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2019

ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION: To partner with our greater community to lead conservation and inspire stewardship of the Gallatin River Watershed

gallatinrivertaskforce.org

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VISION: A healthy Gallatin River
Watershed for future generations



DEAR FRIENDS

Like most of you, the Gallatin holds a special place in my heart. As I reflect upon my twelfth year at the Task Force, we have many successes to celebrate and a growing base of partners and supporters to be grateful for! The Gallatin Watershed remains healthy today because of our collective efforts. Keeping within our mission to safeguard our waters, educate the community, and build partnerships, we'd like to share a list of our proudest achievements in FY2019.

Leadership: We established and led the Headwaters Alliance, a formalized structure to oversee implementation of the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan. This plan, developed by a collaborative group of 35 partner organizations, provides a roadmap to ensure the health of our water into the future. We are a strong and unifying force in the Big Sky community and throughout the Gallatin Watershed, and our leadership is imperative to bringing together partners, facilitating discussions, and creating and implementing proactive and creative solutions for our most precious resource.

Conservation: Since initiating our water-conservation program in October 2016, rebates for water-saving fixtures have helped save 1,608,080 gallons of water, the equivalent of over six Olympic-sized swimming pools. Water conservation will be critical to build resilience of our drinking-water supplies and streamwater flows as our community grows and faces drought and predicted impacts from changing climate.

Outreach: Over FY2019, our growing volunteer workforce made significant impact on watershed health by preventing 21 pounds of nitrogen, 24 pounds of phosphorus, one TRILLION fecal coliform colonies, and 1,200 pounds of trash from invading and polluting our local streams!

On behalf of the Gallatin River Task Force, thank you for your support and partnership. Together, our collective efforts can create a sustainable future for the Gallatin River for generations to come.



Kristin Gardner, PhD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Conservation



HEADWATERS ALLIANCE

Over the past year, the Task Force-led **Headwaters Alliance** secured funding and project work to assess improved wastewater treatment and groundwater dynamics in Gallatin Canyon, developed a monitoring plan to fill in data gaps critical to measuring trends and impacts, and installed a new stream gauge on the Upper Gallatin, where none existed. This gauge gathers critical streamflow and temperature data that will guide our water-use reduction efforts, building resiliency against drought and climate change.

Going forward, the Alliance is spearheading the establishment of **Montana's first Water Fund**, a long-term, professionally managed fund that will support vital projects to enhance our water supplies.

ENHANCED ACCESS

In 2018, we completed the Moose Creek restoration project, establishing a model for conservation and restoration along the river. Over FY2019, we developed project design plans for additional restoration projects upstream from Deer Creek and at Porcupine Creek. As user traffic increases, these projects will protect the river and delicate streamside vegetation that is crucial for fisheries health and wildlife habitat. Construction upstream of Upper Deer is planned for later this year, with completion slated for spring 2021.

DEER CREEK BY THE NUMBERS

- **1** sustainable river-access point for rafts;
- **1** accessible fishing platform; **1** kayak launch
- **1** improved parking area
- **1,044 feet** of riparian buffer enhancements
- **1,414 feet** of existing user-created trails converted into a managed trail system
- **4,323 feet** of existing user-created go-downs to be converted to parking areas and trails



Watershed Monitoring

In late summer 2018, the Gallatin River experienced the largest, most expansive algae bloom in recorded history. Data collected during the bloom indicated that warming temperatures had paired with nutrient overloads in some areas, creating the perfect storm for the resulting algae. Over the next two years, we are partnering with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to further understand the driving factors of algae growth in the Gallatin. The Headwaters Alliance will use this information to create nutrient-reduction strategies to mitigate future algae blooms that threaten our world-class fisheries.

VOLUNTEERING BY THE NUMBERS

- **18 volunteers spent 422 hours** collecting algae and nutrient data, gathering over 35,000 data points to guide algae bloom-mitigation plan

Community Outreach



In FY2019, we reached over 2,800 people through experiential service-learning projects in local schools, summer camps for kids, continuing-education classes for realtors, community volunteer events on streambank restoration and water quality, and our annual festival celebrating the Gallatin River. This expands our growing volunteer army, building a larger, broader, and more diverse community of river stewards.

OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

- **21 pounds of nitrogen**, 24 pounds of phosphorous, and one trillion fecal coliform colonies prevented from polluting our clean, cold waters
- **1,200 pounds of trash** removed from the watershed, keeping riverbanks clean and beautiful
- **2,800+ individuals** participated in our education and outreach programs

GET YOUR FEET WET

BECOME A MEMBER

- ° Preserve and protect the future of the river by becoming a Friend of the Gallatin. Your annual membership supports conservation efforts such as water monitoring and on-going streambank restoration. Join us and become a steward today!

VOLUNTEER

- ° From Yellowstone National Park to the mouth of the Gallatin Canyon, the river needs you. Plant willows. Restore streambanks. Pick up trash. Volunteer and help us make a measurable difference throughout our watershed.

APPLY FOR A REBATE

- ° The Task Force offers rebates to Big Sky residents who prioritize water conservation in their homes by installing water-efficient toilets, showerheads, and clothes washers. Rebate amounts vary. We also offer rebates for outdoor upgrades, like low-flow watering fixtures and irrigation audits.

Visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org

for more information on how to get involved or to make a donation to the Gallatin River Task Force. See you on the river!

Sustainable Growth

Twenty years ago, we recognized that a proactive approach to sustainable resource management was the only solution for a rapidly developing mountain community in a water-stressed region. Today, we lead the way when it comes to planning for a future in which a healthy Gallatin Watershed exists side by side with a growing population.

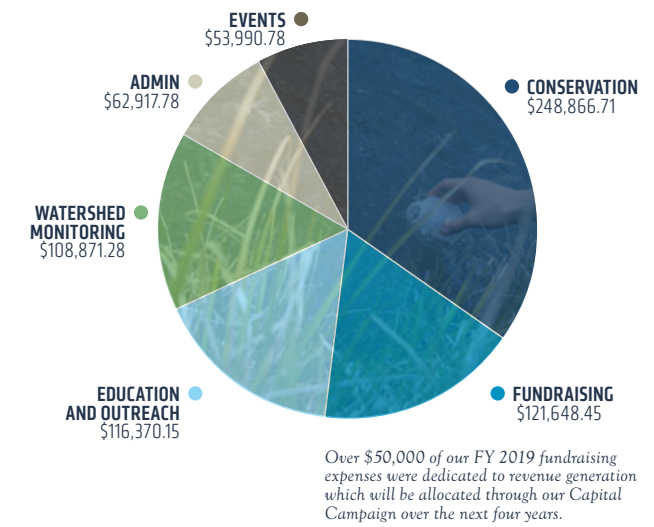
To ensure our ongoing influence and effectiveness, we launched Gallatin River Forever, our first major strategic capital campaign. As we head into 2020, we are humbled by the community’s overwhelming support, another indication that this river is in good hands as we transition into our next 20 years. As always, thank you to each and every one of our supporters. *(Gallatin River Forever campaign report forthcoming.)*

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BY THE NUMBERS

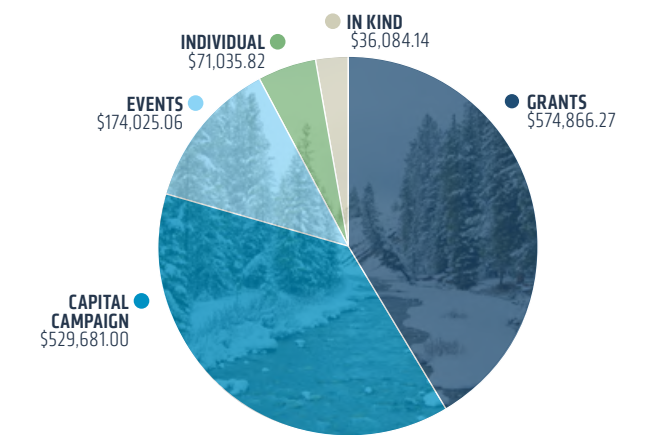
- **200+** individual donors
- **Supported by** dozens of local businesses, conservation organizations, and public-private partnerships
- **\$1.4 million raised**
- **\$900k** for programming; **\$500k** for capacity building (over the next 5 years)

FINANCIALS

EXPENSES 2019 TOTAL: \$712,665.15



INCOME 2019 TOTAL: \$1,385,692.29



All rivers require great stewards—thank you to our Gallatin River donors & sponsors.

\$25,000+

Big Sky Resort Tax, Boundary Expeditions, Eric & Wendy Schmidt, Jeffrey Kelter, John & Stephanie Ingram, John Rocchio, Madison County, Moonlight Community Foundation, Sam Byrne, Ted & Erica Pappendick, The Ladd Family, The Snow Family, Turner Foundation, Yellowstone Club, Yellowstone Club Community Foundation

\$10,000–\$24,999

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\$500–\$999

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“All great rivers draw stewards and philanthropists devoted to the wellbeing of water. And the Gallatin is a great river.

The Gallatin River Task Force could not have the impact on aquatic health, restoration, and conservation that we do without those of you who contribute out of love for the Gallatin River. Expect to hear more from us in the future as we express our deep gratitude for your on-going involvement in our programs and our successes. Thank you to you all.”

Ryan Newcomb, Director of Development