last time.

Botha continued to thank LPHS Athletic Director John Hannahs, her coaching staff including, Kara Blodgett, Krisy Hammond and Bailey Dowd and the parents of the athletes for their continued support throughout the season.

“It has been unbelievable seeing them grow into such great competitors. But not only that, wonderful young ladies,” Botha said of the seniors.



LPHS placed third at both the district and divisional volleyball tournaments this season making them the most successful volleyball team in Lone Peak history. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HORNING



# On the road again...

BY AL MALINOWSKI  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

The 2020 Lone Peak volleyball team had a remarkable season, establishing many team records that future teams at Lone Peak High will be challenged to match. The team remained undefeated for much of the season, and two of the team’s four losses were to the eventual runner-up in the Class C state tournament championship. When the players reflect on this season, they will have much to be proud of, and likely many positive memories to cherish. The hardware added to the school’s trophy case will serve as a constant reminder of the landmark achievements of the 2020 team. Correspondingly, the team’s success was accompanied by long hours on the road.

High school athletes in Montana, regardless of their sport or class, spend a substantial amount of time traveling to play their games, with those at LPHS being no exception. Montana is the fourth largest state in the country, covering over 147,000 square miles, and our population of just over a million people has found that the Treasure State offers numerous attractive and unique locations to call home. Our student-athletes, coaches and parents accept that bus rides to road contests add a greater commute time than high school athletes in most other states typically endure.

During the divisional volleyball tournament, the 2020 LPHS volleyball team established another record of sorts, but this may be one future Lone Peak teams won’t be motivated to best. Over a period of seven days, from Nov. 3 through Nov. 9, the Lone Peak volleyball team visited four different schools across the state to play games. The week began with Seeley-Swan High School on Tuesday, Hot Springs on Thursday, Manhattan Christian on Saturday, and finally Charlo for a challenge game on Monday.

Based on my calculations, the team, and many of their parents, covered 1,766 miles that week, the equivalent of driving from one end of

Montana to the other nearly three times. Assuming the drivers obeyed the speed limit, the Lone Peak caravan spent more than 24 hours of that week on the road.

Most years, the divisional volleyball tournament would have been held at a central location, with the participating teams competing in that central town for as long as they can survive and advance in the bracket. However, since 2020 has been anything but normal, and based on the seeding of the tournament, the Lady Big Horns found themselves as the visiting team in all four of their matches.

To further illustrate the traveling Montana athletes must endure, during the 2012-13 Lone Peak Big Horn basketball season, our boys and girls teams, who travel together, logged roughly 2,600 miles divided into 10 trips over 12 weeks, traveling to various away games and tournaments. To put that in perspective, try to locate a place in the United States (excluding Hawaii) that is further away from Big Sky than the total miles we covered that season. One could drive to look for sharks in Key West, Florida or to view polar bears in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska and still be 400 miles short.

Here’s the good news: Some of the best memories student-athletes retain from high school athletics are those experiences that occur during the bus rides. Players have the opportunity to build a lasting bond with their teammates and coaches on those trips. The Lady Big Horns should’ve had enough time on the bus during the divisional volleyball tournament to produce ample memories to last a lifetime. And if there are any athletes who didn’t, basketball season is (hopefully) just around the corner.

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



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BY DR. ANDREA WICK  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

When you hear the word cholesterol, do you automatically identify it is a bad thing? Cholesterol’s been given a bad rap throughout the years, resulting in a health concept that is highly misunderstood. In the 70s, eggs were given a bad name because they were thought to cause high cholesterol and heart disease. Coconut oil and coconuts were also thought to cause high cholesterol because of the saturated fat content. Current research now shows that these foods are some of the most nutritious ones that we can eat.

Cholesterol is vital for all cellular processes. It is important for manufacturing cell membranes, cell lipids and is extremely important in helping our bodies produce vitamin D. Cholesterol gives strength and flexibility to our cells. It also helps our gallbladder produce bile, which helps our bodies digest fats. As we age certain hormones naturally decrease in our body, especially testosterone. As a result our bodies will naturally produce more cholesterol to help balance the lack of hormonal production.

Cholesterol and fats are extremely important for brain function. All of the nerve cells in our brain, especially the myelin tissue, need cholesterol to help transmit nerve cell signals. Dr. Joseph Mercola D.O., states that nearly 25 percent of the cholesterol in your body is in your brain. He also said that studies show there’s an inverse link between all-cause mortality and total cholesterol levels, meaning that mortality rate is actually higher when your cholesterol is low.

Cholesterol is transported through our blood using “lipo-proteins” these lipo-proteins are called “high density lipoproteins” and “low density lipoproteins.” HDL is known as “good” cholesterol while LDL is

# Cholesterol: the good, the bad and the ugly

known as “bad” cholesterol. HDL cholesterol assists in excreting excess cholesterol. So, what cholesterol is good to consume versus bad?

Poor quality animal products can be highly inflammatory. It’s always best to consume grass fed beef rather than grain fed beef. According to the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, daily consumption of processed meats such as bacon, sausage, salami and hot dogs, increase the risk of heart disease and colon cancer by 42 percent.

Toxic oils, such as canola, soy and corn oil, can cause an increase in bad cholesterol. For this reason it’s also important to avoid fried foods. Eating too much dairy and milk products can increase bad cholesterol as well. However, more studies are showing that eating fermented dairy products such as kefir or organic, cultured yogurt are beneficial. A diet high in simple and refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, tortillas, pasta, bagels and pastries increase higher, bad cholesterol. Additionally, consuming excess sugar, caffeine and alcohol triggers the liver to overproduce bad cholesterol and triglycerides.

Healthy high cholesterol foods include eggs, which can actually improve HDL levels. Grass fed beef and dark chocolate are also beneficial. Dark chocolate contains a high level of antioxidants that can help reduce arterial plaque—great news for chocolate lovers—and supplementing with omega 3s, such as borage and algae oil are the gold standard. Lastly, consuming salmon and sardines help to increase healthy cholesterol also. The message here is: Don’t be afraid of fat and cholesterol. Instead be sure to consume the right kind!

*Dr. Andrea Wick is a chiropractor and applied kinesiologist. She graduated from Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and now practices at Healing Hands Chiropractic in Big Sky. She has a passion for holistic health care and being active in the outdoors.*

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# Making it in Big Sky: 320 Guest Ranch

BY BRANDON WALKER

BIG SKY – The 320 Guest Ranch is more than 120 years old and has shaped much of General Manager Amber Brask’s life. For two years she has held the position of general manager at the ranch, but her history with the cabins, banquet hall and horses on the property runs much deeper—she was raised on there after her father, Dave, bought it more than three decades ago in 1986.

“I just love the history here and I’m really interested in homesteading and just providing for myself off of the land,” she said. “... I guess, just that whole lifestyle of living in the woods, being a part of this little ranch family and all that is just very appealing to me.”

Brask, who attended Montana State University before finishing her BFA in Ceramics at Boise State University, recalls working at the ranch since she was 16 years old. She said she accepted her new role as general manager because she wants to further her family’s legacy with the 320 Guest Ranch.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she recalled the unique family atmosphere that the ranch staff shares even when operations are at their busiest. She discusses how those strong bonds have even helped the ranch persevere throughout the course of the pandemic. The pandemic has presented a challenge to her and her staff, but they witnessed traveler visitation remain consistent this season because of domestic travelers.

Brask recently spoke with EBS over the phone to discuss how she and her staff have approached business since the COVID-19 pandemic began in the spring.

**EBS:** *In the past nine months, what has been 320 Guest Ranch’s greatest success from a business perspective?*

**Amber Brask:** “I believe that it’s really investing in our employees and giving them ... that really great work-life balance where people want to stay and continue to be part of this great work and living ranch family. And we have a really amazing staff right now and I think that is honestly one of the greatest achievements in the last nine months.”



Amber Brask has occupied the role of general manager at the 320 Guest Ranch for two years, but her history with the property runs much deeper. PHOTO BY REID MORTH PHOTOGRAPHY

**EBS:** *On the flip side of the coin, what has been the Ranch’s greatest challenge in the last nine months?*

**A.B.:** “The greatest challenge is just navigating the unpredictability of this pandemic and just to be prepared for every scenario where, if one employee gets COVID-19 or is contact traced, then that’s potentially every single person on the ranch having to quarantine and shutting down for two weeks. So, just creating all these new standard operating procedures and preparing for the worst.”

**EBS:** *Have you noticed an increased interest in some of your offerings as opposed to years past, due to COVID-19?*

**A.B.:** “... I wouldn’t say we had like an increase in anything, but all of our groups that we’re booking us 100 percent in the summer, completely canceled on us and I was preparing for the worst year ever. But all these family travelers that just wanted to get out, ended up coming and reserving the same amenities that we always offer so it wasn’t really an increase, it was just a different type of traveler that we saw.”

**EBS:** *Which of the Ranch’s business offerings are typically most successful during shoulder seasons and why?*

**A.B.:** “We’re honestly pretty shut down, but if I had to say one is our hotel rooms that we offer. So we still have a handful of people coming for that, but most of our other amenities are not provided in the shoulder seasons, so the rooms, definitely.”

**EBS:** *With the holiday season fast approaching, will the Ranch offer any new services this year?*

**A.B.:** “Not new to what we’ve been doing, but with the new health mandate, you know, the restaurant occupancy going down to 50 percent and only six people at a table. We, fortunately, are set up here where we have a banquet hall right next to the restaurant, which we’re now in the process of renovating and we’re going to get a decorator in there to make it this really beautiful experience, so that we can expand our dining [and] offer that to people in Big Sky.”

**EBS:** *What’s the best business advice you’ve ever received?*

**A.B.:** “I’m just trying to think back on things that my dad tells me and one thing that always sticks with me is follow winners. So, who you surround yourself with is who you become in a sense and you learn from these people, and teach them, but always just keep following winners and you’re going to be successful yourself.”

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# Enjoying the Ride: Donating your way



BY SCOTT BROWN  
EBS CONTRIBUTOR

What a year 2020 has been! We have experienced a global pandemic resulting in lock downs, social distancing, stay-at-home workforces, remote learning, a bear market, a recession, riots, civil unrest, fires, hurricanes, foreign wars, mask wearing, a divisive Presidential election cycle and more. Despite all of the craziness and uncertainty, entering the holiday season I find myself feeling blessed with a career, a family who loves me, good health and a roof over my head.

I also think about those people in our communities, in our country and around the world who are less fortunate and possibly in pain and suffering. One way we can help individuals in need, or support causes that we are passionate about is to make charitable donations. For those who may be more fortunate, more charitable or both, considering a Donor-Advised Fund may make sense.

A DAF is essentially a charitable investment account for the sole purpose of supporting charitable organizations you care about. You are eligible to donate or contribute cash, stocks—including private company stock, non-publicly traded assets such as restricted stock, oil and gas royalties, hedge fund interests, private business interests or even cryptocurrency and more.

One great strategy is to donate shares of highly appreciated stock, mutual funds or other securities to a DAF. Doing so could allow you to contribute up to 20 percent more than you might otherwise be able to contribute since you would pay no gains on the appreciated asset you are contributing. All of your donations to a DAF are eligible for an immediate tax deduction. Please note, that in return for that tax deduction, any contribution to a DAF is an irrevocable commitment to charity; the funds cannot be returned to the donor or any other individual or used for any purpose other than gifting to charities. The donations can be used to support virtually any IRS-qualified public charity known as a 501(c)(3).

When you decide to give and ultimately support what you believe to be a worthy cause, most of us want our charitable donations to be as effective as possible. DAF's are the fastest-growing charitable contribution vehicle in the U.S. because they are one of the easiest and most tax-advantageous ways to support charities.

While you're deciding which charities to support, your donations can grow tax-free,

making even more money available for charities in the future. Most DAF's have a variety of investment options from which you can recommend an investment strategy for your charitable dollars.

It's important to choose the right DAF for your charitable contributions. The fact is, not all DAF's are the same. Some things to consider include, what are the DAF's investment options? These can vary widely, with some organizations offering few, and others providing a broad array. Does the sponsoring organization accept "unique or illiquid" assets? Not all funds will accept the assets that a donor might be well advised to contribute, such as appreciated stock or real estate. How flexible is the DAF regarding the choice of charitable recipients and how easy is it to add another charity to their list? Does the DAF have foreign grant expertise? If you want to give to an international charity, there are tax and reporting implications, among others. These are all questions and topics to consider when you're ready to make a donation.

This tax-efficient wealth management tool is a smart way to support the causes you believe in and possibly even provide for your family members during your lifetime and beyond. Of course, if DAF's aren't suitable for you, you can donate your money directly or consider donating your time and expertise to charitable causes instead. I think it's as simple as remembering the Poison song "Something to believe in" and you are on your way to the joy of gifting this holiday season. Sometimes there is no better feeling than allowing others to enjoy the ride!

*Scott L. Brown is the Co-Founder and Managing Principal of Shore to Summit Wealth Management. His wealth management career spans more than 25 years and he currently works and lives in Bozeman, MT with his wife and two sons.*

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10:00-11:15am  
All Levels Yoga

5:00-6:00pm  
Body Melt

MONDAY

9:00-10:00am  
Warrior Flow

4:15-5:15pm  
All level Yoga

NEW OFFERING  
5:30-6:30pm  
Virtual Coordi Class  
with James Sewell

TUESDAY

7:30-8:30am  
All Levels Yoga

Community  
Acupuncture  
11:00am-1:00pm

5:30-6:45pm  
Heated Flow

WEDNESDAY

7:30-8:30am  
All Levels Yoga

10:00-11:15am  
Core Flow

4:15-5:15pm  
All Levels Yoga

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am  
All Levels Yoga

11:00am-12:15pm  
All Levels Yoga

5:30-6:45pm  
Heated Flow

FRIDAY

7:00-8:00am  
Ashtanga Based  
Vinyasa Flow All levels

10:00-11:15am  
All Levels  
Vinyasa Flow

5:30-6:45pm  
All Levels Yoga

SATURDAY

9:00-10:15am  
All Levels Yoga

5:00-6:15pm  
All Levels  
Kundalini Yoga



# Black Diamond opening new retail location in Town Center

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Outdoor gear powerhouse Black Diamond Equipment opened its fourth retail location in the U.S. on Nov. 13, and the first one outside of Utah. It’s home: right here in Big Sky.

A leading outdoor retailer specializing in equipment for climbing and skiing, BD doesn’t offer many retail locations since they are typically a wholesale business. Recently, the company has been looking to expand further into direct consumer sales, hence, the new retail location.

The company’s locations are proximal to key markets where its loyal clientele find the rock, snow and mountains that keep them going, in Utah, and now, Montana.

“We chose Big Sky as the newest location for a BD storefront because it plays host to a vibrant group of outdoor enthusiasts who already identify with our brand,” said Devin Battersby, Black Diamond Equipment’s director of retail. “We look forward to serving the community with monthly events, athlete lectures, equipment demos, special presentations and our own product launches.”

BD’s retail model is slightly different from traditional retailers, with each store they open uniquely tailored to the community that it is located in.

For example, the BD store in Park City, Utah, has a full-service ski shop as well as a “Beta Cave,” where customers can take gear and learn how to use it.

The company has not decided yet what the community specific aspect of the Big Sky store will be, but they hope to become a staple for outdoor enthusiasts in the community.

“Our retail presence in Big Sky marks the beginning of an opportunity for Black Diamond to partner, collaborate and serve as a hub to Big Sky’s community of climbers, skiers, snowboarders and mountain adventurers,” stated Jason Klein, manager of the Black Diamond Equipment Big Sky retail store.

The store officially opened on Nov. 13 at 10 a.m., and patrons kept an eye out for an appearance by Parking Costain, a BD athlete based in Big Sky who last year won the coveted “Kings and Queens of Corbet’s” competition in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The opening followed COVID-19 safety guidelines and while BD wants people to visit the retail location, they will not be holding big events yet, so as not to draw too much of a crowd.

The Big Sky BD store will be located near the Big Sky Town Center, next to Sky Boutique. The new Big Sky location will carry a variety of BD products with a focus on its seasonal collections including equipment and apparel for climbing, backcountry skiing, snow safety and mountain running.



The new Black Diamond retail location, one of four total in the United States, is by the Town Center in the heart of Big Sky. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

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- 100 colonies estimated in 2015 in Yellowstone National Park
- One colony may support 2–14 beavers that are usually related. Six is considered average
- YNP's beavers escaped most of the trapping that occurred in the 1800s due to the region's inaccessibility

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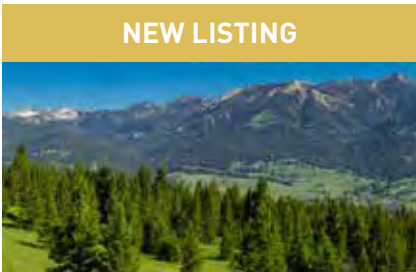
BIG SKY - LAND



The Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - 2A-1B  
526 +/- ACRES / \$5.8M



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



NEW LISTING  
The Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - Tract 2A-1A  
196 +/- ACRES / \$2.199M



The Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - Tract 3A  
20 +/- ACRES / \$750K



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



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



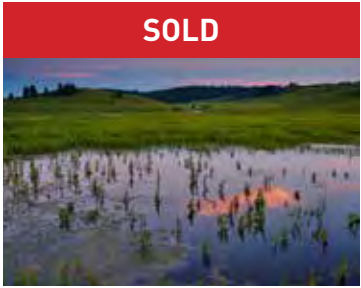
Rocking S7 Ranch Lot 4  
Bozeman, MT  
20.232 +/- ACRES / \$650K



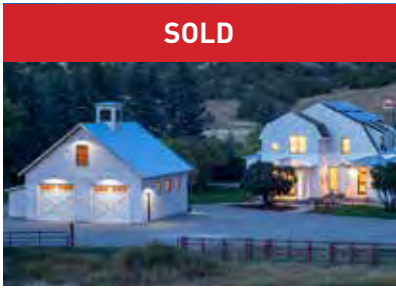
223 Town Center Avenue  
Big Sky, MT  
2882 +/- SQ FT  
1601 +/- SQ FT Patio \$1.525M

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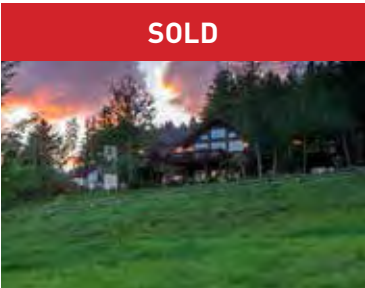
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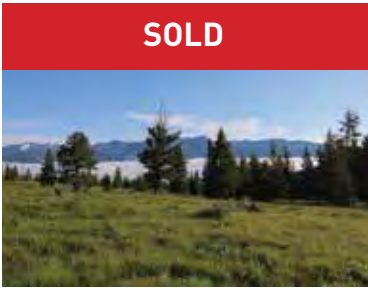
SOLD  
Yellowstone Ranch Preserve  
List Price: \$19M



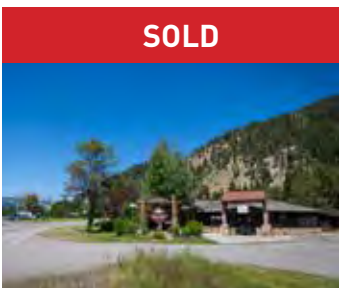
SOLD  
13285 Dry Creek Road  
Bozeman, MT  
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2005 Upper Chief Joseph  
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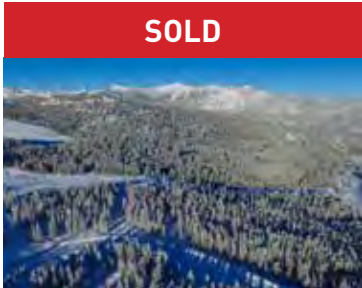


SOLD  
Big Sky Corner Property  
List Price: \$3.24M

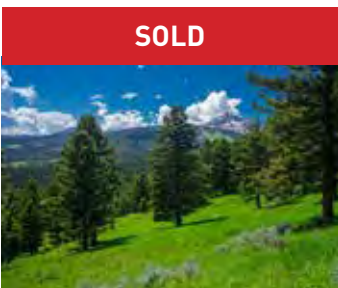
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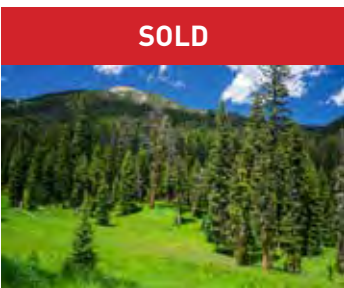
SOLD  
2078 Little Coyote  
List Price: \$1.079M



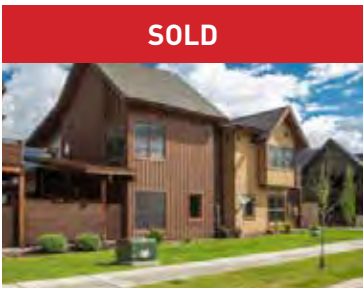
SOLD  
Ski Tip Lot 10  
List Price: \$975K



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



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



SOLD  
211 B Pheasant Tail  
\$692K

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1590 +/- SQ FT / \$699K



The Ranches at Yellow  
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+/- ACRES / \$750K



The Ranches at Yellow  
Mountain - Tract 1L  
21.29 +/- ACRES / \$750K



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Lot 43: \$425K / 20 +/- ACRES  
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Gallatin Foothills Lot 4  
1.519 +/- ACRES  
\$395K  
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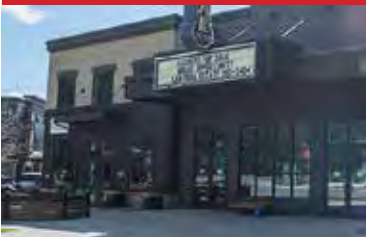
177 Silver Run Drive  
0.402 +/- ACRES  
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UNDER CONTRACT



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UNDER CONTRACT



Lone Peak Cinema  
\$140K / Big Sky, MT  
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Taking reservations for building G



Terranaut Adventure Vans  
Bozeman, MT  
*Call for details*

SOLD



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

SOLD



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

SOLD



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

SOLD



Crail Ranch Unit 40  
List Price: \$1.35M

SOLD



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

SOLD



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

SOLD



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

SOLD



Lot 2 Big Buck Road  
20 +/- ACRES / \$480K

SOLD



130 Mountain Man Trail  
Montana Ranch  
20.8 +/- ACRES / \$325K

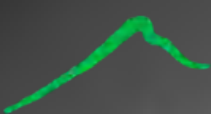
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# AMUSE-BOUCHE

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

## Did we fix something that wasn’t broken?



BY SCOTT MECHURA  
EBS FOOD COLUMNIST

If you haven’t already, I recommend listening to Paul Harvey’s “So God Made a Farmer.”

When you finish the nearly two-and-a-half minute soliloquy on the challenges of a farmer, I guarantee you that no matter what you do, you’ll be thankful your work isn’t as challenging as a farmer’s.

There’s a line contained in Harvey’s soliloquy that refers to taming ‘cantankerous machinery’ that resonated with me as I was reading a piece documenting the ongoing battle between farmers and big agricultural equipment manufacturers.

To paraphrase the piece from *Bloomberg Businessweek*, one of the world’s oldest and most hands-on occupations has now become hands off.

Taking a page from the modern voting process—something simple—in this case machinery, which worked well for decades has now been “fixed.” Or to phrase it another way, it’s become more complicated with no real, tangible results.

In defense of big agriculture equipment manufacturers, their issue doesn’t lie in the farmers’ ability to repair their own farm equipment, but rather what they refer to as agitators who want the ability to modify their machines. After all they maintain and paid for them and have the right to do with them what they see fit.

Many of these pieces of farm machinery: tractors, balers, seed drills, and combines, to name a few, used to be relatively simple for farmers to replace a part, change oil or tires or generally wrench on. But those days are in the past.

To me, the question is why the push to digitalize and computerize these massive pieces of equipment? John Deere will tell you that it’s all about efficiency, making every stroke count and making each blade and drill move with optimal efficiency. Again, I understand this in theory, but now farmers are faced with dismal, unintended consequences.

Ask a vintner about the importance of harvesting grapes at optimum ripening to maximize the sugars. They’ll tell you if they believe that midnight is perfect, and 6 a.m. may be too late, so out go the teams under lights to harvest.

It’s very similar for a farmer. If the crop is ready, it’s ready. If a harvester broke down, it may be a long, arduous night, but they could work on their machine in the middle of the night to be ready for the next day.

Today, however, they have to wait. Today, it’s not enough that most every farmer lacks the skills to diagnose the root of the problem with a circuit board on an \$800,000 combine, but according to John Deere in a 2015 court filing, the farmer purchased the machine but does not own the software, making the equipment’s use what they refer to as “an implied license.”

While technology and progress are both inevitable and unstoppable, it is my belief that a farmer should possess the legal and technological right to work on their own equipment with access to the necessary resources and tools.

Luckily for farmers, it isn’t unprecedented. In 2012, a landmark court case involving auto manufacturers, required them to grant access to the technology and tools to the public.

Farmers have it hard enough. Do we really need to burden them with the one thing they know the least about?

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



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# American Life in Poetry: Column 817

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

James Crews is the editor of a very timely anthology entitled Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness and Connection, published by Green Writers Press. He’s also an accomplished poet and the author of several books, including Bluebird. This poem first appeared, appropriately, at Gratefulness.org.

### Winter Morning

When I can no longer say thank you  
for this new day and the waking into it,  
for the cold scrape of the kitchen chair  
and the ticking of the space heater glowing  
orange as it warms the floor near my feet,  
I know it’s because I’ve been fooled again  
by the selfish, unruly man who lives in me  
and believes he deserves only safety  
and comfort. But if I pause as I do now,  
and watch the streetlights outside flashing  
off one by one like old men blinking their  
cloudy eyes, if I listen to my tired neighbors  
slamming car doors hard against the morning  
and see the steaming coffee in their mugs  
kissing chapped lips as they sip and  
exhale each of their worries white into  
the icy air around their faces—then I can  
remember this one life is a gift each of us  
was handed and told to open: Untie the bow  
and tear off the paper, look inside  
and be grateful for whatever you find  
even if it is only the scent of a tangerine  
that lingers on the fingers long after  
you’ve finished peeling it.

We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2019 by James Crews, “Winter Morning,” from Gratefulness.org, (2019). Poem reprinted by permission of James Crews and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2020 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.

## Corner Quote

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.”

-Melody Beattie

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Master of Business Administration (abbr.)  
4 Indian groom  
8 Addams Family cousin  
11 E. Indian herb  
13 “The Time Machine” people  
14 For (Sp.)  
15 Gulp  
16 Water pipe  
18 Cancel  
20 Evil (Lat.)  
21 Operate  
23 Pack down  
24 Axilla  
25 Gr. leather flask  
27 Husband of Jezebel  
31 Pseudonym of Viaud  
33 Corrode  
34 Millrace  
35 Jar

36 Peruse  
38 Mountain (Scot.)  
39 Bureau of Labor Statistics (abbr.)  
41 East  
43 “The Bartered Bride” character  
46 Whistle  
47 Wife of Milanion  
49 Late  
52 \_\_\_\_\_ Kippur  
53 Get out!  
54 Air  
55 Wine cup  
56 Afr. cotton garment  
57 Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (abbr.)

DOWN

1 Manuscripts (abbr.)  
2 Prow  
3 Estrange

4 Inane  
5 Wings  
6 Comparative ending  
7 Greek letter  
8 P.I. dyewood tree  
9 Balsam  
10 Three (Sp.)

12 Taj Mahal site  
17 Oriental servant  
19 Bygone days  
21 Wrong (Lat.)  
22 Below (naut.)  
23 Retort  
26 Half-boot  
28 Cuban dance  
29 Arabian Sea gulf  
30 Arced  
32 Victory site of Alexander  
37 Grandfather of Saul  
40 Smallest  
42 Hindu sacred writings  
43 Hindu magic  
44 Mono  
45 7th incarnation of Vishnu  
46 Pierce  
48 Noncommissioned officer (abbr.)  
50 Trouble  
51 S. Afr. hyrax

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | S |   | L | A | I | C |   | I | T | S |
| D | O | O | N |   | B | A | N | E |   | A | A |
| C | L | U | E |   | S | R | I | L | A | N | K |
|   |   | V | C | R |   | A | T | L | A | T | L |
| O | B | E | R | O | N |   | L | I | B |   |   |
| P | E | N |   | B | A | T |   | C | A | N | I |
| A | N | I | L |   | B | C | E |   | N | E | C |
| H | E | R | A | T |   | H | A | M |   | P | H |
|   |   |   | S | A | N |   | T | Y | C | O | O |
| C | I | N | E | M | A |   |   | X | A | T |   |
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| L | E | R |   | E | R | D | A |   | M | I | A |

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# BIG SKY BEATS



## A Thanksgiving Playlist By Gabrielle Gasser

While it may feel like we jump straight from Halloween to Christmas, Thanksgiving is a great holiday in its own right. There aren’t many songs that are specifically for the holiday, but there is plenty of music that can put you in a thankful mindset. Here are some Turkey Day jams that may help save your ears from premature Christmas music.



- “Food Glorious Food” by Lionel Bart from the musical “Oliver”
- “Thanksgiving Prayer” by Johnny Cash
- “Thanksgiving Song” by Mary Chapin Carpenter
- “My Favorite Thing” by Rodgers and Hammerstein from “The Sound of Music”
- “We Gather Together” Dutch hymn
- “What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong
- “I’ve got Plenty to be Thankful for” by Bing Crosby
- “Thanksgiving Song” by Adam Sandler
- “Thanksgiving Theme” by Vince Guaraldi
- “Thankful” by Celine Dion
- “We are Family” by Sister Sledge
- “Almost Thanksgiving Day” by Graham Parker
- “Turkey Chase” by Bob Dylan
- “Sweet Potato Pie” by Ray Charles
- “Thanksgiving Day” by Ray Davies





## Shred Dog: Kid's gear for life outdoors

Parents: this is the gear you're looking for.

Shred Dog embodies the spirit and feeling of stoke that every new parent feels as they imagine the fun days they will have with their children in the snow, teaching them how to ski and snowboard, enjoying pow days and winter fun.

As every parent knows, it's not always as easy as daydreaming. There are a few important things that need to happen along the way in order for your kids to get just as stoked as you, Mom and Dad. Kids need to have fun while learning new things, simply put. Here are the top three reasons, from one parent to another, why every parent needs to check out Shred Dog:

**1)** Shred Dog was created by parents and industry professionals. Each season the Shred Dog team tweaks and improves their products, while thinking about every little feature and detail so that your kids stay dry and have the best experience on the snow.

**2)** Shred Dog's direct to consumer model means that you can outfit your children in the best and latest outerwear fabric and technology without the mark up cost. Get the best gear for the best price.

**3)** Shred Dog's outerwear is designed to keep your kids dry and warm, using the same tech and fabrics as adult outerwear, and each season they ask for feedback from parents to improve next year's lineup.

Shred Dog provides a service to all parents by letting them choose the best outerwear for their kid's adventures, while allowing parents to get the best price and same quality of a high end retail product. From one parent to another, don't miss this!

*-Ersin Ozer, Outlaw and Dad of two young shred dogs*

### **SHRED DOG's High-Performance, Versatile, Kids' Layering System: Hardshells, Puffys, Bib/Pants and more**

SHRED DOG creates elite technical apparel to help kids live outside. We believe there is no bad weather, just bad gear. We believe in less screen time, more outside time. And active versus sedentary lifestyles for the physical and mental health of our kids.

SHRED DOG families make memories in the outdoors that will last a lifetime. And that's why we're here, doing what we do. For you. But we also want to do more than that to help get even more kids outside. We donate a percentage of all sales to non-profits that share that mission and help introduce outdoor lifestyles to more children and youth.

*- Marc & Dallas, SHRED DOG Co-Founders*

**“Shred Dog provides a service to all parents by letting them choose the best outerwear for their kid's adventures, while allowing parents to get the best price and same quality of a high end retail product. From one parent to another, don't miss this!”**



SHRED DOG Kids’  
Elevated Hardshell

Un-insulated and totally waterproof, this hardshell provides the ultimate in weather protection and versatility for the ever-changing conditions in the mountains. From the harshest storms to warmer bluebird spring days. To keep kids dry in wet conditions, this hardshell is fully seam-taped, and all exposed zippers are waterproof. In cold conditions, kids can layer (or zip-in) the Element Insulator for maximum warmth. For warmer spring conditions, kids can leave the insulator at home and simply wear the highly breathable hardshell over a baselayer and open up the underarm vents.



Key Features:

- 20k/20k waterproof/breathability rating
- Fully seam-taped
- Underarm vents
- Element insulator/puffy jacket zips in for cold weather conditions
- Rubberized wrist gaskets create a secure seal to keep wrists and arms dry
- Waterproof zippers (main zipper, chest pocket, hand pockets, forearm pass pocket)
- Adjust-a-Fit™ sleeves that lengthen and shorten for growing kids, hand-me-downs, or just a custom fit



SHRED DOG Kids’  
Element Insulator

The lightweight and warm jacket that kids can use for everyday wear or additional warmth for their winter layering system. The Element is an enhanced update to our insulator jackets with a higher performance face fabric that has improved durability and increased wind resistance. The Element can be worn as a stand-alone jacket, layered underneath a hardshell, or it can also zip-in to the Elevated Hardshell. The technical design utilizes strategic body mapping with more insulation throughout the core to keep active kids warm without causing them to overheat and sweat. The synthetic 3M™ Thinsulate™ insulation is extremely warm and low profile for enhanced freedom of movement with less bulk. Every kid needs a great puffy jacket, and your biggest challenge with this one will be getting it off your kids for the occasional wash.



Key Features:

- 3M™ Thinsulate™ insulation
- Body-mapped insulation, 100 grams in the core, 60 grams in the arms
- Durable Water Repellency (DWR)
- Zips in to our Elevated Hardshell jacket
- Dropback hem to keep the lower back protected
- Adjust-a-Fit™ sleeves that lengthen and shorten for growing kids, hand-me-downs, or just a custom fit



SHRED DOG Kids’ Elevated  
Convertible Bib/Pant

The snow pants you wish we made in adult sizes. Elite level waterproofing and breathability paired with all the features your kids need to enjoy their time in the snow. New for this year is a stretch back panel, YKK waterproof exposed zippers, and velcro waist adjustment. Sometimes kids want bibs, sometimes they want pants, with the removable bib feature they now have both. Pair this top of the line convertible bib with one of our hardshell jackets and your kid will want to stay on the mountain no matter the weather.



Key Features:

- 20k/20k waterproof/breathability rating
- Fully seam-taped
- 60 grams of 3M™ Thinsulate™ insulation
- Zippered thigh vents
- Reinforced knees, instep and bottom hem
- YKK Waterproof zippers (hand pockets and rear pocket)
- Removable bib module
- Back stretch panel for improved comfort and mobility
- Adjust-a-Fit™ pant legs that lengthen and shorten for growing kids, hand-me-downs, or just a custom fit



The Full SHRED DOG Layering System

These three styles can be paired with SHRED DOG mid-layer fleeces, baselayer tops and bottoms, and mixed and matched with other outdoor styles designed to provide kids with the ultimate performance and at a more affordable price with no retail markup. For full catalogue, reviews, and more information visit [www.shreddog.com](http://www.shreddog.com) or email [marc@shreddog.com](mailto:marc@shreddog.com)



BACK40

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

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

# An economic crossroads

## Technology has broken the barrier of geography that long shielded mountain towns from growth

BY CLAIRE CELLA

Welcome to the Goldilocks moment of the Greater Yellowstone. Most are familiar with the childhood tale, when a little girl tries to find not too hot or too big, too cold or too small, but “just right.”

The tale serves as a palpable metaphor for the growth seen in mountain towns across the West—including Bozeman and Big Sky in Montana, and Jackson, Wyoming—which is spurred by a subtle shift in American societal values, a migration to where we find meaning. Realizing that access to nature contributes to a higher quality of life and sense of well-being, we’re escaping the sprawl of sidewalks, strip malls and subdivisions to settle in the mountains.

But even here, we still struggle to find, and maintain, “just right.”

For nearly the past 50 years, rural counties in the West with the highest share of protected federal public lands have shown faster population, employment, and personal income growth on average than counties with lower shares of federal lands, according to Headwaters Economics, a Bozeman-based nonprofit research group that works across the West to promote economic growth.

Which leads people like Brian Guyer to ask, “Can you really blame telecommuters who have the ability to work wherever they want?”

He has a hard time blaming people for coming to live in the mountains, because it’s exactly what he did, too. Guyer, the community development manager at the Human Resources Development Council, which operates in Bozeman and Big Sky, is not alone in following his aspirations to live in the mountains—ask a majority of people who live in Wyoming’s Teton County or Montana’s Gallatin County and they’ll echo their own versions of, We moved here for the lifestyle. Whether it’s the ability to ski out your backdoor, the local hospitality, or the after-work trailhead access, there’s an allure and charm to these former cow towns and villages near iconic ski mountains.

“The secret is out,” says Chris Mehl, a two-term Bozeman city commissioner who in early November was elected mayor. He has had a pulse on the region for almost a decade, and praises the enterprising work of his predecessors in building a Bozeman with a lively downtown, a flourishing tourism and outdoor recreation industry, a growing healthcare infrastructure, and an exceptional school system, supported by the success of Montana State University.

It’s easy to see why there is a desire to live in these places, and this phenomenon is not new (think of 1960s Aspen or Park City over 20 years ago). What is new is the pace at which people are moving and the reasons many are able to: technology.

Technology has broken the barrier of geography that has long shielded mountain towns from growth. Historically, they remained isolated for the simple fact that they were hard to get to. Today, however, daily direct flights connect Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport to 15 major U.S. cities and Jackson Hole Airport with 10.

This makes it easier for local entrepreneurs to fly important clients in, or West Coast-based technology firms to summon remote employees. Advancements in telecommuting technologies, such as cloud computing, video conferencing and high-speed fiber optics, have helped companies take risks on employees who want to work remotely.

“They’ve realized they can build and grow their company almost anywhere,” said Mike Myer, CEO of Quiq, a Bozeman-based business-messaging platform. “And if their workers live in a place where their quality of life is higher, they’ll have happier, better employees.”

In Montana, the high-tech and manufacturing industry was projected to grow seven times faster than the state economy, according to a 2016 report by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana. Between 2001 and 2015, Headwaters Economics reported that Gallatin County added 2,984 jobs in professional, scientific and technical services—a 56 percent difference compared to other Montana counties—while Teton County added 80 percent more than the rest of Wyoming.

“We’re seeing the development of a critical mass of people who bring diverse skills, like software development, marketing and product management, who weren’t here 10 years ago,” said Lance Trebesch, CEO and co-owner of the Montana-based companies Ticket River and TicketPrinting.com.

“And it’s not just the people moving here,” he continues. “There’s also a robust community who have grown up here, grown successful businesses here, and have that savvy to know what it takes.”

Liza Millet, the co-founder of Silicon Couloir, a Jackson nonprofit that connects entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed, agrees with Trebesch. She’s witnessed a blossoming entrepreneurial spirit since 2012 and says a majority of the growth she’s seen through her nonprofit’s start-up intensives and pitch days is not from traditional technology, but from locals who have had dreams of building their own companies, mostly related to retail and the outdoors—like Stio, Sego Ski Co., and Give’r Gloves.

Jobs in this industry also pay more than twice the average wage of the rest of the jobs in the state, and for three years, according to The Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurship, Montana was the No. 1 small state for startup activity. In 2017, Montana was fourth. Wyoming was third.

But, there are signs that growth is putting a strain on other aspects of these local economies—most notably in the housing markets.



Bozeman has been growing 2 to 3 percent annually for the past few years, which has brought the associated challenges like increased traffic and housing prices. PHOTO BY CHUCK HANEY





17,000 people commute into Bozeman from places like Four Corners, Livingston, and Blgrade. PHOTO BY MIKE KLINE

The problem is so acute in Jackson that traditional tech companies struggle to pay their employees enough to live there.

“And, if they can, they can’t find housing,” says April Norton, director of the recently created Jackson/Teton County Affordable Housing Department.

There’s a lack of not only long-term rental opportunities—which are commonly taken up by lucrative vacation listings—but also affordable options for home ownership and a lack of land to build on, says Norton.

In 2016, the average home price in Jackson was \$780,000, according to the Jackson Hole Real Estate Associates 2017 Market Report. Rental prices, similarly astronomical, averaged \$1,842 for a two-bedroom apartment, according to the Wyoming Cost of Living Index for 2017. Meanwhile, the median household income was \$75,325, with per capita income averaging \$44,231. The cost of living in Teton County was 52 percent higher than the rest of Wyoming.

Without enough affordable housing—or housing stock in general—for those who make decent incomes by national standards, young professionals live with roommates to make rent, service industry workers camp out in cars, and new families settle in neighboring towns and commute.

Bozeman, too, is “growing so fast that more people want to move here than we’re able to build housing for,” Mehl says. As a result, 17,000 people commute into Bozeman from places like Four Corners, Livingston and Belgrade. In Jackson, 43 percent of workers reside in nearby Wilson or Alpine, or across the state line in Idaho. Well-worn commuting paths clog up Teton Pass and choke the Gallatin Valley—creating an irritation many newcomers thought they left behind in San Francisco or an experience locals have never faced before.

So while people continue to move in pursuit of a higher quality of life, this very pursuit threatens the reason they moved in the first place. Commutes grow longer, cost of living increases, housing developments encroach on open space, and office buildings block views.

Still, many agree that they’d much rather live in a place that is growing rather than declining. And decline is something these two Rocky Mountain economies know all too well—in the past 50 years, both have felt the devastating effects of heavy reliance on the dwindling and volatile energy industry, and a lack of metropolitan hubs.

That’s why both states have begun to enact long-range plans to bolster economic resilience through diverse industries—technology and entrepreneurship included. In November 2016, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead initiated ENDOW—or Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming—a 20-year plan that, among other things, adds technology as a fourth economic leg to balance against wobbling energy markets.

In Jackson, Mead turned to John Temte to spearhead diversification and support of tech and entrepreneurship as chairman of the Jackson Hole Technology Partnership, which hosts an annual Wyoming Global Technology Summit.

Temte grew up in Laramie, Wyoming, but pursued business management and entrepreneurship in California and started his first tech company in Palo Alto. When he relocated to Jackson in 2012, he brought along strong connections to Silicon Valley and investment firms through his own venture capital fund, Temte Venture Partners, LLC. He now leverages these high-profile relationships to bring entrepreneurial opportunities to Wyoming. The summit aims to connect young

Wyoming companies with high-level mentorships, advisors and financiers who are looking to give back to the local community and feed this emerging ecosystem.

In Montana, Governor Steve Bullock released the Main Street Montana Project in April 2014. Pillars include training and educating Montana’s future workforce, attracting and retaining businesses, and nurturing emerging industries and innovation. U.S. Senator Steve Daines—himself a former tech executive at Bozeman’s RightNow Technologies—also launched a biennial Montana High Tech Jobs Summit in 2015, to bring together the nation’s tech leaders with entrepreneurs and innovators to forge opportunities for high-paying jobs and successful business ventures.

The experiences of peer cities—like Aspen, Boulder, Flagstaff and Park City—offer leaders, community members, company executives and investors the chance to learn from previous mistakes and address growth proactively.

Guyer favors choosing thoughtful growth over a head-in-the-sand approach. And so his organization, HRDC, works throughout the Gallatin Valley to implement creative housing plans and to assist developers, local governments and city leaders, like Mehl, in preserving affordability.

Bozeman and Big Sky are in the process of rolling out various initiatives to do just that: giving architects more flexibility; developing down payment assistance programs to help people take the first steps toward homeownership; offering financial incentives for listing long-term rentals instead of vacation homes; and incorporating inclusionary zoning, in which a percentage of all new residential development needs to be affordable for low- or moderate-income residents.

Everyone has a different perspective on growth though, Mehl says. “So, for instance, yes there might be more traffic, but now there’s also a cancer center in Bozeman. My commute just increased 25 minutes, but there’s a new Thai take-out restaurant.”

Candace Carr Strauss, the CEO of the Big Sky Chamber and Visit Big Sky, would welcome a more robust tech sector in her town as a way to stabilize the seasonality of the tourism and construction-based workforce, and address major infrastructure needs—like spotty cell service and slow internet.

In Jackson, Temte and Norton are also aware of the impact they can have through their positions.

“We want to be a community first ... and that needs people living locally,” Norton says. “Locals take cars off the road, they volunteer at the food pantry, they watch out for their neighbors. We lose a lot if we can’t have our workforce afford to live here.”

Temte says he serves on the Jackson Hole Technology Partnership to encourage affordability, so that people who want to live in Wyoming, because they love Wyoming, can, with a decent-paying job.

Mehl knows it won’t be easy to find and maintain “just right,” especially if Bozeman continues to grow 2 to 3 percent each year, as it has for the past few. Jackson’s population swelled almost 10 percent between 2010 and 2016, and Big Sky grew nearly 20 percent in the same timeframe. Mehl can see that these towns might still have the same troubles as the Vails, Aspens and Boulders.

“But we should aspire to learn from them, and have a humility about what can be done,” he said. “This is going to require a lot of attention for a long time to try to get it right.”

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



Jackson: \$780,000 average home price in 2016, \$75,325 median household income, \$44,231 per capita income average. PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK



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# **BIG SKY RESORT OPENS THANKSGIVING DAY**

The wait...is over





# Big Sky Resort implements new health and safety measures for winter 2020-21

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

**BIG SKY** – The theme of ski season this year is plan ahead and book in advance. Every aspect of the Big Sky Resort will be running at reduced capacity this winter and it is strongly suggested that all bookings are made early.

While there will be no capacity restrictions on daily mountain access, there are tools in place to manage daily visitation, if it becomes necessary. Those tools include asking Ikon pass holders to make reservations before they arrive. According to Stacie Mesuda, the public relations manager at Big Sky Resort, they do not intend to limit access for season pass holders.

For those who have already purchased a season pass, the pass media card from last year will work again this year thanks to the new RFID system Big Sky Resort switched to. If you don't have your RFID card from last year, you can head into Base Camp or the Mountain Services Office and get a new one for \$5. In the future, that card will be automatically reloaded with any mountain access that you purchase.

According to the resort, they plan on going live with pass sales again soon, likely later this week.

Reservations made in advance will help provide the resort with an accurate picture of visitation numbers and capacity ahead of time, which allows them to implement the tools they have in place if need be.

Big Sky Resort is implementing an array of new health and safety measures for the 2020-21 winter season to keep guests safe and remain open.

Troy Nedved, the general manager of Big Sky Resort said, “it is all about getting open and staying open,” in reference to the resort’s winter plan.

Big Sky Resort boasts 5,850 acres of skiable terrain with 38 ski lifts to access it. The resort intends to use that space to its advantage and encourages skiers to spread out over the acreage.

“Big Sky Resort is different; we have a lot of acreage to work with which means a lot of elbow room” Nedved said.

The resort will not be enforcing uphill capacity on chairlifts. Guests will be able to choose from a “friends and family line” which allows them to ride up only with the people in their party, or there will be a “normal” line, allowing guests to load a lift with unrelated parties.

The Tram will operate at a reduced capacity, but final determinations of the number of guests allowed per car are yet to be determined.

The changes in the resort’s operations focus on three initiatives: enhanced cleaning, distancing and masks, and minimizing contact.

All resort guests, age five and older, must wear a face covering in all indoor public areas and all outdoor areas where distancing cannot be maintained. Inside buildings there will be ample signage and physical barriers at all transaction points and contactless transactions are highly encouraged when possible.

There will be a new system called “Swifty Takeout & Delivery” available this season. The service is another method to decrease contact in restaurants.

Another additional service that will be available this year is rental delivery. If you need to rent gear and don't want to enter the rental shop, you can now have a rental technician come to your hotel or condo and fit you there.

In addition to all of the health and safety measures discussed above, Big Sky Resort is also announcing two new access additions.

The first is a bootpack that will be laid in from the top of the Dakota lift, running up the side of Liberty Bowl to the Yeti Traverse. The bootpack will provide access to the majority of the terrain offered from Big Sky’s Lone Peak and it will alleviate pressure on the Tram.

The second access addition will be the ability for guests to enjoy uphill travel for the first time ever at Big Sky Resort. The run known as “Hangman’s” on Andesite mountain will be open in the mornings from 6 – 8 a.m. No dogs will be allowed, and no decisions have been made about passes for uphill travel.

Big Sky Resort has made significant operational adjustments for the upcoming ski season and hopes that guests will respect the new health and safety measures.

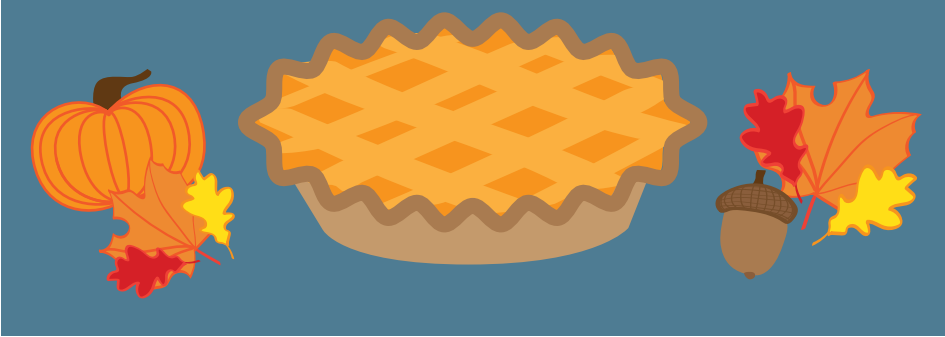
As Nedved said, “We are social creatures and we all want to ski and get outside.”



Big Sky Resort has made significant operational adjustments for the winter 2020-21 ski season with new health and safety measures focusing on three initiatives: enhanced cleaning, distancing and masks, and minimizing contact. PHOTO BY JEFF ENGERBRETSON/SKIIER AMIE ENGERBRETSON

## Thanksgiving Dinner Pickup

For the first time ever, Big Sky Resort will offer a Thanksgiving dinner pickup. For those who would rather ski opening day than spend all that time cooking, you can order a premade Thanksgiving dinner, courtesy of Chef Gus Baker, which will be available for pick up on Thursday, Nov. 26 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. To snag your Turkey Day treat, orders must be submitted by Nov. 23 through the dinner order form on Big Sky Resort’s website.









# The approach of ski season means it’s time to prep gear

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Big Sky Resort opens in six days. Before getting out there to shred on Thanksgiving Day, it’s important to make sure your equipment is properly tuned up and ready to go.

There are several shops in big sky that offer ski tuning services. Explore Big Sky went behind the scenes at Grizzly Outfitters in Big Sky Town Center to get the inside scoop on their tuning process and recommendations for gear maintenance.

Before you even have to pay for a tune, Grizzly Outfitters is happy to offer free assessments of your gear so you can decide how you want to proceed.

It is best to be proactive and get your gear prepped early. The Grizzly Outfitters ski and snowboard repair shop opened on Nov. 1 after a shoulder season closure and once winter operations are in full swing, they will offer their overnight tuning and repair service.

After early November, business will likely increase for ski shops, especially around holidays, so as a savvy local, it’s a good idea to get your skis to the shop as soon as possible.

EBS talked with Colin Leo-Nyquist, the repair manager at Grizzly Outfitters, and got all of our pre-season prep questions answered.

**Gabrielle Gasser:** *What should people be doing to prep their equipment for the season?*  
**Colin Leo-Nyquist:** “The easiest way is to bring it to us, of course. But at the most basic level, waxing your skis is incredibly important... That’s something I recommend be done at least once a year. Another important thing is we always recommend having your bindings calibrated and checked every year.”

**GG:** What is your advice for summer ski storage?  
**CL-Q:** “A lot of it is more where you store your skis so a lot of people will throw their skis in a basement or a shed. And that’s just really bad, the edges, get really rusty, and sometimes they get so rusty, that base will start to kind of [de-laminate] away from that rusty edge there.”

**GG:** *Where should you store your skis?*  
**CL-Q:** “Ideally a temperature-controlled area, somewhere that doesn’t get too wet and somewhere that doesn’t get too cold, either.”

**GG:** *Should everyone be getting their skis tuned?*  
**CL-Q:** “I mean of course I’d love everyone get their skis tuned. We’re not going to push an excessive amount of service, but you can’t over wax the ski.”



The Crystal Rock ski tuning machine blanks the skis creating a smooth, blank canvas. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

**GG:** *Walk me through what you are repairing when you tune a ski?*  
**CL-Q:** “So, we’re just kind of first just checking out the ski, not just this condition you know...base damage and edging, but also for any kind of more serious repair we want to catch that right off the bat. ... We’re looking for blown sidewalls, blown edges, delamination on the base anywhere, and then again, the overall condition of that base.”

**GG:** *How often should people tune their skis throughout the season?*  
**CL-Q:** “It really depends on you know how much they’re abusing them. I wax my skis every other time I use them pretty much, I also run a ski shop.”

After we sat down and discussed the importance of ski tunes and why everyone should get them, Leo-Nyquist took me behind the scenes and showed me the process of tuning a ski. In the ski shop at Grizzly there’s a giant machine from Switzerland that automates many of the steps. According to Leo-Nyquist, Grizzly Outfitters was the first shop in the country to get the Crystal Rock ski tuning machine produced by the ski service technology company MONTANA which is based in Switzerland. While the machine is efficient and allows them to tune more skis, Leo-Nyquist explained that robots can never replace a good hand tune. He said they still complete high-end race tunes, which are done by hand, and have no machine equivalent. Here are the steps that Leo-Nyquist walked me through for a standard ski tune.

### Ski Tune Steps:

- 1. Initial P-tex work:** The first step is to lay down some sintered polyethylene or P-tex to fill in any damage to the base.
- 2. Initial belting:** The belt is akin to a wet sander and is rougher than the stone. It takes off more material and preps the ski for the stone grind.
- 3. Stone grind:** The stone takes off less material than the belt and gets the ski flat and level making it easier to set the base bevel.
- 4. Set the side bevel:** For a standard tune, the side bevel is set at a one- or two-degree angle. A three-degree side bevel would be appropriate for race skis.
- 5. Blank the ski:** This step is to get a smooth, bank canvas before adding structure.
- 6. Final structuring pass and base edge:** The structure is specific to conditions. In Big Sky, a finer structure is added to the ski that is tighter and doesn’t go as deep.
- 7. Detune the ski:** A gummy stone is used to knock down any burrs and make a cleaner edge that will stay sharper for longer.
- 8. Wax the ski:** Grizzly uses an infrared waxer for a more controlled and even heat which opens up the ski pores, so the wax is absorbed.
- 9. Remove excess wax and buff:** After waxing the ski, it is passed over a buffing wheel to remove excess wax and buff the base.



Colin heats the skis evenly and rubs the wax on the bases. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER



# Teton Gravity Research brings their latest ski film

## ‘Make Believe’ to Big Sky

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – A parking lot full of honking cars would usually appear to be a traffic nightmare, but on the evening of Nov. 15, the honks were celebratory, in appreciation of a drive-in movie and the sponsors that made it possible.

Teton Gravity Research partnered with the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation to host a drive-in premiere of their film, “Make Believe” in Big Sky.

“Make Believe is whatever your wildest imagination can dream up,” said TGR co-founder Steve Jones. “It’s an unwavering commitment to that dream in order to make it reality. Ultimately it has been in the works for 25 years. Realizing all-time conditions in almost every location this past season, Make Believe showcases some of the most progressive athletes and riding on the planet. We are pumped to kick off winter with innovative worldwide screenings at locations such as Drive Ins, Outdoor Pop-up Theaters, private screenings, and more.”

The event was initially scheduled for Friday, Nov. 13 but mother nature had other ideas. Wind and snow postponed the screening, but the sold-out show was still packed on Sunday evening.

In an empty parking lot, just off Simkins Drive, a large movie screen was set up and cars were directed to park in offset rows to view the film. Families brought camp chairs and plenty of blankets and the excitement was palpable. Everyone was there to get inspired for the coming ski season by watching some breathtaking lines and gravity-defying tricks delivered by talented athletes.

Proceeds from ticket sales for the evening supported BSSEF and a lot of young athletes were in attendance to watch some of their role models on the big screen.

“All the kids look up to these athletes, they know a lot of the athletes and it’s fun to bring everyone together,” said Wallace Casper, the head coach of the Freeride team. “It keeps the kids super motivated too, you know they’ve always got people they’re looking up to.”

BSSEF has several teams, including their Youth Ski League, Buddy Werner, the Junior Development and Freeride teams, a Nordic program and even a Master’s program for adults.

According to Casper, BSSEF was able to devote 100 percent of the proceeds from the film screening to benefit their Alpine, Freeride and Nordic teams thanks to Visit Big Sky, which footed the bill to transport and set up the screen.



The Big Sky Ski Education Foundation supported by Visit Big Sky partnered with Teton Gravity Research to add a stop on the tour of their latest film “Make Believe” in Big Sky. All proceeds from the event went to support BSSEF. PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

“It is definitely not cheap to set up something that massive so without Visit Big Sky we would have had massive expenses and probably would have only, basically, broken even on the event,” said Casper.

The event went off without a hitch and the audience had a great time honking horns, flashing headlights and hooting and hollering in excitement. The film was awe-inspiring, funny, heartwarming and sobering.

Amid the antics and huge tricks was a timely reminder that avalanches are an ever-present danger.

In the film, athlete Nick McNutt is buried after triggering an avalanche on what he and his peers thought was a low-risk pillow line. The screen goes dark as we listen to the heavy breathing and frantic shouts of his friends looking for him. They were able to find him just by probing since his transceiver was not emitting a signal.

The film was a good mix of general stoke for the season, important safety reminders and even a dose of nostalgia near the end in the form of a montage of clips from past TGR films.

After the film, there was a quick raffle, where attendees won prizes that included Black Diamond skis and a Backcountry Access pack.

The screening was a great chance for the Big Sky community to come together and celebrate the onset of winter and ski season safely.

“It’s super fun to be able to get the community together first of all right now, I think it’s a really cool way to be able to do a drive-in movie and still have an event like this,” said Casper. “And then, I think that ski movies are fun for everyone.”

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\$258,000

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**SOLD** - 127 Tanager Fork  
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**SOLD** - Lot 25 Ousel Falls  
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**SOLD** - 440 Beaver Mountain Trl  
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