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ON THE COVER:

Big Sky Ski Patroller Dan Skilling poses with his avalanche dog Tela in front of Andesite Mountain. Tela is Dan's second avalanche dog and she will be three years old in March. PHOTO BY **GABRIELLE GASSER**

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Q&A: Inside ski patrol

Big Sky Resort's ski patrol battles deep snow and avy conditions daily to open 5,850 acres to the public. EBS spoke with patroller Dan Skilling to learn about his experience on the mountain with his avy dog, Tela.

Discovery Academy's first grads

Five red hats took to the skies after a quick ski run down Ambush at Big Sky Resort as the Big Sky Discovery Academy celebrated its first-ever graduating class.

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Topping off Big Sky's water supply

Last summer, the Big Sky Water and Sewer District board contracted Western Groundwater Services to drill a series of wells along the base of Lone Mountain to test water viability, with one producing promising results.

Buried alive: A firsthand account

When Henry Hall hucked a 40-foot cliff at the Yellowstone Club in early February, he landed four feet under the snow, struggling to breathe. Read Hall's harrowing firsthand account of his jump, burial and rescue.

Warming Center drive provides comfort, dignity

A feminine sanitary products drive organized by Bozeman local Whitney Bermes raised more than \$3,000 and highlights a lesser-known need for those struggling with home insecurity.



Opening Shot

On Feb. 16 the first ever senior class graduated from Big Sky Discovery Academy. The ceremony was held outside at Big Sky Resort and the five seniors took a lap in their gowns. PHOTO BY **MIRA BRODY**

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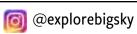
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Taking into consideration the massive growth in Big Sky and increased demand on our water supply, what do you think a growing community can do to conserve water?



Chambers Moline Big Sky, MT

"To conserve water, I think we as a community [need] to work on finding different ways and sources to reuse and recycle the water we consume and use. We also should be doing the simple solutions to help personally reduce our water use such as turning off the sink while you brush your teeth."



Chancey Hawthorne Denver, CO

"I think any small tasks that we can do personally, such as reducing our water use with shorter showers or not watering our lawns if we don't need to, can help our community conserve water."



Zach Hinte Bozeman, MT

"With the growing community in Big Sky, I think everybody could potentially check their pipes and toilets for leaks and rotate between handwashing and using the dishwasher for cleaning your dishes.



Ryan Newcomb Big Sky, MT

"One of the greatest things our community could do would be to develop formalized, required water conservation programs to be adopted community wide, as cities and towns across the West have done."

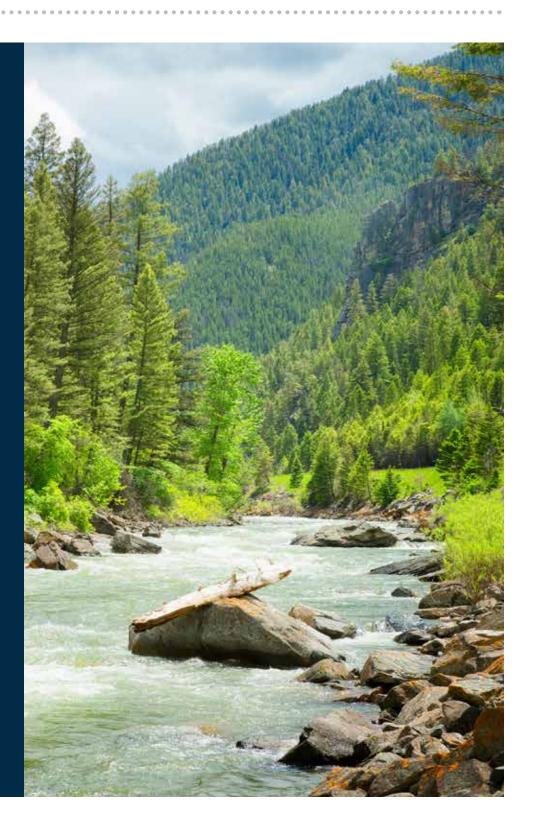
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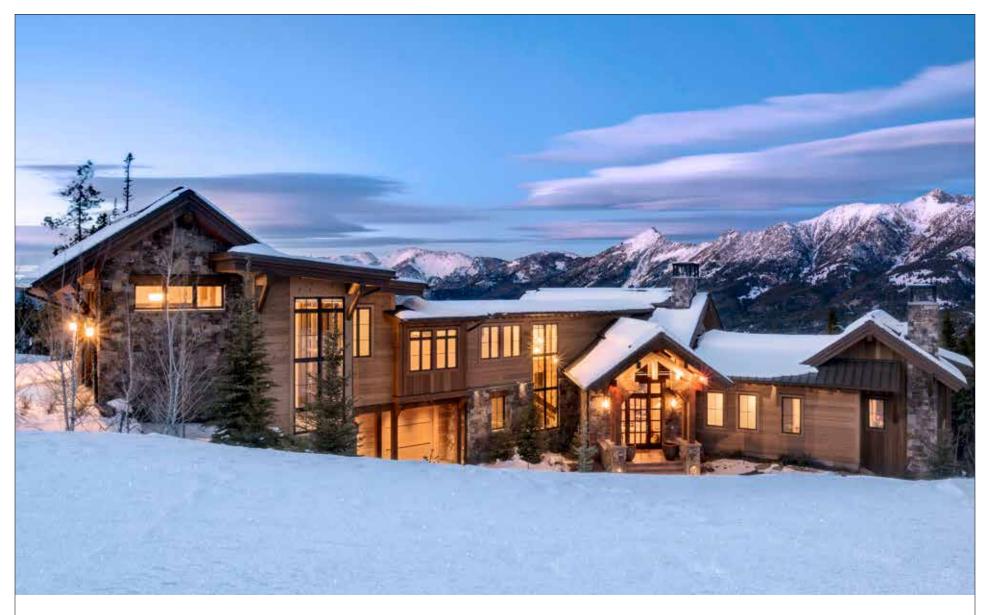
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NEWS IN BRIEF



COVID-19 vaccine clinic available to BSMC patients

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – On March 7, Big Sky Medical Center will host a clinic to distribute about 600 doses of the vaccine to Gallatin or Madison county residents who have been patients of BSMC the last three years who fall into Phase 1B. Phase 1B includes those 70 years of age and older, 16 to 69 years of age with a high-risk medical condition, and Native Americans and other people of color.

BSMC pulled from a randomized list of their patients who meet the Phase 1B criteria. Those patients received an email on Friday, Feb. 19 with a link allowing them to sign-up for an immunization appointment on Sunday, March 7. Patients who did receive an email must only use the sign up link for themselves, and not forward it to others.

Madison County residents can call 406-682-4223 to be added to the vaccine waitlist with Madison Valley Medical Center. Madison County is in the process of coordinating a vaccine clinic and more information will be available soon.

Those who are not BSMC patients can sign up for the Gallatin City-County Health Department alert system to stay up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations in Gallatin County. More information about the COVID-19 vaccine and eligibility for different phases can be found at the Gallatin City-County Health Department and Bozeman Health websites.

Gallatin County's new sheriff

GALLATIN MEDIA CENTER

BOZEMAN – In a unanimous vote on the morning of Tuesday, Feb. 23, the Gallatin County Commission appointed Dan Springer as the next sheriff of Gallatin County.

Springer has been with the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office since 1996. During that time he has served as a patrol deputy, K9 officer, school resource officer, sergeant of the patrol and detective divisions, member and commander of the Special Response Team, commander of the Detention Center and the Missouri River Drug Task Force, chief deputy coroner and as Gallatin County Undersheriff since 2012. Springer was appointed as interim sheriff to replace former Sheriff Brian Gootkin, who left the office at the end of 2020.

"I thank the commission for trusting me this with responsibility," Springer said. "This office means a lot to me. It makes me proud to even be considered for this position. I make a promise to this community that we will continue to provide the exceptional service they expect of us."

Springer said he would like to work on a variety of projects, including creating new internal training for deputies, a domestic violence investigative unit and a Regional Training Center at the sheriff's new building on Jackrabbit Lane. He is also prioritizing the health and wellness of his 140 employees. That includes providing better tools and knowledge to do their jobs, continue and improve on training available, helping them get opportunities to gain empathy, compassion and knowledge, and keep hiring remarkable individuals.

Springer will serve the remainder of Gootkin's term, which expires on Dec. 31, 2022. The next election for Gallatin County Sheriff will be November of 2022.

White-tailed deer hunt sheds light on CWD in Montana

FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

SHERIDAN, WY – More than 300 samples were collected for chronic wasting disease testing during a recent CWD management hunt for white-tailed deer in southwest Montana. The hunt, which lasted from Dec. 15 through Feb. 15, was implemented to reduce densities of white-tailed deer in areas with relatively high CWD prevalence and other places nearby where CWD prevalence is expected to increase in the coming years.

CWD is a contagious neurological disease that infects deer, elk and moose. It is always fatal, and there is no known cure. It was first found among wild cervids in Montana in 2017 and was first detected among white-tailed deer in the Ruby Valley in 2019.

Continued testing of deer harvested during the management hunt further improved biologists' understanding of CWD distribution and prevalence in all or portions of nine hunting districts in southwest Montana. During the management hunt, FWP received 318 samples for CWD testing. So far, 305 of them have received a result, and 52 have tested suspect or positive for CWD.

Without population reductions, CWD prevalence is expected to increase substantially in the coming years.

Biologists will continue working with hunters and landowners in the coming seasons to further understand CWD prevalence and distribution in many areas. Hunter and landowner participation, proper carcass disposal and minimizing prolonged concentrations of deer will all continue to play a critical role in managing CWD.

For more information about CWD in Montana, please visit fwp.mt.gov/conservation/chronic-wasting-disease.

Big Sky Resort mid-season update

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – Troy Nedved, general manager of Big Sky Resort, sent out a letter on Feb. 18 providing a mid-season update and a heartfelt thank you to guests and team members alike.

Big Sky Resort has been operating with visitation caps in place and a policy requiring facial coverings in all indoors spaces as well as in lift lines and on chairlifts. Though the state mask mandate has been lifted, Nedved's letter reaffirms the resort's commitment to requiring masks and adhering to Gallatin and Madison county mandates.

"Proper mask-wearing is the key to our most important goal: Staying open safely for the entire season," Nedved said in the letter.

He went on to address the longer lift lines seen this year explaining that lift queues indicate adherence to distancing protocols including loading the lifts at a reduced capacity.

As a result of reduced lift ticket availability and an Ikon reservation system, the resort is seeing 15 to 30 percent fewer guests a day compared to last year according to the letter. Additionally, passholders are skiing about 10 percent more than usual and make up the majority of the resort's visitation.



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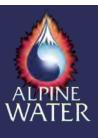
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The Big Sky Discovery Academy Graduation was held outdoors at Big Sky Resort and the five seniors took a lap in their caps and gowns. PHOTO BY MIRA BRODY

Big Sky Discovery Academy graduates first senior class

BY MIRA BRODY AND GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – On Feb. 16, a snowy Tuesday morning, graduates of Big Sky Discovery Academy—the school's first graduating class—skied down the mountain they had been learning in the shadow of for most of their lives. Visible only as vibrant, red streaks in their graduation gowns, they snaked their way down Ambush run, through the steadily growing line at Ramcharger 8, and into the patio area at the Summit Hotel where they were welcomed by an intimate group of family, and the teachers who had shaped their education.

"I just want to say as part of my welcome, that these five young amazing people have a real story to tell," said Nettie Breuner, Discovery Academy's Head of School. "And that story is ... that you helped to start a high school. And that's an incredible kind of thing."

Breuner commended her students for "taking a different path" than most, and trying something different with the Discovery Academy, and encouraged them to carry that uniqueness and tenacity through the rest of their lives. As snow fell steadily on their graduation caps, all five students listened to as their teachers, Breuner, Grace Ganoom-Grein and Barbara Rowley, spoke of each student and their goals for the future.

Nehalem Manka is a competitive free ride skier and will continue to compete with support from her sponsors. She has applied to a variety of universities and plans on attending college out west.

Ben Quackenbush is currently teaching at Big Sky Resort and he will support Discovery's "work hard, play hard" summer program. He will attend Northern Arizona University, joining their honors program in the fall.

Mazie Schreiner, once a competitive ski racer, had to pivot following an injury, and will instead focus on a 90-hour internship with Lone Peak Physical Therapy. She took her exam to obtain a real estate license and she will either attend University of Utah or Montana State University to achieve her degree in exercise science and kinesiology.

Caleb Unger is determined to compete in every ski race he is eligible for. Post-graduation, he plans to participate in a ski program in either Vermont, Idaho or Wyoming.

Bo Wikan has been building a house with his dad, and was able to adjust his school schedule to both finish that project and graduate early. Breuner commented on his unique skill as a builder and ability to balance his craftsmanship against academia.

These five trailblazers are not only the first set of seniors to graduate from Big Sky Discovery Academy, but also have played an instrumental role in shaping the school's curriculum.

Big Sky Discovery Academy was originally founded in 2014 as an alternate option for students in the Big Sky community. Four students—including Unger and Schreiner—came up with the idea that the academy should become a full-time high school, and in fall of 2018, that idea became a reality.

"We refer to them as the trailblazers because they were the kids that made us start a high school, so that was really awesome," said Ganoom-Grein, the director of the High

School Program. "They did it because they wanted a different experience or different schedules, a lot of them were athletes, and a lot of our students now are athletes, so they paved the way for how we do things—we learned a lot from them."

Ganoom-Grein originally joined Discovery as a math teacher and her role has grown along with the school. She still teaches math as well as organizing all of the scheduling and class determinations.

Discovery Academy uses the University of Nebraska's online high school diploma program as the basis for the curriculum. In addition, Ganoom-Grein explained that they have developed their own electives at Discovery, which then transfer over to University of Nebraska. The entire curriculum is available online which is what allows the students the flexibility to shape their schedules around their chosen extracurriculars.

Schreiner was able to craft her schedule around ski racing initially, and then her physical therapy internship. By completing classes in the summer, she says, she and her peers were able to design their schedules with a lighter load during the winter.

As one of the founding students at Discovery, Schreiner has navigated several different schedule configurations, starting with a hybrid between Lone Peak High School and Discovery, and ending with a class schedule of her own design.

"We decided that we were going to take the leap of faith and just hope that it all worked out, because we had already used the online curriculum for our math class our freshman year," Schreiner said. "We figured we could just continue with that and pick up all the other classes that they offered."

Now that the trailblazers have graduated, Schreiner said she is using the extra semester to, "get all the tools in my toolbox." She took the test to get her real estate license, she has received her Professional Ski Instructors of America Alpine Level 1 certification and is currently ski instructing at Big Sky Resort.

"Discovery is an amazing, different way of learning in the community, and I think it will benefit a lot of kids coming up," Schreiner said. "The learning style definitely has set me up way more for my future than a normal public high school because I've been held accountable for every one of my moves. ... Being able to have the ability to take control of my own education and know that I'm the one that's either going to make myself succeed or fail was amazing."

Since 2018, Discovery has grown and the curriculum has evolved with the help of the first five trailblazers.

Emotions ran high at the Feb. 16 graduation as the first five students to shape Discovery head off to new adventures.

"It's a really emotional experience for me," said Ganoom-Grein. "I feel like watching them grow up, I grew up a lot as well. These kids gave me as much of a chance as Discovery gave me being pretty new to teaching, having the opportunity to run a high school and do it in a way that has led these kids to their graduation has been a really rewarding experience. It's pretty incredible."



Maize Schreiner

Explore Big Sky: What is your favorite memory from your time at Discovery Academy?

Mazie Schreiner: "My favorite memory of the Discovery Academy would be the first time my mom and I sat down with the head of school, Nettie, to discuss making our dream of a flexible school become a reality for my competitive ski racing. I remember asking my mom and Nettie what exactly this program was going to look like, and the answer from both of them was that we get to figure it out

together. A group of us came together not knowing exactly what this academy was going to look like, and it was the best thing we could have done. The Big Sky Discovery Academy High School is now one of the best alternatives for students looking for another learning style that is specific for each individual."

EBS: What are your plans for the future?

MS: "I am planning on attending college in the fall to study exercise science and kinesiology, along with getting my real estate license at the end of February."

EBS: How did Discovery allow you to pursue your personal interests?

MS: "The Discovery Academy allowed me to have the flexibility I needed to be successful in all my extracurriculars and not sacrifice a solid education. For my first year at Discovery, I was able to design my own school schedule to allow me to have the flexibility to ski train six days a week, not have schoolwork over a race weekend, maintain good grades and enjoy school. After having to quit ski racing, I was able to get the opportunity to become the first Lone Peak Performance Intern in Physical Therapy. Now my Senior year, I was able to work at an advanced pace and graduate in December."

EBS: What extracurricular activities did you participate in? **MS:** "Throughout my senior year, I participated in alpine ski racing, an internship at Lone Peak Performance, recreational skiing, and being able to work as a ski instructor my junior and senior year."



Nehalem Manka

EBS: What is your favorite memory from your time at Discovery Academy?

Nehalem Manka: "Our beginning of the year hikes."

EBS: What are your plans for the future?

NM: "I have applied to 10 colleges and am waiting to hear back. I plan to major in English."

EBS: How did Discovery allow you to pursue your personal interests?
NM: "At Discovery I was allowed to essentially create the schedule I

needed. I was not penalized for missing school for whatever I needed to do, and I was able to accelerate in my classes and graduate early, as was the entirety of the senior class."

EBS: What extracurricular activities did you participate in? **NM:** "Freeride and soccer."



Caleb Unger

EBS: What is your favorite memory from your time at Discovery Academy? Caleb Unger: "I don't think I can narrow it down to one exact memory because there are too many good ones. I think some of my favorite memories were made during summer math classes with Grace. We would sit outside and work on math in the shade of the umbrellas. We often found ourselves working through math problems, but we also just had the ability to work, talk and be

ourselves during the summer. It provided a perfect balance of school and catchup that I really enjoyed."

EBS: What are your plans for the future?

CU: "My plan is to continue skiing and traveling to races for the rest of this year. Then next year I plan to take a post-grad year and continue focusing on skiing and trying to make teams."

EBS: How did Discovery allow you to pursue your personal interests? **CB:** "Discovery provided me with the ability to pursue skiing by creating a flexible schedule where I could work to finish classes early, along with being flexible for when I was gone for skiing. Discovery also helped me with working ahead so that I was able to graduate early and focus on my future endeavors in skiing."

EBS: What extracurricular activities did you participate in? **CB:** "Skiing was the main extracurricular that I participated in during my time at Discovery Academy."



Bo Wikan

EBS: What is your favorite memory from your time at Discovery Academy? Bo Wikan: "My favorite memory at Discovery was all the powder days I got to partake in because I was at a flexible school that allowed me to get my work done so I was able to do this."

EBS: What are your plans for the future?

BW: "My plans for the future at this point are to continue working throughout the summer in

construction and attend trade school for construction somewhere in Montana either this fall or next year."

EBS: How did Discovery allow you to pursue your personal interests? **BW:** "Being at Discovery allowed me to work, participate in hobbies I enjoy and still maintain good grades and enjoy school."

EBS: What extracurricular activities did you participate in? **BW:** "I am a skier and soccer player. I worked on some construction projects at the school to help upgrade and improve things, along with building my

family house."

Ben



Ben Quackenbush

EBS: What is your favorite memory from your time at Discovery Academy?
Ben Quackenbush: "My favorite memory from my time at Discovery Academy is from before the high school was established. There used to be only four students, and we would sit outside in what is now the playground of the school, and work through our summer math courses with our math tutor, Grace. I have never been one to enjoy math, but it was always fun to learn in such a small

group of close friends. As a bonus, all of those years of summer math eventually allowed me to graduate early."

EBS: What are your plans for the future?

BQ: "My plan after high school is to attend college at Northern Arizona University, where I'll be studying history."

EBS: How did Discovery allow you to pursue your personal interests? **BQ:** "At Discovery, I had the opportunity to create a more flexible, personalized school schedule that gave me more time to pursue my interests outside of class. With that extra time I was able to have several jobs, volunteer as a ski instructor, and enjoy my hobbies more regularly."

EBS: What extracurricular activities did you participate in?

BQ: "Throughout high school I was a member of a kayaking team, worked part-time jobs at Ace Hardware and Big Sky Resort, and volunteered as a ski instructor for younger students at Discovery."

Water supply ... and demand

As Big Sky grows, water is in high demand. Can the supply handle it?

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – Each year, mountain towns across the West closely monitor a pivotal dataset that determines one of their most important resources: snowpack and the snow water equivalent it contains.

In Big Sky, it's a very big deal. In the face of a growing population, one accelerated over the past year by coastal residents fleeing pandemic-ridden cities, water supply remains where it was a decade ago. Demand, however, is increasing.

Recent storms, which laid a thick blanket of snow atop much of the drought-ridden West, have boosted Big Sky's struggling snowpack and made for some great skiing. They also brought the Gallatin River Basin's snow water equivalent—the amount of liquid water in the snowpack—up to 104 percent of median as of Feb. 24, according to data collected by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of Montana.

"The water supply in Big Sky is almost purely snowmelt driven," said Lucas Zukiewicz, a water supply specialist with NRCS. "Precipitation in the spring certainly helps, but you're relying predominantly on snow for your water in Big Sky."

Montana's snowpack and therefore its water supply is being threatened by rising temperatures, and demand for that water continues to increase. And that's a problem, according to Tom Michalek, the vice chair of the Gallatin Watershed Council.

"If we have less snowpack, we're going to have less water," Michalek said. "We're definitely going to have more people. Less water, more people, that is a situation that should concern folks."

The 2017 Montana Climate Assessment made some dire predictions. "Rising temperatures will reduce snowpack, shift historical patterns of streamflow in Montana, and likely result in additional stress on Montana's water supply, particularly during summer and early fall," the assessment reads.

Big Sky's water and sewer district is aware of this eventuality, says Ron Edwards, the district's general manager.

"At some point, your demand will exceed your ability to supply," Edwards said, pointing out that while demand for water is rising in Big Sky, a graph he shared at a Jan. 19 water and sewer board meeting showed that water production has remained level for the last 10 years.

According to the most recent data available, a Water System Source Capacity Plan Update prepared for the water and sewer district in August of 2015 by Western Groundwater Services, illustrated the point. "A capacity deficit is estimated to first occur during years 2022 to 2023," the update read.

The plan addresses the projected deficit covering ways to increase capacity including leak detection and repair, water conservation, maximizing capacity from existing sources and constructing new sources. These improvements, according to the plan, could increase water system source capacity to 1,190 gallons per minute which would cover the projected 1,180 gpm deficit.

In an effort to make the current water system in Big Sky more efficient, the district undertook a Mountain Well Exploration Project last summer and drilled six test wells around the Mountain Village at the base of

Lone Mountain. The goal was to find a viable water source to serve homes higher on the mountain and allow the district to split its system for efficiency and to save on pumping costs.

Of those wells that were drilled, No. 7 was the most promising, says Mark Cunnane, owner of Western Groundwater Services, the company

contracted to drill and test the wells. A pump test was completed on Dec. 7 showing that No. 7 produced 215 gallons per minute, but that number dropped off and after three days of recovery the well was still down 14 feet from its initial static water level.

According to Cunnane's report, he recommends a longer pump test to see if the well can produce a sustainable flow. Approximately 100 gallons per minute is a desirable flow according to Cunnane, based on the cost of building a well.

"We haven't found anything that meets that criteria yet up there," Edwards said in a Jan. 19 interview. "We're finding water but not sustainable, 100-gallon-aminute water."

This graph illustrates the predicted source capacity deficit for the Big Sky water system. Meadow Village wells are projected to provide surplus capacity until 2023; Mountain Village wells until 2022. GRAPH COURTESY OF WESTERN GROUNDWATER SERVICES

For now, the difficulty of drilling new wells in the West Fork Valley is merely an inconvenience to the water and sewer district, but in the not-so-distant future, increased demand driven by an influx of people to the area could outpace existing availability.

"The district and all that land out there was set up by Gallatin County to be developed," said Scott Buecker, project manager with Bozeman-based Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., which Big Sky nonprofit Gallatin River Task Force hired to create a Water Conservation Plan. "The development can happen as long as the developers can show that the water is there."

GRTF is working on programs to conserve water in the community.

"You can't create new water, so you have to conserve it so that you can meet the demands of a growing population," said Emily O'Connor, conservation program manager with GRTF. "On top of that, we have concerns about the impacts of climate change on our water supply since we rely on snowpack."

There are three main initiatives in the Water Conservation Program that O'Connor runs: indoor cash rebates for Big Sky residents to update fixtures in their homes, outdoor rebates that reward residents for auditing and upgrading their irrigation systems, and a program to certify properties as a "trout-friendly landscape."

The GRTF Water Conservation Program will be expanded by a Water Conservation Plan created by Advanced Engineering Services to take a holistic approach at improving conservation efforts. The plan will identify additional measures to bolster the existing program.

Water supply in Big Sky is complex and there are no easy answers. People are flocking to the area, global warming is threatening the snowpack, and new water is difficult to come by.

"The question becomes, 'What do we do about that?" said Michalek of the Gallatin Watershed Council. "There's not too much we can do to make more water than we already have and there's very little we can do about more people moving into Big Sky and the Gallatin Valley. That situation is going to continue for the foreseeable future."

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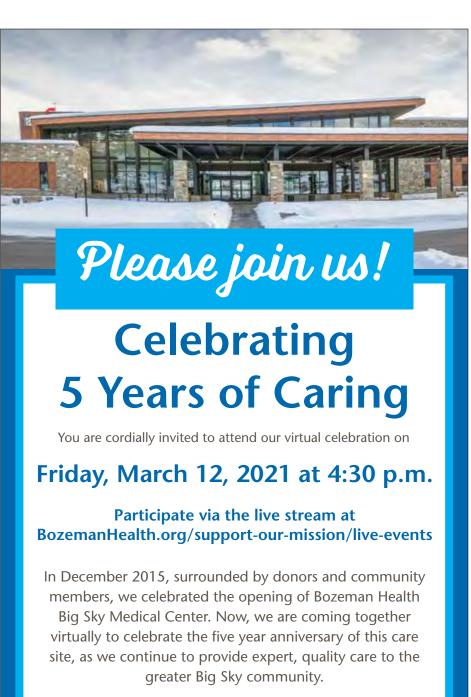
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BOZEMAN HEALTH BIG SKY MEDICAL CENTER

Q&A: Big Sky Ski Patrol

Patroller Dan Skilling and avy dog Tela weigh in

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – When was the last time you were booted up and ready to ski at 6:40 a.m.? For the members of the Big Sky Resort's ski patrol, a daily 6:40 a.m. team meeting is just part of their standard routine.

Ski patrollers—the mountain employees in red coats with white crosses—work hard daily to open the resort's 5,850 acres of skiable terrain to the public. In addition to mitigating avalanche hazards and ensuring signage and ropes are up and in the right places, they also complete morning and evening sweeps of the mountain, and, during business hours, help skiers or riders who injure themselves on the mountain.

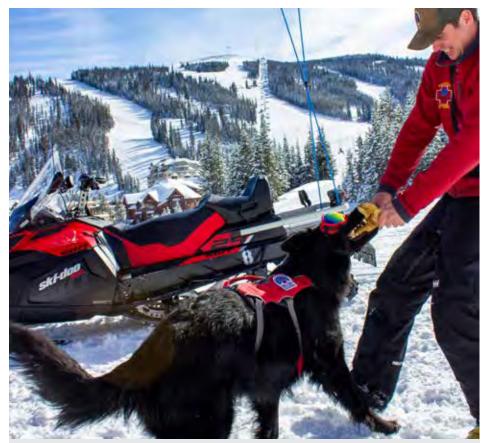
Big Sky Resort has just over 100 professional ski patrollers as well as a volunteer staff that provides 10 to 20 extra people to help out on weekends. It takes 40 to 50 patrollers to open the mountain each morning and they all have to be certified avalanche blasters.

Dan Skilling is a Montana native who's been patrolling at Big Sky for 12 seasons. He moved to Big Sky at 18 and started his resort career as a lift operator at the tram. After his first season in 2009, he got a job on ski patrol.

Today, Skilling is part of the avalanche dog program at Big Sky and has two avy dogs under his care. His first dog Pulver is 13 years old and happily retired. His second dog, Tela, will be 3 in March and patrols the mountain with his handler.

EBS sat down with Skilling to learn more about his ski patrol experience, his involvement in the avalanche dog program, and why he and Tela keep coming back.

Explore Big Sky: What made you want to be on Big Sky Resort's patrol? **Dan Skilling:** "That first year being up here seeing all the patrollers scan through the tram, watching their job and seeing what they do really inspired me to get out there and want to learn more about the snow.



Dan and Tela play tug of war with a glove and Tela sports her "doggles." PHOTO BY GABRIELLE GASSER

Growing up, I always had a passion for outdoor sports, winter stuff, snowmobiling, and I didn't really know too much about snow dynamics or the EMS medical side of things and that really intrigued me as well. Every time I saw those guys and gals cruising through the tram everyone was so happy and it seemed like a very tight-knit kind of group of people that I really wanted to learn from and really wanted to be a part of. So that drove me to be a ski patroller."

EBS: What training and certifications did you have to get? **DS:** "The minimum requirement training for a ski patroller is you have to be 18 years old, and then you have to have an [Emergency Medical Technician] license. Those are about the only two things that we require



Nancy Sheil skis with her dog Juniper between her legs. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY RESORT

per se, but there's a lot of extra training that goes into it that we really like to see to make you a better candidate for ski patrol. Any sort of snow science degree, any sort of formal avalanche training, any guiding experience—that kind of thing is what we look for when we're hiring.

[You need] a very basic understanding of how to ski and then have that EMT license. They do a lot of the training here at Big Sky, so we've sent a lot of patrollers through Avalanche 1 Pro courses and Avalanche 2 Pro courses. We send our dog handlers to a bunch of dog training schools, and then throughout the years of experience this is one of the best mountains in the world to learn how to read snow and make big avalanches and figure that stuff out."

EBS: What does an average day look like for you? **DS:** "Each day is different whether we do avalanche control or not. Our day starts at our morning meeting which is at 6:40 a.m. down in the base area. [The] meeting consists of the plan for the day and then what happened overnight, what the snow quality is, how much snow we got, and what the plan is for our avalanche mitigation routes. Then we all gear up and head up Swift Current. This year is a little different, so we stagger our times going up Swifty. As we're riding up Swifty with our route partner, we call up to 'the fort' where we keep all our explosives, and we ask the guys to get that ready. However many explosives we think we need for the day, we'll call those in and by the time we get to the fort, they'll all be in different little boxes for us. We'll arm up, grab our shots and then ... head up the Tram.

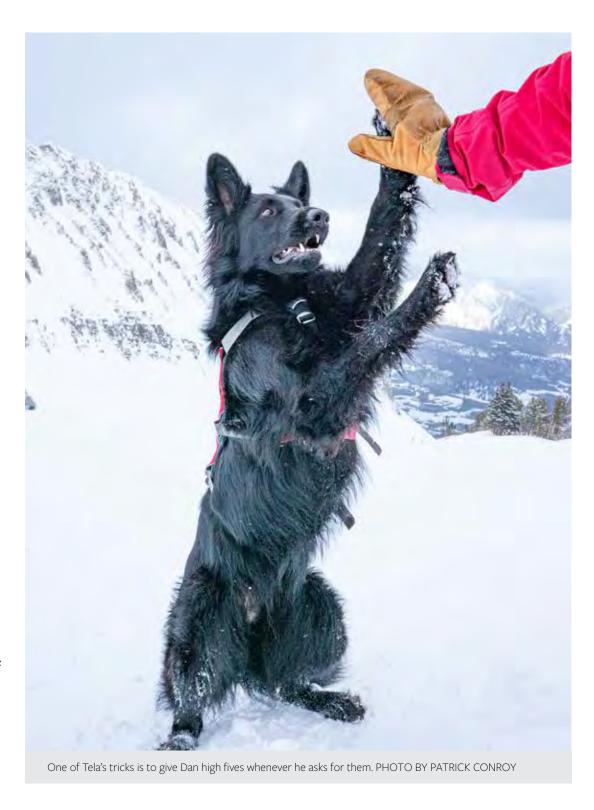
"Separate routes go out at staggered times just so we're not all going out at the same time. We're going out on avalanche control using our explosives, doing ski cuts, mitigating any hazards that we find out there and getting stuff open. Once we get all of our terrain open, that's when we start to do our morning run checks. We'll make sure that everything's in place and looking good, and all our medical gear is where it needs to be, so we'll do all those daily checks before we really get going.

"Throughout the day we'll be consistently doing ski-run checks on our avalanche terrain, doing ski cuts and mitigating any hazards that we find. Between mitigating avalanche hazard during the day, we'll be running wrecks, taking toboggans down and facilitating transports through snowmobiles. We do random projects throughout the day, whether it's rope lines, opening up more terrain or setting up different signage. So, our days really consist of making sure people are skiing safe, making sure the terrain stays safe [by] keeping an eye on our avalanche terrain, and running wrecks. Speckled in there, depending on the day, we will do a lot of training."

EBS: What is your favorite part of being a patroller?

DS: "Well that's easy, it's the dogs. I love working with the dogs. Tela is my second avalanche dog. I ran Pulver up here for 10 years. He was another German shepherd and he retired three years ago at the age of 10. I've been a dog handler for 11 out of the 12 years, so I got lucky and there was an opening early in my career. My favorite part is definitely working with the dogs, being able to bring my dog to work, and use her as a tool and not just bring your pet to work. I like all the training that goes into it. Last year, I took over the role of training coordinator for the dog program so I'm in charge of facilitating all the training, getting people tested, getting people certified and I really liked that responsibility a lot, too."

EBS: *Tell me about the avalanche dog program at Big Sky?* **DS:** "We have seven certified dogs on the hill and 10 altogether, so three that are in training right now. That's right at our minimum of what we need to operate up on the hill. We like to have at least two certified avalanche dogs up on the hill, one for the north side and one for the south side. They're mainly here for the worst-case scenario. We do a really good job of mitigating our avalanche hazards, but should something happen, these dogs are going to be our No. 1 tool to find somebody that doesn't have avalanche gear.



We're also here if something happens inbounds and we don't know if somebody is caught. [The dogs] are going to clear that scene so that's one more tool to be able to say, 'Yep, there's definitely nobody in here.' We're all certified through the county search and rescue so if anything happens anywhere in the county—Gallatin or Madison—we're all on a call list so we'll get called out and asked to come if we're available."

EBS: What do the dogs do on a standard day?

DS: "The dogs come up and ride the chairlift with us to the posting station. They stay there and we do obedience training and search training most days. They're trained to find human scent under the snow. We bury people up to five feet deep in snow caves and have the dogs search for them. They alert by digging and barking when they pinpoint the scent. The dogs will ski behind us—we trained them to ski between our legs or ski on the side of us—and they'll run down the hill. We try not to ski them too much, but they like to ride the snowmobiles. They ride on the snowcats from time to time, and we'll even do training with the local search and rescue to do helicopter training, so they'll ride in helicopters as well."

EBS: What is your best memory from patrolling at Big Sky? **DS:** "When I got my first dog Pulver certified, I'll never forget that feeling. We had a tough go the first time we tried we actually had to retest after that; it just wasn't his day. The second time when I tested him again and we passed, that's a memory that will definitely stick with me for the rest of my life.

Every day we work we make memories. It sounds super cheesy, but all these guys and girls are like my family so being able to do cool stuff with them, go do avalanche control, make big avalanches, ski powder before the people get there, and watch the sunrise in the morning, that kind of stuff is what keeps me coming back every year. There's a very big family aspect and that group mentality that goes along with ski patrol so that's what keeps me coming back."



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The warmth of giving

Warming Center drive provides dignity, comfort

BY MIRA BRODY

BOZEMAN – Last week, a pallet of women's sanitary products arrived in Bozeman, delivered from the Albertson's headquarters in Boise, Idaho. The pallet was a part of a feminine hygiene products drive organized by Bozeman local Whitney Bermes, and although hundreds of tampons may not mean much to some, to those in need they provide dignity during an uncertain time in their lives.

After hearing two years ago that feminine hygiene and other personal care products were a need at the Human Resource Development Council's Warming Centers, Bermes, who also works as the communications coordinator for Gallatin County, rallied her friends and raised enough money to fill a Costco cart of donations.

This year's drive, which she expanded to the Facebook group "Feminine Hygiene Products Drive for Warming Center," raised \$2,000 in just two days. The manager at the regional Albertson's headquarters caught wind and sent over the pallet with more than \$1,000 in feminine care products. As of Feb. 17, the drive's monetary donations reached \$3,145.

Bermes says the most powerful result is seeing the community's generosity and willingness to help.

"I didn't really realize that I needed to see this overwhelming support and generosity," she said. "I just did this because I thought it would benefit women. I just love how you give people the framework to help and they run with it."

HRDC operates a total of three community-funded shelters, two in Bozeman and one in Livingston. It also runs Blueprint, a transitional housing program for young people experiencing home insecurity and manages 47 different programs for those in need. These range from senior services programs to food, nutrition and financial-opportunity training to Fork and Spoon, Bozeman's pay-what-you-can nonprofit restaurant.

"We want homelessness to be rare, brief and only one time," said Kristin Hamburg, HRDC's development director who's no stranger to community need having worked for HRDC nearly the entire 26 years she's lived in Bozeman.

In the Big Sky community, there are no Warming Center services. Sarah Gaither Bivins, operations manager for the Big Sky Community Food Bank, says they've often purchased hotel rooms to help those in Big Sky with home insecurity on cold nights or bus tickets to get them to one of Bozeman's Warming Center locations. As of yet, she says, there are no concrete opportunities to provide emergency housing in Big Sky.



Bermes and a group of volunteers used cash donations from the drive to purchase sanitary products at Costco.. PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITNEY BERMES



Whitney Bermes, left, organized the feminine hygiene products drive, which has raised over \$3,000 in monetary donations and "trunk-loads" of products. PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITNEY BERMES

"We really do rely on that Warming Center to shelter people either working or looking for work in Big Sky," Gaither Bivins said in an email to EBS. "At the Food Bank, we do have toiletries, bedding and other essentials that we distribute to those experiencing that type of need."

In mid-January, the Big Sky Housing Trust and Lone Mountain Land Company announced a partnership on a workforce housing development project that will bring more affordable housing to the community's employees. LMLC acquired Buck's T-4 Lodge, the River Rock Lodge, the Powder Light parcel next to Ace Hardware and, most recently, the former American Bank property along Highway 64 with such projects in mind.

HRDC has been forced to adapt numerous services due to the pandemic in order to keep their customers and volunteers safe. Last spring during the stay-at-home order, the group leased a local hotel for housing and quarantine services and have had to limit capacity of their Warming Center locations to comply with social distancing measures. Customers can only use the center for sleeping, limiting their ability to socialize.

"People were in a stay-at-home order and needed to stay home to be safe, and our customers experiencing homelessness didn't have a home to stay in and be safe," said Hamgurg said, who also noticed an increase in need since the pandemic began.

Despite the challenges, HRDC has been unwavering in its community services. An annual back-to-school shopping event, usually hosted at the Gallatin County Fairgrounds, was adapted so at-risk youth could still "shop" for new and used clothing, supplies and personal care items such as razors, shaving cream, shampoo and conditioner, and hair ties.

"The reaction from the young men and women was just surprising," Hamburg said. "We didn't realize how much of a need there was for things that make you feel your best."

The reaction from those donating is just as powerful.

"It tells me that I live in the best place in the entire world," Bermes says of watching her drive come to life. "I've been in Bozeman for 10 years now and it's just things like these that really reinforce that."

Bermes says between monetary and product donations, as well as volunteer time, 94 individuals contributed to this year's drive, a momentum she hopes will continue. While personal care items could be considered "luxury" goods as opposed to the common necessities we often think of when making donations, they can sometimes make the biggest difference in someone's life—to feel comfortable, clean and dignified.

"Things just feel so negative," said Hamburg of the events of this past year. "To have people you don't even know reach out is so warming."

OUTLAW EVENTS

JOIN US FOR BIG SKY'S BIGGEST WEEK!

SUMMER 2021 LINEUP

FRIDAY, JULY 16

3-5pm - Big Sky Art Auction Preview / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

6pm - Big Sky Community Rodeo / Big Sky Events Arena

9pm - Street Dance / Town Center Plaza

SATURDAY, JULY 17

4-7pm - Big Sky Art Auction / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

SUNDAY, JULY 18

TBA - Mutton Bustin Pre-Ride Competition / Big Sky Events Arena

6pm - Big Sky Bingo Night / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

11am-5pm - Big Sky PBR / Western Sports Foundation Golf Tournament

5pm - Farmers Market

6pm - Golf Tourney Reception

7pm - Big Sky PBR Kickoff / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

8pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

THURSDAY, JULY 22

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

7pm - 10th Annual Big Sky PBR Night 1 Bull Riding / Big Sky Events Arena

TBA - Music in the Mountains Concert

FRIDAY, JULY 23

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

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

Following Bull Riding - Jason Boland & The Stragglers

SATURDAY, JULY 24

12-6pm - Big Sky PBR Basecamp Vendor Village Open / Town Center Plaza

2pm - PBR Meet & Greet / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

4pm - Live Music / PBR Basecamp Tent in Town Center Plaza

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

Following Bull Riding - Robert Earl Keen

LIMITED TICKETS ON SALE MARCH 1 - BIGSKYPBR.COM *events and timing subject to change; stay tuned to bigskypbr.com for the most current events schedule



SECTION 2: ENVIROMENT & OUTDOORS, SPORTS, TRAVEL, HEALTH



ENVIRONMENT & OUTDOORS





Buried.

A first-person account of a deep snow burial

BY HENRY HALL EBS CONTRIBUTOR

BIG SKY – For me, powder days always meant fewer consequences. These are the days when I get to meet up with friends, ski good snow and hit jumps and cliffs with typically safer and softer landings.

The storm that hit Big Sky the first weekend of February was unlike any one I had ever seen. I had to work on Friday and Saturday, so I was prepared to have myself a day on Sunday. I was lucky enough to be skiing the Yellowstone Club that day, and the first three runs of the day were some of the deepest turns I've ever made in my life. I was hitting some large features that morning with my good friend, Matt LaCasse.

On the next lift ride, I told Matt I was ready to hit the "big one." Kelly Attenborough and I had hit the 40-foot cliff a couple years before and had both failed to stick the landing. On that Sunday, however, conditions were almost too perfect not to hit it.

It's not the biggest cliff I've ever jumped off, but it's definitely the most intimidating. It sits right in the middle of the ridgeline and can be seen from most parts of the mountain. It isn't marked by any ropes but three signs on the ridge warn "CLIFF" about 100 yards above the drop. The fact that patrollers keep it open is awesome.

As I approached the drop, I had surprisingly less nerves than I did when I hit it the first time. I had been scoping the spot all year, had talked with patrol about it, and knew where there would be enough snow to land. I heard Matt yell to me that he was ready to film, and I dropped.

I felt good in the air and started to fall toward the backseat slightly so I could use my body to make the landing less impactful and ski away. That didn't happen.

When I landed, I plunged about four feet below the surface of the snow, and all of my momentum forward had stopped. As if it were a motor function, I put my elbow in front of my mouth, and the other arm straight up before the snow settled. My face and mouth were covered in snow, but I could move both of my arms from the elbow down.

After about a minute and a half of not being able to breath, I finally was able to clear an airway to my mouth. If that hadn't happened, I would have died.

When I finally stopped panicking, I noticed something warm and wet start to creep up my body. I had heard myths that people who get buried pee themselves, but I had no idea it would happen that easily, and that fast!

At that point, Matt tried to ski toward me but he wasn't sure exactly where I was. He ended up spotting the tip of my ski which hadn't released from my feet and called patrol immediately. Stepper Hall, Chase Ryan and Sarah Bell had all been skiing down the chute next to the cliff, and Matt yelled to them to stay as high possible, to traverse over and get me.

Unfortunately, from their vantage point it wasn't possible to traverse to my landing zone. They ended up about 20 yards below me and attempted to hike up. The snow was so deep that even with hard efforts they could barely move.



Yellowstone Club ski patroller Matt Brunns pulls author Henry Hall out of the snow nearly 20 minutes after Hall was buried following a 40-foot cliff huck. PHOTO BY CHASE RYAN



Hall takes the "big one" at the Yellowstone Club after a big storm in early February. Watch the video of Hall's cliff huck on the EBS Facebook page. PHOTO/VIDEO BY MATT LACASSE

While I was in the snow, my confidence in being saved was declining. In my head, I thought Matt must have thought I skied away, and that he hadn't noticed I was buried. Every time I tried to free any other part of my body, snow would fall into my airway and I wouldn't be able to breathe for another 20 seconds. I also thought, "My parents are going to be so mad if I die from doing something stupid like this."

After about 10 minutes, I began entering a really dark place. I thought a lot about death, about my family and about my friends, and I started to feel selfish for going out like that.

After another 5-10 minutes of falling in and out of consciousness, I finally heard a voice from outside of the snow. I screamed back and Matt Bruns was able to extract me from the snow in about a minute.

I was so happy to be out, but looking at the faces of Stepper, Sarah, Chase and Matt made me feel horrible. Something about putting other people through an ordeal like this made me feel worse than even being buried. I ended up being totally uninjured. Nothing was wrong with me, however I've lost a lot of confidence in my skiing and I'm trying to feel comfortable on skis again.

What went wrong was that the slope that I landed on was significantly wind loaded, and none of the snow had actually settled. I've never really heard of any accidents similar to the one that I had in inbounds terrain.

After talking to a lot of people these past few weeks, I don't feel incredibly stupid for what happened that day, and I don't blame anyone but myself for what happened. Everyone did everything they could to get me out of the snow, and the circumstances were bizarre. But I do want to tell the story as a cautionary tale and urge people to really think through things hard when skiing big terrain and in deep snow.

I learned three things from that day:

- 1. Big snow means big consequence, even inbounds. Wear a beacon, shovel and probe when skiing deep snow, no matter what. It could save lives, including yours.
- 2. Friends on a powder day are important. If Matt wasn't there, I would definitely be dead. If we had more people there, and someone to spot the landing, things would have been a lot less drastic.
- 3. You can never be that dialed with a cliff that big. While I had probed the landing a couple days before and had been looking at it all year, I should have checked that day to see what the snow was like. If I had done this, I might've known that it was in fact, too deep. And I wouldn't have been buried.

Henry Hall is an aspiring writer and a ski coach at Big Sky Ski Education Foundation this winter and is counting to work on his passion for freeride skiing and outdoor journalism.

BY TODD WILKINSON EBS ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMNIST

The other day I was on a Zoom call with students from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Sciences who were taking a class taught by Dr. Susan G. Clark. Her curriculum focuses on how to save some of the last remaining wildland ecosystems on Earth.

Clark and I have been friends for more than

30 years. When she's not delivering lectures at Yale, she spends much of her time at her home in the town of Jackson, Wyoming, and is located right across the street from the National Elk Refuge.

Clark, founder of the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative, had asked me to discuss the fate of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and my work both as a writer and founder of the nonprofit journalism site, Mountain Journal, which explores the intersection of humans and nature in a region without parallel in the Lower 48.

In anticipation of a lively exchange with graduate and undergraduate students, I asked them to ponder the amazing map produced by the Wyoming Migration Initiative that illustrates where elk herds move across Greater Yellowstone.

It's a truly extraordinary thing to have tens of thousands of wapiti migrating seasonally across the landscape—not only because it happens at all, but because human development and land-use patterns, including outdoor recreation, have reduced or eliminated such movements elsewhere.

Greater Yellowstone is, in many ways, the last large mammal ecosystem still left standing in the American West.

And the truth is we are losing this place. It's occurring right now, in real time, right in front of our noses and while wildlife experts and land

Bozenan Paradise Valley Herd Northern Herd Sand Creek Herd VELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK Sand Cody GRADINA Sand Cody Form Herd All Sand Cody Form Herd Sand Sand Sand Form Herd Sand Sand Sand Form Herd Sand Sand Sand Sand Sand Form Herd Sand Sand

Elk migration map shows elk herd movement across the Greater Yellowstone. MAP COURTESY OF WYOMING MIGRATION INITIATIVE

Our role in saving Greater Yellowstone

managers concur with this premise, citing accumulating evidence, there is currently no plan or sense of urgency to save it.

What I asked the bright young minds from Yale to ponder is not what appears on the elk map, but what's missing? Federal, state, county, local and private property jurisdictions can be delineated with elk migrations flowing across the cartography like rivers.

What's absent, I said, is a chronicle of the seasonal migrations and movements of other species, as in: bison, mule deer, pronghorn, moose, bighorn sheep, and wolverines. All of these animals migrate, too, and they need spaces and habitat not overrun by humans to keep doing it. Grizzlies and wolves peregrinate too, as do bald eagles, peregrine falcons, trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes, bobcats, lynx, and wild neotropical songbirds.

Greater Yellowstone is a vast symphony of wildlife whose melody flows like notes across a beautiful, complicated, harmonious score of sheet music. This is the reason why it warrants being compared to the other great wild ecosystem, the Serengeti in East Africa. This is our version of that and yet, by neglect, indifference, law of mass awareness of what we have right before our eyes—and add to that a fragmented way of thinking about it—we are losing this place.

Unless we get undistracted and change the way we're doing business, any future SOS distress call—"Save Our Serengeti"—is destined to be too little, too late. Next week, I am hoping to have a discussion with citizens who share a passion for Greater Yellowstone and comprehend that what sets this place apart is not its stature as a human playground, or next real estate play, but it's wildlife.

Good work is being done but it clearly isn't happening fast enough. All of us have a role in its stewardship. Like the sheet music that speaks to Greater Yellowstone's marvel of remnant biodiversity, citizen voices of advocates represent the vital chorus. Join the discussion online, which you can access remotely on Thursday, March 4, at 6 p.m.

Let's have a serious, heartfelt chat among people near and far who love this place and know that we need a plan—a vision—to safeguard the miracle that is Greater Yellowstone.

Here, I want to amicably lean upon a few people, beyond elected officials, to make a difference in elevating ecological awareness at a mass scale. And that's the business community, locals and those decamped here amid COVID-19. Jackson Hole, Bozeman, members of the Yellowstone Club at Big Sky, Cody, Red Lodge, Paradise Valley, Madison Valley, and the Centennial have people of means who need to step up to the plate.

Yes, let the words above enter into your consciousness and conscience. Money can buy you stuff, but it can also earn you satisfaction, admiration in your family, community and country for stepping forward to make a plan for saving Greater Yellowstone a reality. Visit Mountain Journal (mountainjournal.org) and drop us

All readers are invited on March 4 to the Teton Public Library's Zoom session titled "Wildness from the Heart of the American Serengeti: How Are We Gonna Save This Place?"

Zoom coordinates: https://zoom.us/j/91949492284?pw d=UUVLZUNjU2paRnN3emUyN0JoOVRkZz09 Meeting ID: 919 4949 2284 Passcode: 488398

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















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- Gregory, MT







BY DAVID TUCKER **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

In the last issue of EBS, this column started with dire numbers concerning our local snowpack and the equivalent amount of water held therein. Since then, it's been dumping and we've moved into an above average winter—thanks, Ullr.

While the improvement in conditions is obviously a welcome relief, it shouldn't distract us from pressing environmental concerns, shifting weather patterns due to climate change and growing stresses on our water resources. We are by no means in the clear—a warmer than average spring could send all this snow running off faster than normal without bolstering our groundwater aquifers.

In the same way that we have yet to witness demonstrable downturns in the availability of fresh water in the Gallatin River watershed, our dwindling snowpack has yet to have serious repercussions for ecological integrity. This corner of the world has up until now dodged the climate change bullet—but our time will come.

When it does, will we be prepared? Is preparation possible, and what will it take to build a resilient, climate change-adaptable community?

As the saying goes, where there's a will, there's a way—and I believe we have the will.

If recent history has shown us anything, it's clear that this community has the gumption to rally when the going gets tough. Big Sky Relief sprang from nowhere in response to the COVID-19 crisis, raising money, administering test kits and keeping Big Sky relatively safe. We need to take that same approach to ecological restoration, water conservation and climate change preparation.

This should go without saying, but climate change is very real. Montana will be afflicted by abnormal weather patterns that change the availability of fresh water. That change in water distribution will have profound consequences for fish, wildlife, wildfire, human health and the agricultural sector that drives much of Montana's economy. The outdoor lifestyles we all enjoy will be disrupted and the vibrant community we've worked so hard to build will be tested like never before—unless we plan.



The impacts of climate change are coming to the Gallatin River Watershed—will we be prepared? PHOTO **COURTESY OF GRTF**

More than anything, planning is an insurance policy against an inevitability not far off. In the same way that savvy investors hedge "sure things" against high risks, we can hedge innovative solutions against a catastrophic future. The systems exist, the technology is available, and we have the knowledge—do we have the will?

Do we have the foresight to slow down, take a breath and look to the future, investing capital and common sense in an outcome our grandchildren will be proud of? With COVID, we were caught off guard but were still able to respond. Imagine how well we can adapt to climate change and create a climate change-resilient Big Sky if we start planning now.

Again, solutions exist, and some are already in place, but we need to improve and expand them. Here, the Big Sky Water and Sewer District reuses wastewater to irrigate certain

facilities around town, like the golf courses in the Meadow Village, Spanish Peaks and the Yellowstone Club. This prevents wastewater from being directly discharged into the Gallatin River, but it also prevents those courses from irrigating with fresh water.

Currently, the nutrient concentrations in the wastewater combine with pollutants from other sources. The cumulative effect of this nutrient load is a concentration of pollutants reaching our surface waters that is above state standards—in other words, it isn't good enough.

Big Sky's soon-to-be-built treatment plant will drastically reduce nutrient concentrations in wastewater, while expanding reuse options for that water resource. High-quality recycled wastewater can mimic the natural water cycle, augmenting water supply and bolstering in-stream flows in late summer and early fall. These are the kinds of innovative solutions we'll need to incorporate if we wish to continue living in this special place without further harming our cherished resources, like the Gallatin River.

While global warming is already having a measurable impact across the planet, the worst is yet to come to southwest Montana. But holding our breath and hoping for the best is too high risk a strategy. We need a good plan for hedging our bet that we can live here sustainably without compromising the wildlands and wildlife that share our

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

Billionaire mine owner leaves a tiny town in the lurch



BY DAVE MARSTON

Only about 100 people live in Somerset in western Colorado, a former coal company town squeezed into a narrow valley. A state highway and railroad tracks crowd on one side, the North Fork of the Gunnison River on the other.

Some say there's charm in the town's narrow streets and funky houses with affordable rent. What's more, there's no government except for a water district, though that's what a recent controversy is all about.

For over a century, Somerset has been dominated by a parade of big money interests, from Kaiser Steel to U.S. Steel and now by billionaire Bill Koch, younger brother to the Koch brothers, known for financing far right politics.

De facto government has long been from the coal companies, which provided water and even a store. In the early 1960s, mine owner at the time, U.S. Steel, sold the houses to residents. But Somerset never created a town government, and minimal oversight comes from Gunnison County, two hours away by way of a twisting highway or dirt road over

The town's water always remained a coal company's responsibility until this year. On Jan. 27, Koch's mine president, Mike Ludlow, sent a letter to the Somerset Water Board: "Oxbow Mining is hereby providing you with a six months' notice of its intention to terminate the Agreement (contract of 1962) effective on July 31, 2021."

The property under the plant and water rights from the North Fork River, however, will revert to Koch's gas fracking company, Gunnison Energy.

How can tiny Somerset—its finances shaky and residents on the poorer side—possibly shoulder the burden? Maintenance of the aging water treatment plant costs \$7,000 monthly, and water from the plant consistently fails state-monitored water quality tests.

Saddled with finding a solution is lifetime Somerset resident John Mlakar, Somerset's water manager. He says the town has \$71,000 on hand, which isn't nearly enough to build a new, \$200,000 plant that would meet state standards and sift harmful compounds from the water.

One of those compounds is bromide. When mixed with chlorine used to kill bacteria in a water treatment plant, it causes total trihalomethanes, a cancer-causing mixture.

Bromide occurs naturally but concentrates after being stirred up by mining or natural gas drilling. Water tests by a Koch employee in 2018 found that bromide originated

well above the West Elk mine, but below where Koch's Gunnison Energy and others have natural gas wells.

Meanwhile, new people have been moving into the town's 50 or so houses as retired coal miners move out. One champion of the reviving town is Terry Commander, who heads the town's fire district. "The dynamics of the town are changing for the better," she says.

You might think that Koch's corporation, the state of Colorado or the county would be willing to help Somerset deal with its crisis. So far, no one has stepped up.

Gunnison County Commissioner Roland Mason says that dealing with "rights of way" in distant Somerset has always been a chore. Perhaps that's why a visitor to the town notices abandoned cars parked willy-nilly and piles of junk that look as old as the town itself.

Yet Mason acknowledges that Somerset has been a valuable asset: "Ten years ago, 18 ent of our budget was from the severance tax when the mines w amounted to \$11.7 million of the county's \$65 million budget. "The county had to rearrange their budget significantly when the mines closed," Mason adds.

Impacts, however, were mostly felt in nearby Delta County, which for 60 years provided everything from schools, hospital and housing for hundreds of coal miners and their families. Delta County received some payment for its services, but they were never on the scale of Gunnison County, which could claim Somerset as its cash cow.

Koch's mine closed after a fire in 2013, but Somerset still has one active coal mine, West Elk Mine, which sent \$1.2 million direct severance taxes to the town and county of Gunnison in 2019 alone. Another \$497,000 indirect severance grant paid for six solar arrays on Gunnison county buildings.

Mlakar says he's happy to make the town's pitch to Gunnison commissioners: "We need their help. I've been in the new Gunnison jail, though not for illegal reasons. That place

He compares prosperous Gunnison County to his own tight budget. "I make \$905 per month. My house is paid off and money pays for food, heat and my water. You push the price of water any higher, and I'm broke, I gotta leave."

Dave Marston is the publisher of Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He went to school years K-12 with kids from Somerset.

Avalanche Safety: Back to the Basics

BY IAN HOYER

Whether backcountry skiing, snowmobiling or snowshoeing, safely enjoying the backcountry requires planning, preparation and paying attention, not hours spent analyzing snow crystals or a graduate degree in snow science. Simple techniques can dramatically improve your odds of staying safe—no magnifying lenses or thermometers required.

To get started, identifying avalanche terrain is the most important safety skill to learn. If your goal is snowshoeing or cross-country skiing in the flats, avoiding avalanche terrain is all you need to know about avalanches. If you can identify and avoid slopes steeper than 30 degrees and the runouts beneath them, you don't need to worry, as an hourlong avalanche awareness course will teach you how to confidently identify avalanche terrain. You can find a list of local courses at mtavalanche .com/education.

If you want to get onto steeper slopes (or near them), knowing a bit more about snow conditions, a few safe travel techniques and how to be prepared for an avalanche rescue is very important.

Reading the avalanche advisory every day is a small time commitment that could save your

life. The avalanche advisory will tell you how dangerous conditions are that day, and which slopes to particularly watch out for. Reading the forecast, even when you aren't going into the backcountry, can help you stay informed about conditions and keep a good perspective for the days you do head out. The forecast for Southwest Montana can be found at mtavalanche.com.



lan Hoyer tests the snow pack. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST AVALANCHE CENTER

Once you are out, keep an eye out for signs of instability and be ready to amend plans if needed. If you see recent avalanches or the snowpack collapses under you (sometimes accompanied by a "whumpfing" sound), avoid all steep slopes for the rest of the day.

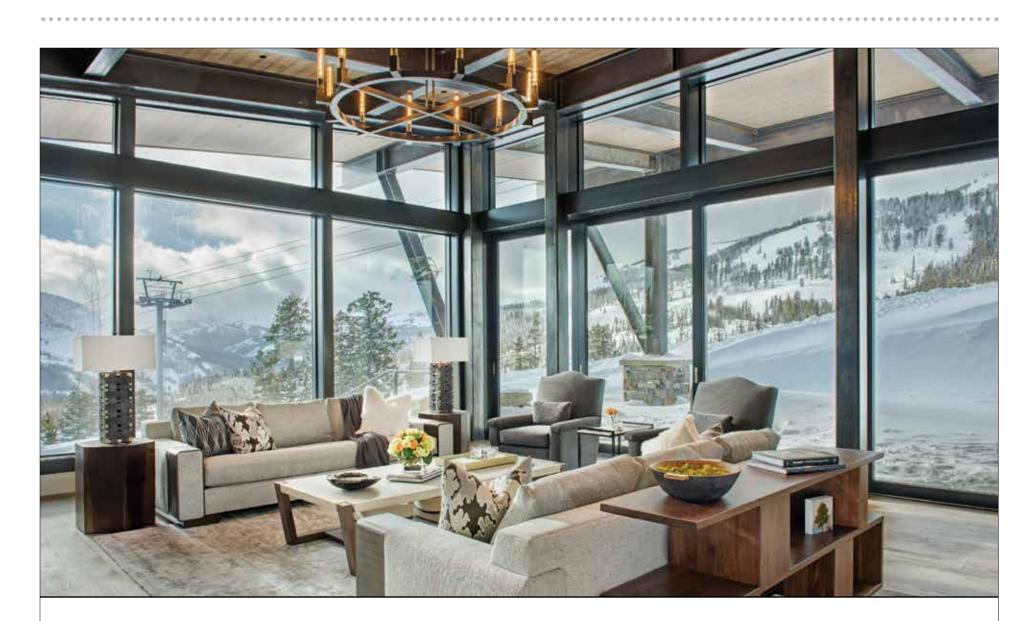
If something goes wrong, having a partner with the right gear and training who you can trust is essential. If someone is buried by an avalanche, their best chance for survival includes being dug out in the first 15 minutes.

For an efficient and effective rescue, both you and your partner should carry and practice with avalanche rescue gear: an avalanche transceiver, a shovel and an avalanche probe. There are many other useful things to carry in the backcountry, but these are the holy trinity—never leave home without them. This gear is only useful if you know how to use it. Practice at least a couple times a season and make sure your partners do as well.

To avoid both you and your partner being buried by an avalanche with no one to do a rescue, only expose one person at a time to steep slopes. This means skiing or riding one a time while your partner watches from a safe spot, and pick uphill travel routes that minimize exposure to avalanche terrain.

A little bit of knowledge can make a big difference when consistently applied. While there is lots more to learn about avalanche safety, following these simple lessons will put you on a good path towards safely enjoying the backcountry.

Ian Hoyer has been with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center since 2018 and earned his master's from Montana State University with a focus on snow science.





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Lady Big Horns fall in district tourney quarters

Five-win season ends versus Ennis

BY BRANDON WALKER

ENNIS, Mont. – A pair of Ennis Mustang athletes scored 11 points each to fuel their team's 12C District Tournament quarterfinal victory over the Lone Peak Lady Big Horns 35-21 on Feb. 18.

In the revised single-elimination tournament, the defeat at the hands of the Mustangs ended the Lady Big Horns' season.

Sophomore Jessie Bough led the LPHS offensively with a team-high seven-point performance. Junior Carly Wilson and freshman Astrid McGuire also had solid offensive outings with each player scoring four points for Lone Peak.

The team was fresh off a 10-point play-in victory over Lima on Feb. 16 to reach the matchup with Ennis.

Landri Paladichuck and Jenna Snider each scored a game-high 11 points for the Mustangs, while Shelby Klein and Shae Lovett chipped in six and five points, respectively.

A slow start by the Lady Big Horns allowed the Mustangs to grab a 10-2 lead at the conclusion of the first quarter, highlighted by Paladichuck who accounted for five of Ennis's points.

Bough and the Lady Big Horns battled to keep pace in the second quarter. The Lone Peak sophomore guard scored four points in the quarter, but Ennis edged their competition 8-7 in the second and led 18-9 at the half.

Paladichuck and Snider combined for eight points in the third to help the Mustangs outpace the Lady Big Horns 11-8 in the quarter and grab a 12-point lead entering the final eight minutes of play.

Ennis outscored LPHS 6-4 in fourth quarter to dispel any possibility of a Lone Peak comeback.



Lone Peak athletes Carly Wilson (5), Sara Wilson (blue sneakers), Ivy Hicks (11) and Maddie Cone (31) defend against the Ennis Mustangs on Feb. 18. The Mustangs defeated the Lady Big Horns 35-21 in the 12C district tournament quarterfinals. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HORNING



Lady Big Horns sophomore Jessie Bough (10) attempts a foul shot against the Ennis Mustangs on Feb. 18. LPHS fell 35-21 to Ennis in the 12C district tournament quarterfinals. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HORNING

you look at the box score from the first quarter on, it was a battle," said Lone Peak Head Coach Taylor Cummings.

Cummings added that Ennis deployed a man-to-man defense versus Lone Peak in this matchup, which may have caught the team by surprise after the Mustangs played a zone when the teams met earlier in the season.

Free throws were a prominent fixture in the game for both teams as they combined to shoot 35 foul shots. The Lady Big Horns shot 50 percent from the charity stripe with an 8-for-16 showing as a team, while the Mustangs were 8-of-19.

LPHS concluded the shortened campaign with a final record of 5-9 and four of those five victories came in front of the hometown crowd at the Bough-Dolan Athletic Center. In fact, the Lady Big Horns sported a winning percentage of .500, or a 4-4 record, at home this season.

> Cummings said her highlight this year was the team's victory on Senior Night over the West Yellowstone Wolverines in a hardfought game on Feb. 11.

Lone Peak will graduate Ivy Hicks, Lyli McCarthy and Sara Wilson from this season's team.

"They were just always consistent, had the right mindset, positive [and] good leaders," Cummings said. "Just [a] really good group of kids."

After the departure of those three seniors, LPHS could have as many as eight returning athletes for next season's varsity girls basketball squad.

"I hope that this year showed the girls the level that we can compete at," Cummings said. "And that if we keep working on our offensive game and maintain the defensive intensity that we brought this year, that we can compete with anyone."

Lone Peak stumbles versus Gardiner, conclude four-win season

BY BRANDON WALKER

GARDINER, Mont. – Gardiner's Evan Guengerich scored a game-high 28 points to help lead the Bruins past the Lone Peak Big Horns 62-47 on Feb. 16 in a 12C District Tournament play-in game.

As a precaution due to COVID-19, athletic directors within the district restructured the tournament format this season. Typically a double elimination style tournament, this year athletic directors amended tournament play to a single-elimination format, so the loss ended Lone Peak's season.

Additionally, rather than playing at a host site this season, teams with the lower seed in each tournament contest hosted the game, so the Big Horns traveled to square off against the lower seeded Bruins.

Big Horn seniors Michael Romney, Jackson Lang and Nolan Schumacher led the team offensively in their final appearances with Lone Peak. The trio combined for 39 of the team's 47 total points with Romney scoring a teamhigh 18, Lang adding 12 and Schumacher contributing nine. After Guengerich, Gardiner received another 12 points from John McDonald and eight points from Taylor Rose.

The first half was tightly contested with neither team gaining much separation. Guengerich scored eight first-quarter points to propel his team to an early 10-7 lead.

The Big Horns and Bruins battled to a stalemate in the second, scoring 11 points apiece. Sophomore Gus Hammond poured in all six of his points in the quarter to help keep LPHS within striking distance as the teams entered the locker room with Lone Peak trailing 21-18.

Coming out of the half, Gardiner hit the ground running. Led by a nine-point quarter from Guengerich, the Bruins outscored the Big Horns 19-8 in the third quarter and grabbed a 40-26 lead as the teams entered the final eight minutes of play.

The fourth quarter was high scoring for both teams. Ultimately, Gardiner was able to outlast Lone Peak, winning the quarter by a point, 22-21, and clinching their victory.

"It was kind of a back and forth of who's going to catch fire first," said Lone

Peak Head Coach John Hannahs. "They caught fire first and we had trouble recovering."

Both teams shot better than 60 percent from the free-throw line. LPHS edged Gardiner at the stripe, shooting 7-of-11, while the Bruins were 11-of-18 as a team.

Overall, the Big Horns finished their season with a 4-10 record. Lone Peak's junior varsity boys' team, coached by Dave Magistrelli, finished their year with a 6-3 record, according to Hannahs.

In a winter athletics season shortened by COVID-19, the four victories of the 2020-2021 basketball season marked an improvement over last season's 3-15 final record for LPHS. Two of the team's victories came at the Bough-Dolan Athletic Center, while the other two wins were picked up on the road.

"Their coachability and their general attitude that they bring to practice every day, it makes you want to come back next year," Hannahs said of his team.

The Big Horns will graduate four seniors from this year's squad in Lang, Romney, Schumacher and Mikey Botha. "All four of them have just made such significant growth over the four years that I've been able to coach them," Hannahs said.

To say the senior group left its mark on the program this season would be an understatement. Schumacher was a constant defensive presence at the post and hauled in more than his share of rebounds this season, while Botha scored a game-winning basket against the team's rival West Yellowstone Wolverines that Hannahs pointed to as the highlight of the season.

Finally, both Lang and Romney will depart as single-game recordholders for the Big Horns. Lang's seven 3-pointers against Twin Bridges on Jan. 16 are the most by any Big Horn in a single game. Romney has two records to his name: he recorded a Lone Peak single-game high in assists with 11 against White Sulphur Springs and also made the most free-throws in one game with 17 against Sheridan.

The 2020-2021 season was not without its share of challenges, but Hannahs appreciated the opportunity to lead his team on the court this year.

"We got to play basketball and a whole lot of teams around the country didn't get that luxury," he said. "We're thankful for that."



Lone Peak senior Jackson Lang (third from right) attempts a jump shot against the Gardiner Bruins on Jan. 30 earlier this season. LPHS fell in their district tournament play-in game versus the Bruins 62-47 on Feb. 16. PHOTO BY JILL BOUGH



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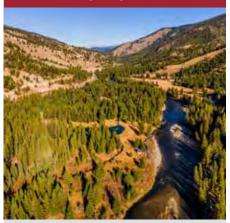
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Rancho Pacifico:

A luxury vacation both indulgent and eco-friendly

BY PATRICK STRAUB

The impact of a vacation is not reserved to the human psyche. Indeed, there's a tangible effect on the destination itself and a cumulative effect on the planet.

Now, as global travel slowly begins its return to pre-pandemic levels, the role of humans to be positive agents of change will be more crucial than ever. By choosing wisely, travelers can enjoy a luxury vacation while not forsaking the health of the planet.

"Ecotourism and sustainability are terms travelers hear a lot," says Mark Leaman, owner and operator of Rancho Pacifico, a luxury resort in Costa Rica. "At Rancho Pacifico, we live them every day. In every facet of our tropical paradise from our energy-efficient architecture to our sustainable operating practices, without a commitment to the greater whole, our mission would be incomplete. Our guests can visit a place that's unspoiled without degrading it. They can even add to it."

Mark and Marlo Leaman own and operate Rancho Pacifico, located nearby several national parks and preserves; the natural beauty is stunning. For years, Costa Rica was a popular destination for the couple, so when the opportunity presented itself to acquire Rancho Pacifico, they did just that and left behind the wind and cold of Chicago's winters for the mountaintop beauty of Rancho Pacifico.

"A commitment to environmental stewardship was part of the plan from the beginning," Mark says when discussing Rancho Pacifico's philosophy. "The ocean and national parks and the rainforest around us are so incredible here, we knew we needed to provide our guests an opportunity to experience luxury in a sustainable way."

That commitment is evident in the resort's use of renewable energy, the on-site organic garden, and locally sourced fish, meats and produce.

The Leamans' commitment to providing an ecologically friendly richness to a luxury vacation doesn't stop once the guests leave the lodge's perch overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Guests can visit and volunteer at Reserva Playa Tortuga, a nonprofit biological reserve and research center near Rancho Pacifico.

Rancho Pacifico's visitors can actively assist the dedicated team of scientists at Reserva Playa Tortuga with turtle rescue, monkey research or butterfly propagation. To date over 60,000 baby turtles have been released and nearly 200 acres of sensitive coastal habitat have been protected.

"But coastal habitats and intact mountain forests are part of an interconnected ecosystem," says Leaman. "That's why we worked with Community Carbon Trees to



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Ocean view from a spacious suite at Rancho Pacifico. PHOTO COURTESY OF RANCHO PACIFICO

plant over 700 trees here at Rancho Pacifico. These new trees attract and sustain local wildlife and ensure the long-term health of the amazing jungle around us."

Rancho Pacifico is a proud member of 1% for the Planet, a network of businesses that choose to donate 1% of their revenues to highly vetted environmental organizations. The resort can also purchase carbon credits on behalf of their guests to offset the climate impact of jet travel.

"Our 1% for the Planet membership, along with our carbon offset program, allow us to have an impact that is global." Leaman adds. "We live local sustainability every day so these two programs allow us to make a difference on a larger scale."

With this commitment to conservation, each day's adventures at Rancho Pacifico can be enjoyed knowing that locally—and globally—guests play a positive role in preserving the planet.

Whether you seek sun salutations in the open-air yoga studio or researching native wildlife, or eco-friendly, yet high-adrenaline pursuits like zip-lining through the jungle canopy, whitewater rafting a pristine river, or just relaxing and taking-in the amazing view, a vacation at Rancho Pacifico is as good for the planet as it is for you.



Twilight on the pool terrace at Rancho Pacifico. PHOTO COURTESY OF RANCHO PACIFICO



Are you feeling more anxious?



BY LINDA ARNOLD **EBS CONTRIBUTOR**

"You just need to relax." "Stop worrying and appreciate your blessings." "Try to live more in the moment."

Sound familiar? These are common responses to expressions of feeling anxious. And, while well-intentioned, this advice is very simplistic.

We're designed to handle short bouts of stress. But when stress is overwhelming, it can take its toll on our bodies, minds and spirits. According to clinical psychologist Seth Gillihan, anxiety is the most common psychological condition that affects us.

Spotting the Signs

Common signs of anxiety include physical tension, difficulty sleeping, worry, panic and avoidance. Additional signs include self-doubt, always fearing the worst, anger and difficulty focusing.

Extreme stress about work, school or a personal relationship can lead to anxiety, according to psychologist Nick Wignall. Financial concerns, chronic medical conditions, early trauma, abuse and neglect can also play a role.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been a source of anxiety for many of us, as evidenced by a recent poll by the American Psychological Association, concluding that the average person believes they experience an unhealthy level of stress.

Psychologists Anthony Rao and Paul Napper, coauthors of the book, "The Power of Agency," emphasize that we're not designed to handle the incredible amounts of stress being thrown at us.

Factors that can make us feel anxious include:

- 1. Loss of control: Overwhelming demands have brought many of us close to breakdowns. And it's happening with children as well. "More and more, they just seem kind of frozen," Rao says.
- Digital deluge: "There's a stunning amount of messaging coming at us," Napper says. "Our minds weren't made to process such a continuous stream of input. People are just unconsciously reaching for their devices."

- 3. Less human contact: Zoom meetings, video conferencing and social media are more of the norm these days, while our minds and spirits crave human contact.
- 4. Sedentary lifestyle: We're moving less than ever and movement is one of the most effective ways to lower stress and anxiety, as well as improving sleep and mood.
- 5. Less outdoor time: Being on our phones—and the winter season—usually means we're spending more time inside. As a result, we miss out on the benefits of the great outdoors.
- 6. Working 24/7: There's no real division between work and the rest of life these days.
- 7. Financial anxiety: Changes in the economy are causing angst. Jobs are disappearing and new jobs are showing up in different fields.

When anxiety becomes so overwhelming that it interferes with day-to-day activities, thereby keeping you from going places and doing the things you need to do, that's when you might consider getting professional help. Irrational fears can lead to panic attacks and phobias.

Coping Mechanisms

Take control of the things you can change, and accept the things you can't. Try

- Journal: center yourself; get your thoughts on paper with freeform writing
- Tackle one very small step of a large project
- Reduce your screen time
- Get outside
- Move
- Meditate, pray or take a hot bath
- Listen to music
- Spread joy: do something nice for someone else (call them on the phone, walk their dog, etcetera)

Awareness is the first step in helping to stem the tide of anxiety. "Our anxiety does not come from thinking about our future," says poet Kahlil Gibran, "but from wanting to control it."

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

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10:00-11:15am

All Levels Yoga

4:15-5:15pm Apres Ski Yoga

5:45-6:45pm Restorative Yoga

THURSDAY

7:30-8:30am All Levels Yoga

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

> Noon-1:00pm Lunchbreak All Levels Yoga

5:45-6:45pm Heated Flow

FRIDAY

10:00-11:15am Core Flow Yoga

All Levels

5:45-7:00pm Kundalini Yoqa

SATURDAY

9:00-10:15am All Levels Yoga

5:00-6:15pm All Levels Yoga

Most classes available to LIVE STREAM as well. In studio classes are limited. Pre-registration required for all.

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SECTION 3:

BUSINESS, A & E, FINANCE DINING & FUN









Making it in Big Sky: By Word of Mouth

Before COVID-19, the BYWOM bar was packed with locals looking for

year-round."

some great food and company. PHOTO BY SARAH GIANELLI

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

BIG SKY – For 25 years, By Word of Mouth has been filling the bellies of Big Sky locals with a variety of great food. BYWOM originally opened in 1993 as a deli and wine shop. Pam and John Flach took over operations in the summer of 1994 and purchased the business in November of 1995 from Lindy Adleman, the original owner.

In 1999, BYWOM expanded from two to three suites and became a restaurant. Then, in 2005, BYWOM again expanded. More recently, the space was

remodeled to add a bike shop, the Shred Shed, run by Sky Jackson. The addition offers bike tunes and beer.

Pam and John made their way to Big Sky separately and met when they were both working at Buck's T4 Lodge. After finishing her studies at Montana State University, Pam returned to Big Sky to work for a summer and she said that, "he was a chef, I was a waitress, such a good love story."

John moved to Big Sky permanently in 1987. His first formal cooking job was working for Kurt Sanborn, former executive chef, at Big Sky Resort's Huntley Lodge.

Both Pam and John were in the restaurant business long before purchasing BYWOM. Pam started waitressing in college while John began his career in the kitchen at 15 years old.

Now, when you visit BYWOM, you will find Pam out front ready to greet you and seat you with a smile and John will be in the kitchen working his culinary magic.

The 25th anniversary of BYWOM was on Nov. 31, 2020. Explore Big Sky talked with Pam and John to learn more about the history and growth of their restaurant over the years.

Explore Big Sky: How has it been watching Big Sky grow?

Pam and John Flach: "Watching the growth is hard but we really try to focus on our restaurant, family and friends and not let it get us down. Our kids have loved growing up here. Some growth has been great...the trails have been so fun both summer and winter. It's a privilege to walk out the door and connect with one."

EBS: What is your favorite item on the menu?

P&JF: "There are so many great things on our menu, it is hard to pick a

favorite. The BYWOM burger of course, especially when we can eat it outdoors at the concerts. I think the wings follow at a close second. Everything is really good."

EBS: Tell me about your Friday night fish fry?

P&JF: "The fish fry was John's idea, being from Wisconsin. We started our fish fry the day we finally got our liquor license. It used to happen every Friday night, all you can eat and had a line out the door, just a really fun local night. We eventually had to change it to the first Friday of the month, the prep just got to be too much, we make it all from scratch."

EBS: What makes your burgers so good? P&JF: "Love."

EBS: What is your favorite memory from working at BYWOM?

P&JF: "After 25 years, there are too many to mention. We just really enjoy working with our employees—it always feels like family. It makes coming to work fun for the most part. The loyal regulars are the best, we have had some great times. Pre COVID, there were a few dance parties on our bar...if that pole could talk."

EBS: Do you have any notable regulars? **P&JF:** "Sam Wilson has a special spot at our bar, name and all. He visits for fish fry's and Coca-Cola's now. Our locals know who they are, and it is so fun to see them all. Lots of Dirtbag Royalty."

EBS: When is your busiest time?

P&JF: "We are a little busier consistently in the winter but being a local restaurant in the neighborhood we stay plenty busy

EBS: Has it been difficult adapting to CDC guidelines during COVID? **P&JF:** "Wearing a mask for hours on end can get a little old but it has kept us safe, so we are happy to do it. We do miss having a full bar and the camaraderie that comes with that."

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

P&JF: "Listen to your customers and be present at your business... 'be nice."

EBS: Anything else you want the community to know?

P&JF: "We did some remodeling and added a bike shop during COVID take out season. Sky Jackson is repairing bikes in our old wait station. It was a lot of wasted space that is put to some great use now. We are looking forward to the summer season, it has given BYWOM a great local casual vibe."

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BIG SKY EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday, Feb. 26 – Thursday, March 11

If your event falls between March 12 and March 25, please submit it by March 10 by emailing media@outlaw.partners

Friday, Feb. 26

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Auction for the Arts Fundraiser

Lone Peak Cinema, 5, 6:30 & 8 p.m.

Metamorphosis: Live music and cinematic dance

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 5:30 & 8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 27

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Auction for the Arts Fundraiser

Lone Peak Cinema, 12-8 p.m.

Metamorphosis: Live music and cinematic dance

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, 5:30 & 8 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 28

Apron Challenge

Bridger Bowl, 10 a.m.

Twisted Trivia

Bar IX, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Monday, March 1

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Sunrise Karaoke

American Legion, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, March 2

Live Music: Rich Mayo

Kountry Korner Kafé, 6 p.m.

Bingo Night

Molly Brown, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 3

Glide Big Sky

Big Sky Golf Course, 2 p.m.

Town Race Series

Big Sky Resort, 11 a.m.

Thursday, March 4

Live Poker

Cat's Paw, Bozeman, 3 p.m.

Pure Barre Pop up Class

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

Friday, March 5

Friday Afternoon Club

EBS Facebook Live, 5 p.m.

Public Skate

Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, 1:30

Saturday, March 6

Saturday Sweat

Moving Mountains, 8 a.m.

Live Music: Dane Thompson

Blend Wine Bar & Gallery, Bozeman, 6 p.m.

Sunday, March 7

Afternoon Tea

Starlite, Bozeman, 1 & 3 p.m.

Brunch and Burlesque

Starlite, Bozeman, 10 a.m.

Monday, March 8

Trivia Night

Pinky G's Pizzeria, 7 p.m.

Trivia

Bozeman Taproom, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 9

Pint Night

Mountains Walking Brewery, Bozeman, 4 p.m.

Service Industry Night

Blend Wine Bar and Gallery, Bozeman, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 10

Town Race Series

Big Sky Resort, 11 a.m.

Super Smash Bros Game Night

El Camino Bar, Bozeman, 6:30

Thursday, March 11

Adult Puck Lunch

Havnes Pavilion, Bozeman, 11 a.m.

Bucket Night

Bar IX, Bozeman, 8 p.m.

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"Metamorphosis" comes to WMPAC

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BIG SKY – The upcoming performance at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is hard to categorize, but will certainly be unforgettable. The show is called "Metamorphosis," and pairs Grammy-winning percussion group Third Coast Percussion with dance by Movement Art Is, a legendary street dance group founded by Jon Boogz and Lil Buck.

The two groups began collaborating on this project over a year ago, but the pandemic stalled their live performance efforts. Belief in the power and potential of the show, however, inspired the groups to continue developing it remotely, trading music and choreography back and forth virtually.

The project "is going to combine U.S. street dancing styles and classical percussion ensemble music," said David Skidmore, a Third Coast Percussion member. "This project is a time capsule—literally almost everyone on the planet is going through something. One of the things that's going to come out of this moment is this project, and it will always be this thing that we created during a really difficult time."

Third Coast Percussion will perform music by Jlin, Tyondai Braxton and Philip Glass, which Movement Art Is choreographed new movement to accompany. The classically trained Third Coast Percussion will travel to Big Sky and perform in person on the WMPAC stage, while cinematic dance films from Movement Art Is are screened behind them.

"Metamorphosis' pairs two very different genres of art, and also blends virtual and live performance," said John Zirkle, executive director of WMPAC. "That collaboration results in a performance that's totally unexpected but feels very much of the moment, because we've all embraced radical creativity this past year."

Third Coast Percussion won a Grammy in 2016 for Best Chamber Music/ Small Ensemble Performance.

"While this isn't the first time Grammy winners have been on the WMPAC

stage, it's definitely going to be the most unique performance from that cohort," said Zirkle. One wouldn't expect to see classically trained musicians sharing the stage with jookin and popping street dance styles, but that's exactly what "Metamorphosis" promises.

Movement Art Is' mission is to use dance to inspire and change the world, and the group addresses issues like racial injustice and disparity through movement.

Up to 50 patrons are able to attend the live performances at WMPAC, which will take place at 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on both Friday, Feb. 26 and Saturday, Feb. 27. Audience members will wear masks for the duration of the show, and groups will be seated with social distancing measures in place. For those who feel more comfortable taking in the show from home, the 5:30 p.m. performance on Feb. 27 can be streamed live at wmpac.live, the center's virtual streaming platform.

Tickets and more information are available at warrenmillerpac.org.



"Metamorphosis" pairs Grammy-winning percussion group Third Coast Percussion with dance by Movement Art Is, a legendary street dance group. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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PUBLIC NOTICE: CALL FOR FY22 RESORT TAX FUNDING APPLICATIONS

The Big Sky Resort Area District is accepting applications for the FY22 funding cycle beginning on Monday, March 1, 2021. As required by law, an applicant must be a legal entity formed under the laws of the State of Montana. The applicant must be "an entity" that is capable of both "legally and practically" carrying out the purpose of the allocation and located within the Resort Area District. The applicant must be a governmental unit, corporation, or limited partnership with the capability of being legally bound by an agreement.

Applications and supporting documents must be completed using the online applications portal and must be submitted by Thursday, April 15, 2021 to be considered for funding. More information can be found at ResortTax.Org/Funding or by contacting the District Office at 406-995-3234.

PUBLIC NOTICE: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS-GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

The Big Sky Resort Area District is accepting applications for a 3-year funding cycle for FY22, FY23, and FY24 beginning on Monday, March 1, 2021. As required by law, an applicant must be a legal entity formed under the laws of the State of Montana. The applicant must be "an entity" that is capable of both "legally and practically" carrying out the purpose of the allocation and located within the Resort Area District. The applicant must be a governmental unit with the capability of being legally bound by an interlocal agreement. Eligible applicants may apply for funding of operational costs.

Applications and supporting documents must be completed using the online applications portal and must be submitted by Thursday, April 15, 2021 to be considered for funding. More information can be found at ResortTax.Org/Funding or by contacting the District Office at 406-995-3234.

Enjoying the Ride: Sacrifice to Succeed?



BY SCOTT BROWN EBS CONTRIBUTOR

In honor of both Black History Month and Presidents' Day, I thought it would be appropriate to weave two famous quotes, one from Frederick Douglas and another from President Martin Van Buren, into our topic today. Achieving financial independence is a fleeting reality for many Americans. However, if you make good financial decisions and truly commit to your goals, it does not have to be.

Reaching your financial goals is really not much different than committing to reaching your fitness goals. That process typically begins with writing down your fitness goal and designing a weekly, or maybe even monthly, workout plan, such as running a 5K in under 20 minutes. If you don't train, it is unlikely you will ever reach it. As Frederick Douglass once said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

Similarly, if you don't budget, and you don't save, it is likely you will never achieve financial independence. For most of us, making room in our budget to save can be challenging. Some ideas for how to save without too much sacrifice include, but certainly are not limited to, some of these simple suggestions on how to cut back on spending and start saving.

For starters, use your local library and check out books to read or movies and series to watch with the family. Pack your lunch and make your coffee in the morning. Of course, you should always try to pay down or pay off debt. Spend less on groceries by planning meals and buying generic brands. Cancel automatic subscriptions and cut cable. Instead, stream what you like and use more pay-per-view services. Review your energy costs. Consider biking or walking instead of driving, maintain your HVAC system, seal windows and drafty places, and of course, turn lights off when you leave a room. DIY every project you can! Enjoy "staycations" or when you travel, try camping or simply stay with family and friends. Sell all unused and unnecessary belongings. When you have excess cash spend it wisely! Spending wisely could mean increasing your contributions to your investments or paying down more debt but it certainly doesn't have to.

It's my belief that if you never have to make sacrifices than you will never truly appreciate your accomplishments. Don't become the person who has to look at your spouse and children years from now and admit President Martin Van Buren was correct when he said, "It is easier to do a job right, than to explain why you didn't." So, start your savings plan today!

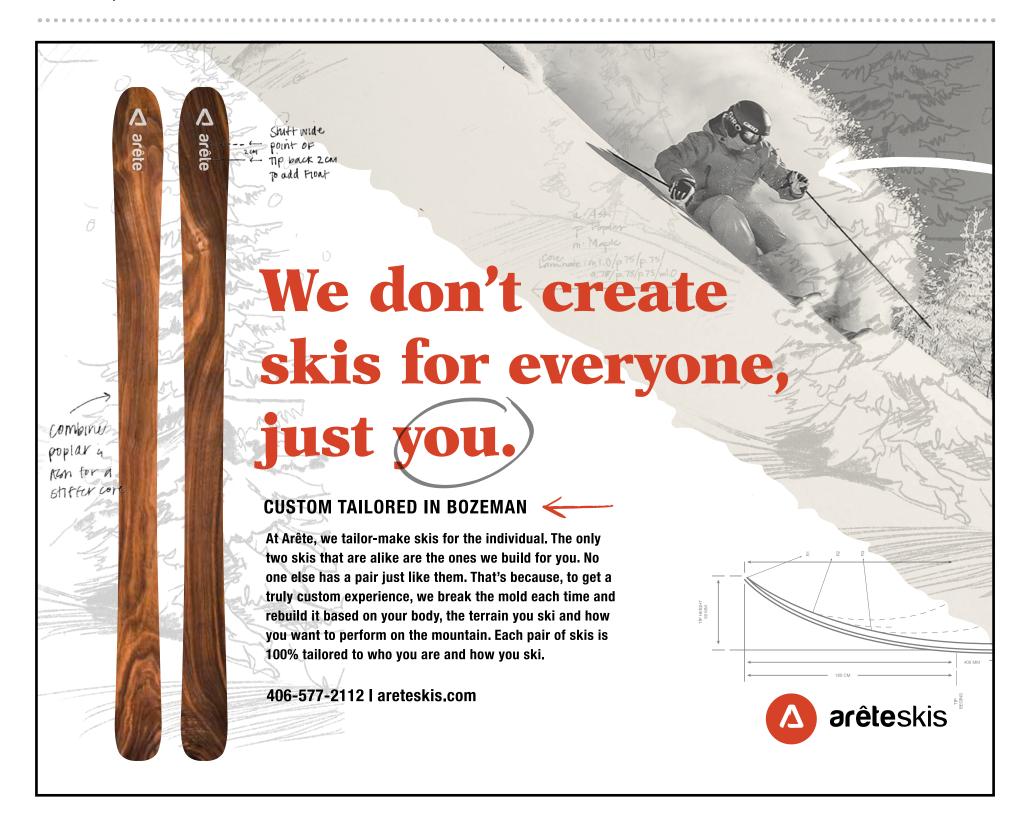
To begin making good long-term financial decisions and reach your goals, you must first identify and prioritize your goals. The next step is to calculate the total future cost of your goals. Once you accurately calculate the real cost you can then determine the monthly or annual savings and achievable rate of return on your savings that is necessary to reach those goals. As we already discussed, it is important to budget to make your goal realizable. Stick to your budget and savings plan and review your progress at least annually. Of course, you will want to review your goals and priorities as your lifestyle changes or whenever you're faced with a life event.

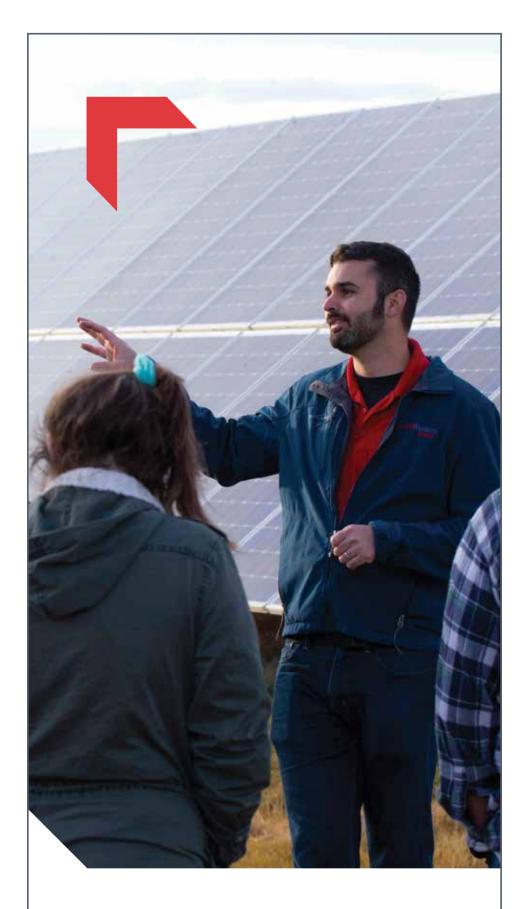
For me, being able to pursue your passions and your career while also planning to take care of your loved ones now and in the future is a good way to enjoy the ride!

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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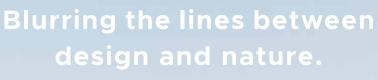


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AMUSE-BOUCHE

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.

(My) unwritten rules of the kitchen



BY SCOTT MECHURA **EBS FOOD COLUMNIST**

Everywhere from articles on LinkedIn to Facebook, to conversations with chefs to episodes of Netflix's' "Chefs Table," to clubs and diners, kitchens have rules.

Every workspace has its own character—its own vibe that makes it what it is. I'm not talking about rules found in a handbook or a human resource coaching

form. I'm talking about rules that govern the work habits and culture of a given kitchen.

Any given chef or kitchen manager will no doubt have his or her distinctive set of rules to live by. But there are certain rules of the kitchen that are (and should be) fairly universal.

Here are mine.

- 1. Always show up on time. Of all the stressful moments in a chef's day, there is no more stressful moment than 10 minutes after a cook's shift was supposed to begin and you don't see them yet. Then you begin to wonder.
- 2. My knives are my knives. Watch a carpenter or electrician take another person's hammer or screwdriver from their tool belt and see what happens. The same goes for chefs and their knives.
- Working neat means working fast. Think of your cutting board as your desk top. How are you supposed to write or type if you have papers or files all over it?
- 4. A task is not completed until it is cleaned up. In my first French kitchen, I was so anxious to please the chef that I would ask for the next task and he would remind me I was not finished with the previous one because my work station had not been cleaned.
- 5. Never take another cook's "mise en place," or, ingredient setup. I've seen near fights ensue when one cook takes another's chopped shallots. That was laborious time spent, and not for others.
- No towel snapping. I'll admit, I enjoyed a good towel snapping fight. However, it was at my first job, in the 1980's, when I was 15.
- 7. Put things back where they go. How can you possibly expect to be productive when you are always looking for something?
- 8. Never take it personally. There is always literal and figurative heat in a kitchen. If your co-worker is short with you, they probably have several things they are trying to keep straight in their head.
- 9. Servers and bartenders are not your adversaries. You both have very different aspects of work that make each of your jobs either easier or more challenging. Respect that.
- 10. Always take care of your dishwashers. They are the keystone to the flow of everything and without them, everything else crumbles.
- 11. Never sacrifice quality for speed. I always coach young cooks to get it precise first, and the speed will inevitably follow. If you don't have time to do it right the first time, how are you possibly going to find the time to repair it?
- 12. Never leave an empty container or box on a shelf. This may be my greatest pet peeve. Inevitably, that same person who left the empty box on the shelf will then tell the person placing orders that they are out of something they didn't order because they saw the box on the shelf.
- 13. Never look when someone drops or breaks something. We've all done it. No one intends to do it. By looking you have now distracted yourself with something that never required your attention in the first place.

Scott Mechura has spent a life in the hospitality industry. He is a former certified beer judge and currently the multi-concept culinary director for a Bozeman based restaurant group.

American Life in Poetry: Column 829

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

In many American poems, the poet makes a personal appearance and offers us a revealing monologue from center stage, but there are lots of fine poems in which the poet, a stranger in a strange place, observes the lives of others from a distance and imagines her way into them. This poem by Lita Hooper is a good example of this kind of writing.

Editor's Note: This column (75) is a reprint from the American Life in Poetry archive as we bid farewell to Ted Kooser, and work to finalize the new website and forthcoming columns curated by Kwame Dawes.

Love Worn

In a tavern on the Southside of Chicago a man sits with his wife. From their corner booth each stares at strangers just beyond the other's shoulder, nodding to the songs of their youth. Tonight they will not fight.

Thirty years of marriage sits between them like a bomb. The woman shifts then rubs her right wrist as the man recalls the day when they sat on the porch of her parents' home.

Even then he could feel the absence of something desired or planned. There was the smell of a freshly tarred driveway, the slow heat, him offering his future to folks he did not know.

And there was the blooming magnolia tree in the distance its oversized petals like those on the woman's dress, making her belly even larger, her hands disappearing into the folds.

When the last neighbor or friend leaves their booth he stares at her hands, which are now closer to his, remembers that there had always been some joy. Leaning closer, he believes he can see their daughter in her eyes.

American Life in Poetry provides newspapers and online publications with a free weekly column featuring contemporary American poems. The sole mission of this project is to promote poetry: American Life in Poetry seeks to create a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. There are no costs for reprinting the columns; we do require that you register your publication here and that the text of the column be reproduced without alteration.

Corner Quote

"The small things came into their own: small acts of helping others, if one could; small ways of making one's own life better: acts of love, acts of tea, acts of laughter. Clever people might laugh at such simplicity, but she asked herself, what was their own solution?"

-Alexander McCall Smith, "The Good Husband of Zebra Drive"

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- Exclamation Both (pref.) 8 Sleeping 12 Romanian
- money 13 Leg ends 14 Wife of Ramachandra
- 15 Renegade 17 Hall (Ğer.) 18 Horse armor
- 19 Passageway 20 Tree 22 In (Fr.) 24 Himalayan
- 25 Brief 29 Korean soldier

monkshood

- 31 Amer Automobile Assn.
- 34 Bird 35 Ecology (abbr.) 36 Music sign

- 37 Complain
- 40 Tie 41 Us dam 42 Against 46 Work (Sp.)
- 47 Hindu princess 48 Pasture 49 Legislature
- 51 Move back

DOWN

- 1 To be announced (abbr.) Exhaust
- Nodal Amer. Federation of Television and
- (abbr.) 32 Gibus (2 words) (abbr.) Hoover Dam
- LAC
- Francis Radio Artists 10 And other: abbr. (2 words) (Lat.)
- 11 Valley 16 Back talk Gamble Mineral (suf.) 19 Quality (suf.) 20 Pressure (pref.)
- A D C I D E E OLDFOR MAPO BUOYANCY TITLEDEE |A|S|T|A|R|T|E|||H|A|N|A|P SKEGHER BADEN REDOUBLT R E P G E A T E T E N A T A L I L A N C E L O T A L F E N D A B T DUDE YEA OSE

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

- 8 Birthplace of St. 21 Over 22 Aluminumcopper alloy 23 Accountant
 - (abbr.) 25 Hamite people 26 Water pipe
 - 27 Basse-Normandie city 28 Pueblo Indian
 - 30 Mug 33 Echo 34 Occident 36 Devil
 - 37 Welfare 38 Islamic month 39 Your (Ger.)
 - 40 Moon (pref.) 42 Limb
 - 43 Sheep's cry 44 Beak 45 Prate

BIG SKY



Sea Shanties

BY GABRIELLE GASSER

work songs traditionally sung by sailors in the 19th century. So why are they going viral in 2021?

The current popularity of sea shanties is largely due to TikTok. Users have gone viral on the app posting videos of themselves singing traditional shanties. These videos have subsequently been copied and "dueted", a feature on the app that allows users to

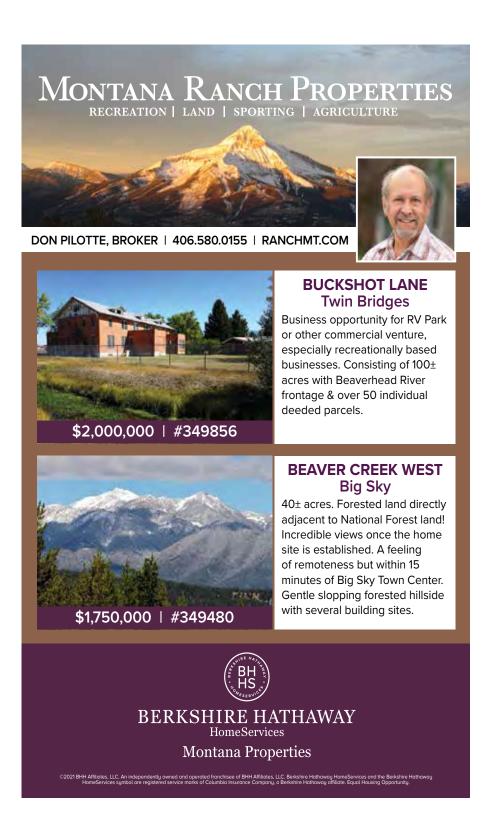


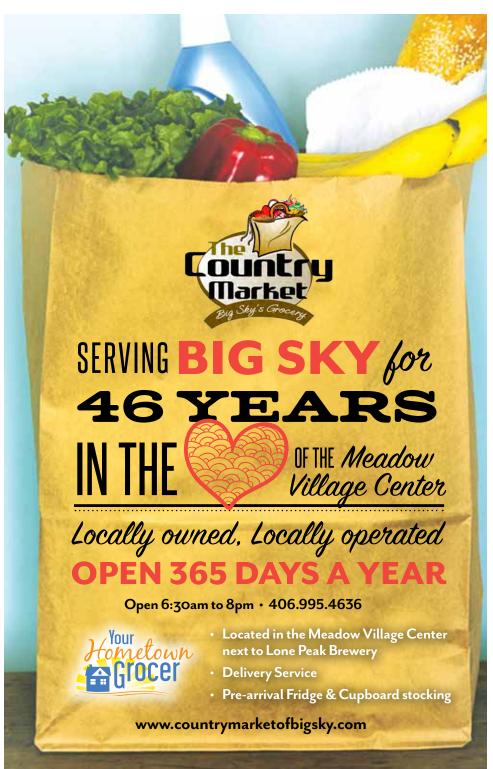
Nathan Evans, a Scottish singer, actually landed a record deal from his cover of "Wellerman" on TikTok. After his video went viral on TikTok in 2020, Evans

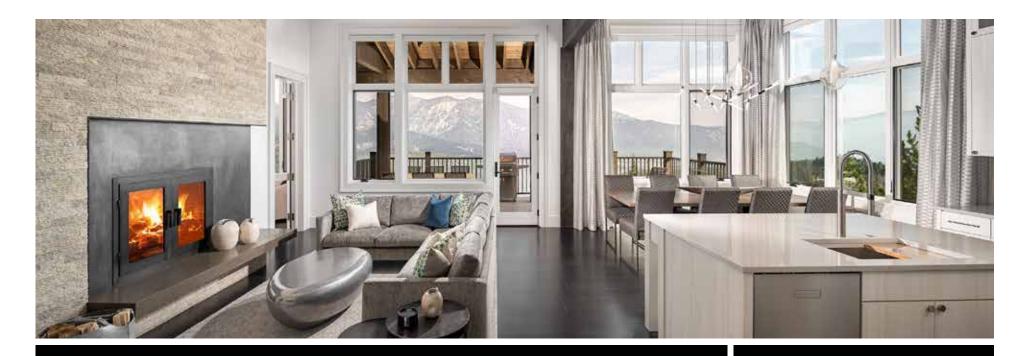
The sudden popularity of these songs may seem strange, but, according to James Revell Carr, an associate professor of ethnomusicology in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kentucky, the songs have specific, and catchy rhythms, which tend to capture the attention.

Sea shanties are also fairly common in pop culture. They are featured in video games such as Assassin's Creed and in movie franchises like "Pirates of the Caribbean."

A big draw to sea shanties is their communal nature. They were created for crews to sing together and create a rhythm to complete tasks in unison. In our current pandemic-induced state of isolation, people crave connection, and it seems that sea shanties are fulfilling that need.







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It's time to make up for lost time. For spring 2021, we've got deals like lodging specials starting at \$80 per night and convenient lift and lodging packages ready to help you make new memories. Check out these deals and more by scanning the QR Code to the right.

From the bottom of our snowpack, we can't wait to see you again. *Don't wait, lift ticket availability is limited and tickets may sell-out.



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BACK[1]

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"

To Kill a Grizzly

Government agencies say Greater Yellowstone grizzly bears are biologically recovered, but should they now become trophies in proposed sport hunts? Even the sporting community is divided.

BY TODD WILKINSON

For two generations, it's been illegal to trophy hunt grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1975 seized control over grizzly management from Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, invoking its authority under the Endangered Species Act.

Back then, the entire Greater Yellowstone grizzly population was estimated to number no more than 136, if not fewer. Most of those bruins were clustered in Yellowstone National Park. Many biologists feared that without emergency measures implemented to prevent conflict and stop humans from killing them—including the government meting out harsh penalties to poachers—they would disappear from the region just as wolves had.

"I never thought we would have the numbers and distribution of bears we have today," Christopher Servheen, the Fish and Wildlife Service's former grizzly bear recovery coordinator, told me. "I thought we would be lucky to have any grizzly bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem."

That's how bleak it was and many say the turnaround orchestrated by Servheen and others ranks among the grandest achievements in wildlife management history.

Yet even now, less than 2,000 grizzlies roam the Lower 48, down from 50,000 that used to inhabit the West historically. Sizable, viable numbers—enough to ensure grizzlies persist for the foreseeable future—exist in just two regions south of Canada: the Greater Yellowstone and the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem that includes Glacier National Park and federal wilderness in northern Montana.

"Our culture, ever since Lewis and Clark came through in the early 1800s, has had such a distorted view of grizzlies. We treated them as expendable—as things we needed to eradicate," said Joe Gutkoski, a former landscape architect for the U.S. Forest Service, who was 48 years old when grizzlies were delisted. "I think we're smarter in that we know more about grizzlies than ever before. ... We know they are not the bloodthirsty creatures they were portrayed to be by our ancestors. But I still wonder, are we wise enough to co-exist with them?"

In summer 2017, with grizzly numbers having rebounded in recent decades to somewhere around 700 in Greater Yellowstone, the Fish and Wildlife Service came full circle, relinquishing its control and giving management back to the states. Servheen says the Endangered Species Act proved it worked in moving the grizzly population out of the biological emergency room and into recovery.

Still, there remain several significant concerns clouding the outlook for grizzly survival, including the deepening impacts of climate change; bears dying in alleged incidents of human self-defense, often involving big game hunters; and rising human population pressure affecting the spaces bears need to persist.

But paramount, and indeed the major point of contention for hundreds of thousands of Americans who oppose giving states management authority, relates to hunting.

Should the most iconic population of wild bears on Earth again be targeted as animals killed for sport, trophies and thrill alone? All three states have expressed their desire to begin selling bear tags in the coming months or years.

Matt Hogan, the Fish and Wildlife Service's deputy regional director in Denver, told me it is not his agency's prerogative to instruct the states on what to do going forward. He added that if the grizzly population falls below minimal numbers that the states agree to, the bear can be relisted and control again wrested away.

Gutkoski is a living legend to those who savor Montana's wild backcountry. A solitary wanderer, his hardiness has earned him comparisons to a wolverine. Today, after seven decades of exploration, Gutkoski's name appears in the summit registers of peaks scattered throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and points well beyond.

He served in the Navy during World War II and following school at Penn State University, was hired as the first landscape architect in the history of the U.S. Forest Service's flagship Northern Region in Missoula.

In 1964, Gutkoski transferred to Bozeman and completed his 32-year tenure of civil service fighting misguided timber sales and attempts to cover mountainsides with mazes of logging roads. He's also been a river protector, a wilderness crusader and a catalyst in pushing to re-establish free-ranging bison herds on the high plains.

But of all his passions, none comes close to matching his zealous enthusiasm for stalking big game animals in the fall. Since the late 1940s, Gutkoski has cut the tracks of every major mammal in the Northern Rockies, including mountain lions, wolves, imperiled





Sportsman's Channel and oversees a popular web podcast devoted to public-lands hunting. PHOTO BY STEVEN DRAKE

Canada lynx and wolverine. He's taken black bears with his rifle, cooking them as roasts for supper.

He has never eaten grizzly; the mere thought causes him to recoil. Indeed, for most hunters, grizzlies have never been thought of as animals killed for sustenance; bringing down a Great Bear has always been treated instead as the ultimate wildlife trophy.

Gutkoski, now 90, is among the few living Montanans who, when they purchased elk tags as young men, were also told they could take a grizzly, no questions asked. Reflecting on a couple of attempts to shoot an elusive massive boar in the South Fork of the Flathead River drainage, Gutkoski offers this solemn confession: "I'm glad I failed."

Had he succeeded, "driven by my personal ego in downing a grizzly for nothing more than the thrill of the chase," Gutkoski says, he'd feel ashamed today.

Few issues in modern wildlife conservation have stirred raw emotion and vehement disagreement over what the ethical and legal objectives should be in rescuing a high-profile animal from the brink of regional annihilation.

Nowhere in the Endangered Species Act does it state that animals brought back from near oblivion in a given location will or will not be hunted once restored. For example, Americans do not legally hunt bald eagles for sport, nor are peregrine falcons classified as game birds available for wing shooting, even though they could make intriguing trophies mounted on a wall.

Passions are even higher because today no species is more synonymous with Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks than Ursus arctos horribilis.

Wildlife watching is one of the ecosystem's key attractions, appealing to people from around the world. Between Yellowstone and Grand Teton alone, more than \$1 billion is generated annually through nature tourism, according to Bozeman-based Headwaters Economics. Seeing a grizzly ranks even higher on visitor wish lists, according to one survey, than witnessing an eruption of Old Faithful Geyser.

In Jackson, Wyoming, a 22-year-old bruin given the identity Grizzly 399 by researchers, is said to be the most famous mother bear in the world. She spends most of her time within the environs of Grand Teton National Park but could be in peril if Wyoming commences grizzly hunting in the adjacent national forest where she dens.

Global outrage erupted over the trophy killing of Cecil the African lion in 2015, downed by an American bow hunter after the big cat was lured out of Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park. The possibility of something similar happening to beloved Yellowstone and Grand Teton grizzlies is, for many, unthinkable.

The bulk of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem exists in Wyoming and that state has aggressively noted that if and when hunting commences again, it will exploit its authority to generate revenue off bear licenses. The state plans to charge out-of-state hunters \$6,000 for a grizzly tag and \$600 for Wyoming residents.

Scott Weber, a member of an organization called Wyoming Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, put up a billboard in his town in 2016 at the height of summer tourist season showing a camouflage-clad hunter posed next to a dead grizzly. He told the local Cody Enterprise newspaper, "The greatest trophy in the Lower 48 is a male grizzly. Now you won't have to go to Alaska to get a grizzly."

During an interview with the Jackson Hole News & Guide, another Wyoming outfitter named Paul Gilroy, a Safari Club member who lives near Wilson, Wyoming, said he sees a commercial opportunity for his business. "It would be a very popular hunt and easily advertised and easily booked. We have some very large bears here, which would make for commendable trophies," Gilroy said. "It would be nice to be able to whack one that's causing problems."

Randy Newberg of Bozeman is an international celebrity in hunting circles. He is host of the Sportsman Channel's Fresh Tracks With Randy Newberg and also oversees one of the most popular web podcasts devoted to public-lands hunting in America.

Years ago, Newberg killed a grizzly in Alaska, part of a dream hunt he took with his 82-year-old grandfather. "It was the thrill of a lifetime," he says. Having done it once, he told me he has no compelling need to repeat it again.

Almost two decades ago, he served on a blue-ribbon panel of citizens in the Greater Yellowstone that examined whether the scientific goals used to gauge bear recovery had been met. He concluded that they had.

Newberg supported the measure to remove grizzlies from federal protection in 2017, just as he had in 2007 when the Greater Yellowstone population was temporarily delisted from safeguarding under the Endangered Species Act. But lawsuits from environmental groups stalled delisting for a decade.

Newberg is torn when pondering where hunts should occur—on the far outlying edges of the ecosystem or closer to the national parks where there are higher concentrations of bears and people and thus likely more conflict. The states have said they first intend to target "problem bears"—for example, those that get into conflict with livestock, chronically wander into communities or get into trash.

Any hunts, if they target grizzlies that would otherwise be destroyed, relocated or sent to zoos, need to be carefully orchestrated and involve only highly skilled and qualified hunters, guides and close involvement with wardens and biologists on the ground, Newberg says.

Newberg worries about bear hunting being captured on camera and posted on social media. It would create a firestorm. He witnessed the black eye Montana incurred when Yellowstone bison were gunned down in the snow right along the park border.

Should a popular bear get accidentally killed, should a bruin get wounded and die with agony, should a female grizzly be slain because a hunter mistook her for a male, it would be a public relations nightmare that would have internationally negative consequences for the image of hunting, he says.

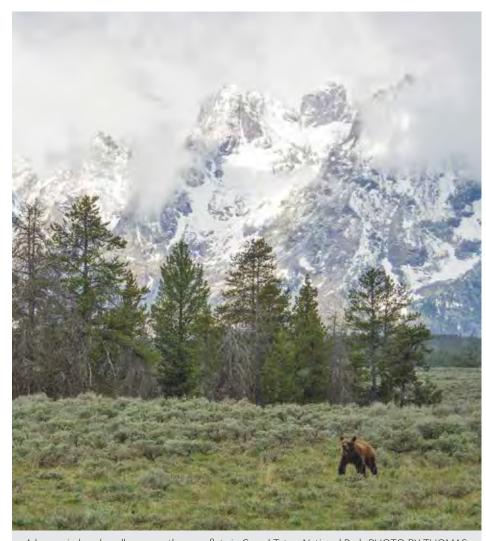
"As someone concerned about hunting and its positive role in society, I am deeply concerned that hunting of grizzlies in Greater Yellowstone could make the backlash caused by Cecil the lion look like a 1.0 on the Richter scale," he said. "The moment somebody shoots a bear like Grizzly 399, by accident, out of spite or stupidity, this will turn into a disaster for the hunting community of an order of magnitude like the San Francisco earthquake of 1906."

He offers an advisement to fellow hunters. "If we want to make sure hunting is embraced for future generations and not have society turn against it, then we need to respect the millions of people who value grizzlies and not talk about the animals with an attitude of defiance or hostility like 'Let's just go shoot the bastards."

Some claim that if grizzlies aren't allowed to be hunted, there will be more poaching. A counterargument is that poachers who break the law need to receive harsh sentences. There is fear among conservationists that the states will be lenient if more bears start dying due to claims of hunter self-defense.

From his home in Kelly, Wyoming, Ted Kerasote has clear views looking west toward the breathtaking Teton Range. Behind him is the Bridger-Teton National Forest, an area where he has hunted for decades. Grizzlies and wolves amble through his backyard and he routinely finds fresh tracks. When he moved permanently to Jackson Hole in 1986, grizzlies were incredibly rare and wolves were absent from Greater Yellowstone.

Kerasote is, in his own way, legendary. For many years, he wrote a couple of widely read columns for Sports Afield magazine and he is author of the acclaimed book, Bloodties:



A lone grizzly cub walks across the sage flats in Grand Teton National Park. PHOTO BY THOMAS D. MANGELSEN

Nature, Culture and the Hunt. Like Gutkoski and Newberg, he is a passionate defender of hunting when it is done to put meat on the table.

"People try to tell me that if I'm not in favor of killing grizzlies, then I'm anti-hunting. I've been called that even though I've shot more elk than those people who are making the claim," he said. "There's an atmosphere of tremendous polarization in this country. It's based on the belief that unless you are wholeheartedly with us, you are against us. Those who say we need to kill grizzlies for fun are on the wrong side of history. And they're not doing the cause of hunting any favors."

The states can't argue that hunting is an essential management tool because it isn't, Kerasote says. Grizzlies have been stewarded successfully in Greater Yellowstone without hunting for four decades. Further, they can't claim that revenues generated through the sale of bear licenses will fix funding woes. Wyoming is in a severe budget crisis because of falling revenues from declining coal markets.

"Wyoming or Montana or Idaho are not going to maneuver their way through larger fiscal crises on the backs of dead bears," he notes. "You can't kill that many bears through hunting, on top of the number already dying through a variety of causes, and not have a negative impact on the bear population."

The deaths of a relatively small number of breeding female grizzlies can, over time, mean the difference between a rising or falling population. States say they won't target female bears in sport hunts.

Kerasote has traveled around the world and he has heard predictions that by the middle of this century, many large carnivores, including tigers in India and lions in Africa, could be rendered extinct in the wild. Given the trend-lines of the global human population rising from 7 billion to 10 billion by mid century, the prospects are not good for species that need big spaces and human tolerance.

Grizzlies are America's version of the tiger and lion, and showing the rest of the world how species can be ushered forward through this century with compassion and stewardship gives hope that it can be done in other areas, Kerasote says.

"I honestly don't understand why Wyoming keeps insisting that grizzlies need to be hunted. In practical terms, there's just no good reason other than appeasing a few people who just want the thrill of saying they killed a Greater Yellowstone bear," he adds. "To pander to that kind of mentality just makes the state look puerile. Is that the image that Wyoming really wants to project to the rest of the world?"

The values of the West have shifted markedly since 1975 when grizzlies were given federal protection. "There are many people who moved here who think that having bears

is pretty cool. There is a large wild bear constituency that did not exist generations ago," Kerasote said.

Aldo Leopold, in his age-old classic, A Sand County Almanac, writes about how the spirit of wildness left a mountain called Escudilla in the American Southwest after the last grizzly was slain by a trapper enlisted to protect livestock interests. In gazing at that place, pondering the mere existence value of grizzlies, he observed:

"There was, in fact, only one place from which you did not see Escudilla on the skyline: that was the top of Escudilla itself. ... No one ever saw the old bear, but in the muddy springs about the base of the cliffs you saw his incredible tracks. Seeing them made even the most hard-bitten cowboys aware of bear. ... We spoke harshly of the Spaniards who, in their zeal for gold and converts, had needlessly extinguished the native Indians. It did not occur to us that we, too, were the captains of an invasion too sure of its own righteousness. Escudilla still hangs on the horizon, but when you see it you no longer think of bear. It's only a mountain now."

Joe Gutkoski says that Greater Yellowstone is like a modern manifestation of Escudilla. "You don't need to possess an individual grizzly in order to know and appreciate its power," he says. "You don't need to claim its life for your own one-time personal benefit. I've run into grizzlies on hunts in the Gallatins and I've had profound moments of satisfaction seeing them and knowing they are there and may be there next time. They make me feel more alert and when you are more alert you feel more alive."

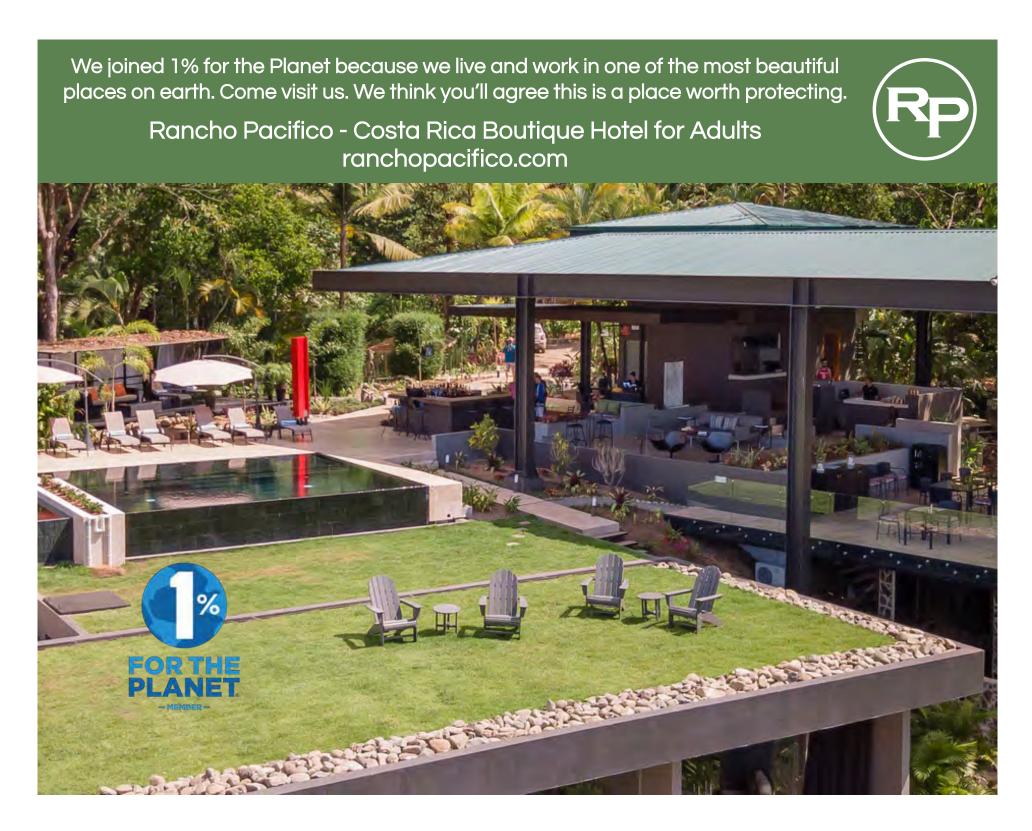
To him, no creature distills the essence of wildness more than a griz. "In this day and age, we are trying to hold onto that raw edge of nature as it slips away from us. Why would you want to kill an animal that is the emblem of the very thing we are trying to save?"

He believes the relationship between people and apex predators has come around full circle and it's time to chart a different course going forward.

Newberg, who has an audience of millions, doesn't disagree with Gutkoski's assessment.

"The grizzly is unique. States should take a lot of pride in the fact they've played a role in recovery," Newberg said. "But grizzlies need to be treated like the special species they are, whether we manage them for hunting or not hunting. If we mess this up, then shame on us. The public will never forgive us if we do."

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







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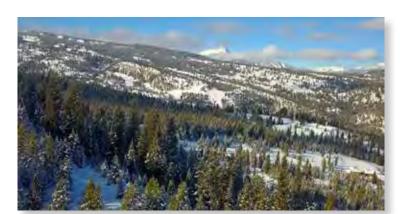
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