

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

## BY THE NUMBERS



**Voted #1**

nonprofit in Big Sky



**54 volunteers**

were critical to the success of the West Fork restoration project



**100**

**trout eggs**

raised in the 2nd grade classroom



**215**

summer campers participated in river educational activities



Water Conservation program in Montana initiated in Big Sky



**79 foot**

fly cast by the Great Gallatin Guide-Off winner, John Sniscak



**144 data points**

collected each day at the South Fork continuous monitoring station that was instrumental in detecting the timing of the Yellowstone Club spill

The Gallatin River is treasured by locals and visitors alike for its spectacular scenery, thrilling whitewater, world class fishery, and abundant wildlife. As the only nonprofit devoted to conserving the Upper Gallatin River, this year we expanded our programming to address the many challenges that put at risk the future of cold, clean, and abundant water. I'd like to thank every single one of you that supported our conservation efforts in 2016.

In the coming year, we plan to strengthen our impact and ensure that the river has a voice as the Big Sky community and visitor numbers continue to grow, and as we prepare for anticipated changes in streamflow, precipitation, and temperature and the rising threat of aquatic invasive species.

I invite you to learn more about how you can invest in a health Gallatin for future generations. Together, we can make a difference.

-Kristin Gardner, Executive Director, Gallatin River Task Force

# A YEAR OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**JANUARY**

## ***Big Sky Sustainable Water Solutions Forum***



The Task Force began a collaborative, stakeholder-driven planning effort to ensure that the ecological health of the Gallatin and its tributaries are protected and enhanced as the Big Sky community grows.

**MARCH**

## ***Yellowstone Club Wastewater Effluent Spill***

We were a partner in the effort to plan, collect, and assess data to understand the impacts of a treated wastewater effluent spill in the South Fork of the West Fork of the Gallatin River on water quality and aquatic life.



**JULY**

## ***Hooked on the Gallatin: Youth Fly Fishing Camp***

The Gallatin River Fly Fishing Festival is a fun-filled event hosted by the Task Force to celebrate fly fishing and conservation in the Upper Gallatin. Leading up to the festival, we organized our first youth fly fishing camp to inspire a lifelong passion for fly fishing and river conservation for camp participants.



**AUGUST**

## ***Big Sky Water Conservation Program***

We began one of only two municipal water conservation programs in the state of Montana. Water conservation will be critical to ensure future drinking water supply and streamflows in the Gallatin.



**SEPTEMBER**

## ***Continuing Education Class for Big Sky Realtors***

We developed and hosted a class to empower realtors with water resource information relevant to the Big Sky area to help new landowners make wise land use decisions that conserve land and protect water.



**OCTOBER**

## ***West Fork Stream Restoration Project***

The Task Force broke ground on a large-scale stream restoration project on the West Fork of the Gallatin as it flows through the Big Sky Golf Course. The project will improve water quality, streamside vegetation, and fish habitat in the West Fork.



# WATERSHED MONITORING

Evaluating the health of the Upper Gallatin River has always been at the heart of what we do. We were founded in 2000 by a group of concerned community members with a simple goal: to understand baseline water quality in the Upper Gallatin River.

Today, the Task Force continues to work with citizen scientists to monitor the vital signs of our River. For the past sixteen years, intrepid volunteers have braved cold, high water, and blazing sun to build a record of chemical and physical indicators of watershed health. This year, we compiled sixteen years of data in a report summarizing the seasonal, spatial, and long-term trends measured since the inception of the watershed monitoring program.



In addition to collecting quarterly watershed data, the Task Forces executes focused monitoring efforts to evaluate events or determine the successes and failures of our conservation work. The Task Force was intimately involved with the effort to understand the short and long term effects of the wastewater effluent spill at the Yellowstone Club in Big Sky in March 2016. We worked with private and state partners to measure the impacts of the spill on water quality, aquatic life, and aquatic habitat.

Long-term water quality data collected by our volunteers provided a critical framework to put the event in perspective. In addition, our continuous data allowed water managers to pinpoint the start and duration of the event.

Thank you to the many river lovers who have devoted countless hours to monitoring the health of the Gallatin River Watershed.

**150 hours donated**

by volunteers monitoring watershed health in 2016



**16 Years**

of credible data monitored at

**16 Field Sites**

**787**

river miles monitored by the Task Force



***“It was a pleasure to work with such competent and enthusiastic personnel from the Gallatin River Task Force on the water quality and aquatic habitat monitoring that we conducted during and after the spill at YC in 2016. Their staff dovetailed right into our field teams with no qualms or hesitations, and helped us collect quality data. While none of us want another spill to happen, I do look forward to collaborating with GRTF on other projects and consider their staff a valuable asset to the Gallatin River and the Big Sky community in general.” - Richard McEldowney, Confluence Consulting***

# CONSERVATION

The sixteen years of watershed data collected by the Task Force informs the planning and monitoring of projects developed to protect and restore the Gallatin River, its tributaries, streamside areas, and wetlands.

Thanks to strong community partnerships, the Task Force greatly expanded our conservation projects in 2016. These projects will undoubtedly leave long-lasting impacts on the health of our River.

Over 2016, we brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to plan for Big Sky's water future. The outcome from this effort will have great influence on the Big Sky community and our visitors, and the downstream communities in the Gallatin and Madison Valleys.



In September, we initiated the Big Sky Water Conservation Program to help ensure plentiful water in the Gallatin and Madison Watersheds. Fresh, clean water is a limited resource and the amount of water each of us uses every day impacts our neighbors, local fisheries and wildlife, and downstream users. We aim to reduce current water use and plan for more efficient future use by incentivizing and awarding our community's participation in efforts that prioritize water conservation.

After years of planning, we broke ground on a stream restoration project in October that will improve water quality, streamside vegetation, and fish habitat on the West Fork of the Gallatin River along the Big Sky Golf Course. Our successes were the result of a real team effort and we are deeply grateful for the overwhelming support.



*"I am grateful that Gallatin River Task Force is leading the charge to protect and respect our rivers." - JeNelle Johnson*



**5600**

willows planted to stabilize streambanks and improve water quality

**936**

feet of riparian vegetation enhanced



**36**

diverse stakeholders planning for Big Sky's water future



**120**

respondents to a water conservation awareness survey



# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

We believe that an engaged community is the foundation for a healthy watershed. Thanks to your support, our Education and Outreach Program grew by leaps and bounds in 2016.

For years, the Task Force has partnered with Ophir Elementary educators to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders. Our education programs include raising trout from egg to fingerling in the classroom and monitoring water quality in nearby rivers and streams.

In 2016, we expanded our watershed awareness programs for professionals in the Big Sky community. The Task Force hosted a series of workshops that armed construction industry professionals with the tools to minimize storm water runoff during construction in May. After completing the workshop series, participants were certified to perform storm water management inspections on construction sites.



***“That was the best 4 hours of education I’ve received in 25 years.”***

*-Cathy Gorman, Big Sky Sotheby’s International Realty*

The Task Force developed and hosted a continuing education course for Big Sky realtors in September that focused on land and water conservation. Thanks to rave reviews and support from local realtors, we will host the same course in Bozeman in spring 2017.

In October, the Task Force and Montana State University’s Water Center hosted a two-day workshop for water resource professionals that highlighted our conservation work on the West Fork. The course included a day of lecture focused on permitting and a day of willow identification and harvesting in the field. The harvested willows were planted along the streambanks of the West Fork to improve water quality.

 **113 professionals**  
attended workshops hosted  
by the Task Force in 2016

**17 fish**  
landed at the Hooked on the  
Gallatin: Youth Fly Fishing Camp 

 **56 Students**  
from Ophir Elementary participated  
in watershed curriculum in 2016



# GALLATIN RIVER FLY FISHING FESTIVAL



## Join us on July 1st and 2nd, 2017

for a fun-filled weekend of paddling, running, biking, eating, dancing, and of course fly fishing! Learn more about the upcoming Fly Fishing Festival at: [gallatinriverflyfishingfestival.com](http://gallatinriverflyfishingfestival.com)

The Gallatin River Fly Fishing Festival connects the community to the rivers, fish, and riparian habitats that are vital to the sport of fly fishing. The proceeds raised from the Gallatin River Fly Fishing Festival support conservation and restoration efforts by the Gallatin River Task Force within the Upper Gallatin River Watershed.

**2016 Fly Fishing Festival Committee:** Ennion Williams, Wes Hoecker, Ron Bowlin, Kristin Gardner, Emily Casey, Steph Lynn, Andrea Saari, Pat Straub, and Dave Alvin

Learn more about the upcoming Fly Fishing Festival at [www.gallatinriverflyfishingfestival.com](http://www.gallatinriverflyfishingfestival.com)



## 58 Species

of stream insects have been identified in the Upper Gallatin River



## Over 1,400

rainbow trout longer than 8 inches per river mile in the mainstem of Upper Gallatin, north of the West fork confluence

**26 Sponsors** supported the mission of the festival

**120 Attendees** at the Hooked on the Gallatin Banquet



## Over \$23,000

was raised for river conservation at the 2016 Gallatin River Fly Fishing Festival

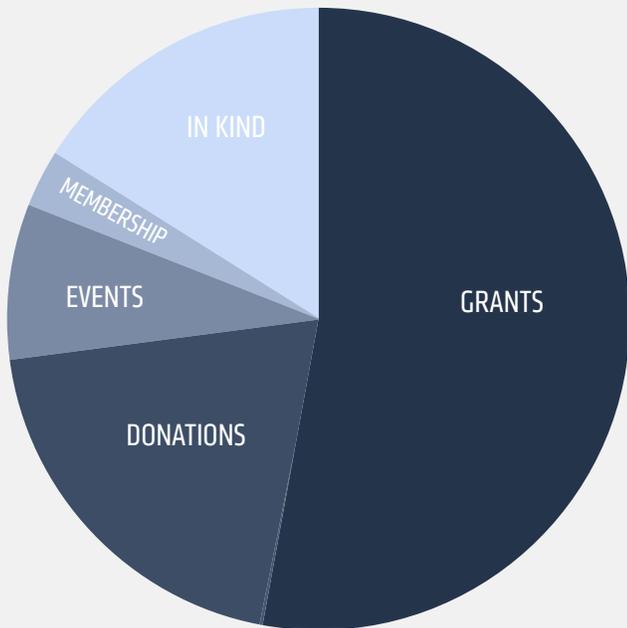


***Finn McRae learned to tie flies at the Hooked on the Gallatin: Youth Fly Fishing Camp. He was so captivated that he convinced his parents to buy him a fly tying kit with the condition that he tie his father 10 flies a year. Finn plans to take a fly tying class at Gallatin River Guides this winter and hopes to start his own business selling flies at the Big Sky Farmer's Market.***

# FINANCIALS

## INCOME 2016

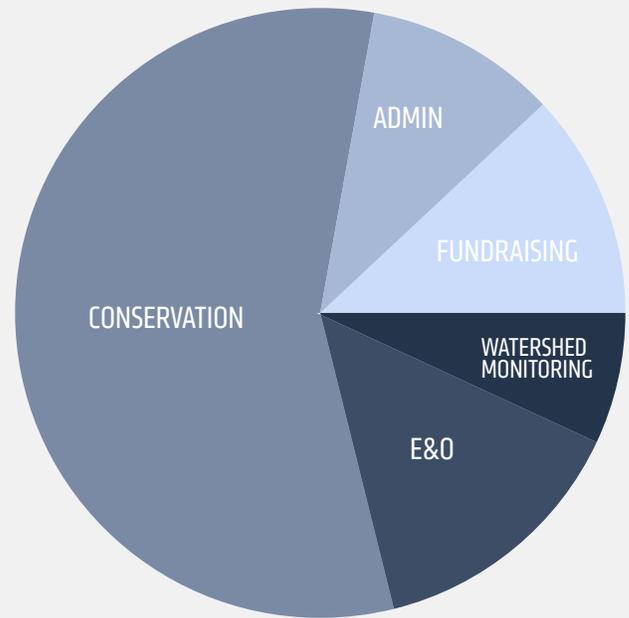
In 2016, the Gallatin River Task Force significantly expanded our community partnerships and volunteer participation as illustrated by an over 200% increase in our in kind donated goods and services from 2015. Our Friends of the Gallatin membership grew by over 80%!



<b>Grants</b>	\$292,341	53%
<b>Donations</b>	\$107,663	20%
<b>In Kind</b>	\$88,588	16%
<b>Events</b>	\$45,254	8%
<b>Membership</b>	\$15,609	3%
<b>Total Income \$549,455</b>		

## EXPENSES 2016

In 2016, the Gallatin River Task Force greatly expanded our programmatic work as reflected in an 85% increase in our program expenses from 2015. We continued to run efficiently with low operational costs.



<b>Conservation</b>	\$276,789	57%
<b>Education &amp; Outreach</b>	\$65,938	14%
<b>Fundraising</b>	\$59,859	12%
<b>Admin</b>	\$52,392	11%
<b>Watershed Monitoring</b>	\$32,774	7%
<b>Total Expenses \$487,752</b>		

# FRIENDS OF THE GALLATIN

REAL PEOPLE MAKING A REAL IMPACT

Friends of the Gallatin make a difference by shaping the future of the river and its inhabitants. Your contributions improve trout habitat, water quality, and streamside vegetation; teach children about river ecosystems; detect changes in river health over time; and help ensure abundant streamflows in the Gallatin and its tributaries.

**The Stuart & Mindy Goldberg Family** invested a percentage of the sale of their home to ensure a healthy Gallatin River for future generations.



*"All I can say about our connection to the river is that it is truly at the core of everything. We are skiers and fishermen, so we enjoy a special opportunity to love the water that runs through our lives from when it falls as snowflakes on Lone Peak all the way to the ocean. With Montana's abundance of cool, clean water, what a joy it is to live here!" - Stuart Goldberg*

**Headwaters Lifetime Members:** Jon & Sharon Holtzman, Mike & Sue Arneson, Quint & Cicely Drennan, Ron & Sheryl Bowlin, Rich & Lori Addicks, and Martin & Kathy Dudley

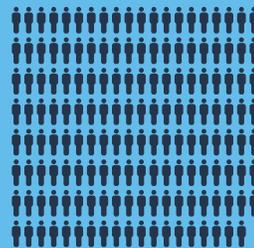
**Our community raised**

**\$22,048**

for the river in 24 hours during Give Big Gallatin Valley on May 3rd, 2016.



**Give again on May 4 - 5th, 2017!**



**159**

people and businesses made a tax-deductible donation to the Task Force in 2016



