



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

A LETTER FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Over the past year, we have watched as drought conditions across southwest Montana worsened. In mid-March, our snowpack was near 100% of normal, but by August almost one million Montanans were living in drought. As of October, 2021 was the third driest year in the last 127.

Soon, this will be the norm and not the anomaly. All Climate Change models point to a future in which Montana's snowpack—our primary source of fresh water—is on the decline, and longer, deeper droughts are common place.

While scientists predict that annual precipitation will increase in the decades to come, we're likely to see more rain and less snow, which means it will quickly leave the watershed as runoff without adequately replenishing our precious groundwater resources.

By late summer, Gallatin flows will be warmer and lower.

While all this paints a dire picture, at the Gallatin River Task Force, we see things differently. Yes, change is coming. But does that change need to include disaster? We'd like to think not, and this year gave us countless reasons to be optimistic, starting with the formation of a new water and sewer district in Gallatin Canyon.

Approved by the Gallatin County Commission, this district paves the way for the implementation of sustainable and environmentally friendly water management in the growing Gallatin Canyon area. For the past decade, the Task Force has been advocating for such a district.

Today, most canyon residents and businesses utilize decentralized wells

for drinking water and inadequate septic systems for wastewater treatment. This new district allows for a more centralized approach that will give the Gallatin a fighting chance as our community continues to grow.

By early summer, Senator Jon Tester had reintroduced the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, just as drought conditions were gripping most of Montana and sending multiple trout streams into Hoot Owl restrictions. The Task Force has long advocated for Wild and Scenic designation on the Upper Gallatin, and this bill would ensure that our backyard waterway enjoys the nation's highest conservation designation. As part of the Montanans for Healthy Rivers coalition, we will continue fighting for this bill until it is passed.

With fall well underway, our Gallatin Restoration strategy scored two more major victories, with the completion of the Upper Deer Creek access project and the first of five projects on the Middle Fork Gallatin River. Restoring ecological function to streams, creeks, and the river allows for natural water storage and habitat reconstruction, while also improving water quality in our impaired streams. We have 100 such projects planned over the next ten years.

While these are hardly the only successes of 2021, they represent the broad spectrum of work underway at the Task Force, and they highlight the proactive approach that is necessary for success in our clean water mission, a mission that serves both the river and the community.

As we move into 2022, we'll hope for a snowy winter followed by a cool, wet spring—but we'll continue planning for less-than-average snowfall and dry, hot summers. We hope you'll join us, contributing however you can, whether by saving water in your home or giving generously to support our conservation work to save the Gallatin.

Most of all we hope you'll join us in imagining a different kind of future for Big Sky and the Gallatin River—a future not marred by disaster but rather highlighted by successful examples of creative problem solving. A future where we look to natural systems for a conservation blueprint, and where we work together to protect this special place we all love.

Thank you for all you do for the Gallatin River. 🏡

Sincerely,
Kristin Gardner, PhD
Chief Executive & Science Officer

Ennion Williams
Board Chair



THE TASK FORCE

Staff

KRISTIN GARDNER, Chief Executive & Science Officer
RYAN NEWCOMB, Managing Director
EMILY O'CONNOR, Conservation Director
DAVID TUCKER, Communications Manager
ISABELLA VENDRAMIN, Operations Manager
JESSICA OLSON, Conservation Associate
MARK CASTAÑEDA, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member

Board of Directors

ENNION WILLIAMS, Board Chair
RICH CHANDLER, Board Vice Chair
HEATHER BUDD, Treasurer
ROB MCRAE, Secretary
BILL COLLINS
MICHAEL JACQUARD
JENELLE JOHNSON
RYAN KUNZ
ERIC LADD
LINDA MEADE
CHRISTINE SUNDNAS

DAVE PECUNIES

▲ COVER PHOTO: RYAN TURNER

STATE OF THE GALLATIN

As a science-based organization, we're directed by data. We look to the river to guide our work, collecting and analyzing water samples at a variety of sites throughout the watershed to determine the State of the Gallatin. Armed with this information, we can make strategic conservation decisions to improve river health.

When an historic algae bloom broke out in 2018, we turned again to data, partnering with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to determine the cause of the bloom and how we could prevent additional large-scale outbreaks in the future. Here's what we know three years into our study.

WHAT'S THE CAUSE?

Cladophora glomerata, the primary algae species in the upper Gallatin watershed, is naturally occurring in our headwaters streams and the main stem Gallatin. A problem arises when concentrations of this bright-green vegetation surpass a level that is healthy for aquatic ecosystems and bearable for river recreationalists. So, what's causing these outbreaks? As it turns out, several factors impact algae growth.

- NUTRIENT CONCENTRATIONS, PARTICULARLY PHOSPHORUS AND NITROGEN
- WATER TEMPERATURE
- WATER HARDNESS
- PH LEVELS
- STREAM FLOW VELOCITY
- SUNLIGHT
- WATER CLARITY

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

While algae is native to the Gallatin, the delicate balance that keeps growth in check has been disrupted by land development and amplified by climate change. Our study shows that:

- NUTRIENT LEVELS ARE TOO HIGH
- WATER TEMPS DURING OUTBREAKS TEND TO BE ELEVATED
- STREAM FLOWS ARE DECREASING, ON AVERAGE
- AND SUNNY DAYS ARE INCREASING, POTENTIALLY LEADING TO MORE VEGETATION GROWTH

▲ In recent years, algae growth on the Gallatin has reached nuisance levels, driven by excess nutrients, warm air and water temperatures, and low flows, among other factors.

WHERE ARE WE NOW

After 2018's wide-spread outbreak, 2019 was devoid of a bloom, but in 2020 it came roaring back. Why? It was likely triggered by several environmental factors that occurred at the right time, including:

- EXCESS NUTRIENTS AND POSSIBLY THE INFLUX OF NUTRIENTS FROM A LARGE RAIN EVENT ON JULY 28
- WARM WATER
- LOW STREAMFLOWS

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

In cases like this, we want a quick fix. As is so often the case, the solution is complicated and fully understanding the problem will take more time. We do, however, know that cleaner water and more of it is always better. To that end, there are steps we are taking to reduce the likelihood of future outbreaks.

AT THE TASK FORCE, WE'RE

- RESTORING THE MIDDLE FORK TO **REDUCE SEDIMENT AND NUTRIENT POLLUTION**
- IMPLEMENTING OUR **TROUT FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING INITIATIVE** TO REDUCE NUTRIENT POLLUTION AND WATER USE IN LANDSCAPING
- ADVOCATING FOR THE BIG SKY WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE AND **CENTRALIZED WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT IN GALLATIN CANYON**
- ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED WASTEWATER TREATMENT IN THE FIRELIGHT SUBDIVISION

- AND INCORPORATING WETLAND TREATMENT TO **REDUCE NUTRIENT POLLUTION** AT CHAPEL SPRING

YOU CAN HELP BY:

- APPLYING FOR A **BIG SKY WATER CONSERVATION REBATE** TO SAVE MONEY AND WATER IN YOUR HOMES
- CERTIFYING YOUR LAWNS AS TROUT FRIENDLY BY **PLANTING NATIVE SPECIES THAT REQUIRE LESS WATER AND FERTILIZERS**
- COLLECTING AND PROPERLY DISPOSING OF PET WASTE
- ADVOCATING FOR BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT IN BIG SKY

PROGRESS REPORT

In January 2018, the Task Force and our Headwaters Alliance partners published the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan, a 177-page tome outlining the path toward a clean, cold Gallatin River. Now, three years later, we’re proud to report on the progress that we’ve made.

Focus Area 1:
Ecological Health of River Systems

On the surface, the Gallatin appears to be in good shape, but our water-quality data suggests that there is more than meets the eye.

To keep tabs on trends over time and update the community on the status of the watershed, we’re actively expanding our monitoring capabilities. In 2019, we installed a new USGS gauge at Deer Creek, which allows us to track flows and warm temperatures. After the historic algae outbreak in 2018, we partnered with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to determine drivers so that we can mitigate such blooms in the future. Additionally, we have implemented the Upper Deer Creek River Access and Restoration project, and restoration of the Middle Fork Gallatin River is underway to improve habitat and slow flows.

Taken together, these efforts fulfill recommended actions from the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan under the Ecological Health of River Systems category, although much work remains. Over the next ten years, we plan to implement 100 restoration projects and launch an interactive online dashboard so community members can track water-quality conditions in real time.

Focus Area 2:
Water Supply & Availability

The upper Gallatin is the headwaters of the Missouri River basin. As such, we have a responsibility to conserve, not only to the residents of Big Sky and Gallatin Canyon, but also to the wildlife and communities downriver that depend on a clean, ample water supply.

To that end, we’ve launched the Big Sky Water Conservation program, providing cash rebates to residents and businesses that upgrade to water-saving fixtures, like showerheads, faucets, and irrigation sprinklers. Since implementing the program in 2019, we have kept 2,288,342 gallons of fresh water in the Gallatin.

Landscaping irrigation is the largest form of consumptive water use in the

community, so in 2020 we initiated the Trout Friendly Landscaping program, encouraging native vegetation that requires less watering and chemical fertilizers, while providing habitat for birds, insects, and other wildlife.

With more of our landscapes being altered by development, we’ve commissioned stormwater studies to monitor and predict how non-porous surfaces such as roads and roofs will lead to less groundwater recharge and more pollutant runoff. Through this study, we will identify conservation projects that will increase water security for the community and stream flows in the Gallatin.

While it’s clear much progress is being made, we’re again in need of community-wide buy-in to ensure the positive impacts will be far-reaching and long-lasting. Our continued advocacy and your support will ensure we’re successful for the river.

Focus Area 3:
Wastewater Treatment & Reuse

Wastewater, when treated to a high enough standard, can reduce our consumptive use of fresh water, augment our dwindling snowpack, and remove harmful pollutants

that are currently entering our waterways. With that in mind, we’ve long advocated for an upgrade to Big Sky’s water and sewer treatment plant.

In the spring of 2020, thanks in part to our advocacy, voters agreed to fund the construction of such a plant using the 1% for Infrastructure tax, another huge win for the river. Wastewater treated at the new plant will contain 99% less harmful bacteria, 90% less nitrogen, and 90% less phosphorus. This will allow for snowmaking as a reuse option, preventing direct discharge into the Gallatin. Soon, the Yellowstone Club will have the systems in place to take advantage of this opportunity, and we continue to work closely with Big Sky Resort to study the feasibility of a similar process on their terrain.

In addition to the upgraded treatment plant in Big Sky, the creation of the Gallatin Canyon Water and Sewer District allows for centralized collection and treatment of wastewater in the developing area south of the Lone Mountain Road junction, another win for the Gallatin and focus of the Watershed Stewardship Plan. 🏡



DAVE PECUNIES

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

RESTORING THE RIVER

This year marked another huge step forward for our restoration efforts along the Gallatin and its tributaries. While most work was completed on the Upper Deer Creek project in 2020, we put the finishing touches on over the summer, planting and watering native vegetation and installing interpretative signage along the accessible trail and fishing platform.

In the West Fork drainage, we completed the first of five projects along the Middle Fork as it flows out of Lake Levinsky, working with our partners at Big

Sky Resort and Trout Unlimited. Together we installed beaver-dam analogs and post-assisted log structures that will slow the flow of water through a formerly channelized section of the stream. After just a few short days, it was already possible to see pools of cold water temporarily impounded behind vegetation harvested on site, mimicking natural conditions engineered by beavers.

These projects represent two of the nearly 100 we plan to execute over the next ten years.

► Photos top to bottom: Volunteers plant riparian vegetation at Upper Deer Creek; An angler and her dog enjoy Deer Creek's new sustainable access trail. Photos courtesy of the Task Force.

▲ Restoration and re-vegetation at Upper Deer Creek.

CHRIS KAMMAN

RYAN TURNER

WILD & SCENIC FOREVER

In June, Senator Jon Tester reintroduced the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, a Wild and Scenic Rivers bill that would protect up to 39 miles of the Gallatin, 17 miles of the Taylor Fork, and 329 total miles of stream throughout the Treasure State.

As members of the Montanans for Healthy Rivers coalition, we've long advocated for Wild and Scenic on the Gallatin, and we're grateful to Senator Tester for prioritizing this made-in-Montana legislation.

As a Wild and Scenic river, the Gallatin would enjoy the nation's highest conservation designation, ensuring its protection for generations to come. With Climate Change an imminent threat, we must take whatever steps possible to safeguard the Gallatin. As the only river conservation organization focused solely on the upper Gallatin, the Task Force will continue pushing for the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act until it is signed into law. Add your endorsement today at healthyriversmt.org.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

While reducing our consumptive water use is essential to protecting the Gallatin, conservation alone is not enough. We must also find ways to reuse treated wastewater and recycle it through the natural hydrologic system.

In 2021, major progress was made on this front, including the creation of the Gallatin Canyon Water and Sewer District, construction of the new Big Sky Water and Sewer District treatment plant, and permit approval for snowmaking using treated wastewater at the Yellowstone Club. The Task Force has long advocated for all of these outcomes as they each represent wins for the Gallatin River.

A new treatment plant in Big Sky will result in higher quality wastewater being used for irrigation, cutting down on pollutants entering our creeks and the river and allowing for other types of wastewater recycling. That same wastewater will soon be used for snowmaking at the Yellowstone Club, expanding reuse options and allowing for natural storage of water as snow. And the new district in Gallatin Canyon allows for future central wastewater collection, reducing reliance on inadequate septic systems currently harming water quality in this section of the Gallatin River corridor.

Taken together, these victories show how proactive water management can protect the Gallatin River while Big Sky continues to grow.



▲ Development adjacent to the Gallatin poses a threat to river health, unless we proactively manage wastewater through centralized collection and treatment. The new Gallatin Canyon Water and Sewer District makes that a possibility.

CHRIS KAMMAN

MANY HANDS, LIGHT WORK

The old adage is true: many hands do make light work. But that doesn't mean our annual river cleanup outcome was any less impressive. Together with our partners at the Gallatin Watershed Council, we successfully collected and properly disposed of 2,180 pounds of trash, keeping it out of the river and on its way to the landfill.

In total, 135 volunteers committed to cleaning up the Gallatin's riverbanks, with teams spread out from the Yellowstone National Park boundary to the Spanish Creek confluence. In the valley, the Gallatin Watershed Council led crews of their own to level-up our impact.





CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHT

TROUT FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING

Did you know that water use increases seven times in the summer compared to winter, even though visitation to Big Sky is far higher during ski season? The reason: landscaping irrigation.

Across the upper Gallatin watershed, homeowners and businesses use fresh water to keep their lawns green and lush throughout the summer season, but this use is sucking our groundwater resources dry, and threatening the health of the Gallatin River.

Underground aquifers supply water to our homes through our community water systems and our individual wells. These same aquifers feed surface waters like the South Fork, Middle Fork, West Fork, and main stem Gallatin. The more water we withdraw from these aquifers to water our lawns, the less there is in the Gallatin come August and September. These low flows can be harmful to trout as water temperatures rise, and they can even contribute to nuisance algae blooms.

That’s the bad news.

The good news is the Task Force has a simple solution: plant a trout-friendly landscape. By selecting native wildflowers, grasses, and hedges, you can significantly cut back on your water use, while restoring habitat for insects, birds, and other wildlife.

To incentivize your switch, we’ve launched a Trout-Friendly Landscaping program. Now, homeowners and businesses can work to reduce their

▲ Landscaping with native grasses, flowers, and hedges reduces water use and limits harmful fertilizers.

landscaping irrigation, conserving vital fresh water, and get recognized for their efforts. The Task Force will provide a step-by-step guide to facilitate the transition. As the program grows, we hope to provide lawn-swapping kits full of native wildflower seeds for use in your garden.

Since initiating the Trout Friendly platform, dozens of homeowners and several homeowners’ associations have

made the switch. While we love to see this progress, we look forward to more residents taking the Trout Friendly pledge. Just one individual trout friendly landscape can save 630 gallons of water a day, or 10,000 gallons a summer. While ensuring adequate flows in the Gallatin should be incentive enough, participants also save hundreds of dollars on their water bill and countless hours of lawn maintenance. 🏡

Campaign HIGHLIGHT

FOCUS

Reduce consumptive fresh water use and limit nutrient-heavy fertilizer application.

HIGHLIGHTS

Since inception, 29 homeowners and 3 homeowners associations have taken the Trout Friendly Pledge.

What are you waiting for? Switch to Trout Friendly today.



THE ANGLER SCIENTIST

A CONVERSATION WITH MIKE RICHTER

If you want insights into the conditions of the Gallatin River watershed, there's no better source than a scientist who is also an avid angler. For the better part of a decade, the Task Force has relied on such a source to help guide our conservation mission.

Mike Richter, long-time Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) groundwater specialist and secretary of the Gallatin River Task Force board has seen it all, ever since he arrived in Big Sky in the 1990s.

"I came here to snowboard," Mike says as we sit on his porch nestled in the timber just above the banks of the Gallatin. "But once you live here a little bit, you might as well

start fishing—there's a different river every 45 minutes!"

Like many of us, it was Lone Peak that drew Mike to Big Sky, but the Gallatin that convinced him to stay. "Fishing is such a great way to get to know a river, and I got sucked in big time. The amazing thing about the Gallatin is that the fishing is good everywhere. There's over 100 miles of good fish habitat, but my favorite sections now are the ones away from the roads."

It's precisely that good fish habitat Mike is passionate about protecting, and he has had a front-row seat to the show, studying groundwater trends for MBMG. "There are some areas in Big Sky with increasing nitrate levels," he says, "and fish need clean water. The biggest single thing that could potentially

help that is the new treatment plant."

The new treatment plant that Mike is referring to is the Big Sky Water and Sewer District plant that will radically improve the quality of wastewater, a significant pollutant in the upper river watershed. The new plant will reduce bacteria in effluent by 90%, phosphorus by 99%, and nitrogen by 99%, allowing for new reuse options that will bolster water supply as consumption increases and Climate Change drives ever-worsening drought.

This applied knowledge is what made Mike so valuable to the Task Force, and continues to make him an asset to Gallatin River health. His countless hours on the river as an angler provide strong anecdotal evidence that something is eschew, but he has the decades of scientific inquiry to back it all up.

In many ways, Mike personifies the Task Force's approach to conservation and natural-resource management. He's excited about the potential solutions to our biggest environmental challenges, but knows it's up to the community to protect the Gallatin, sometimes from the people who love it most.

"The access is so good, that it's almost too good," Mike says. "The Deer Creek project is a great example of protecting people from themselves—good access at either end with a trail in between. The old days were great but the use has increased to the point that a lot of the access points are a mess."

This access model protects riparian areas adjacent to the river's edge while improving recreation infrastructure,

such as the accessible fishing platform and hard-surface boat launch. In the coming decade, the Task Force hopes to implement 100 similar projects throughout the Gallatin River corridor.

For Richter, access isn't the only factor damaging the Gallatin. In fact from a water quality standpoint, it's somewhere in the middle of the list. "There are so many different sources of pollution, we don't know what that tipping point is," he explains. "These systems are so complex, and we are developing so fast, good luck ever fully understanding them."

While that might sound like hopelessness, it's actually guarded optimism. "We're counting on people to

do the right thing, for everybody to do the best that they can," Mike continues. "The Task Force is staffed with great people that actually care, but it is really an uphill battle. We're already seeing impacts to the base flows of these streams, and a small reduction in your aquifer storage will have a disproportionately large impact on the base flows of springs." And consequently, base flows of the Gallatin.

So, what's the solution?

"This scenario has played out in every other booming mountain town," Mike continues. "But how do we stop it from happening here? Is it true that to save the river, we must first destroy it? You would hope that the algae blooms would

▲ Richter assists with the Task Force's Fly Fishing Camp, educating the next generation of anglers about the importance of water conservation.



▲ Richter monitoring groundwater wells adjacent to the Big Sky golf course.



▲ Tracking groundwater levels provides insights into how consumptive use impacts in-stream flows.

trigger a higher level of regulation or development limitations by your county and state regulators, but in Montana, that doesn't seem to be the case. A lot of this is falling on this little local nonprofit to try to do something. It's an uphill battle, but it's going to come down to the developers, homeowners' associations, and even individuals doing the right thing.

"Hold new development to a higher standard. Get as much of our wastewater into that new state-of-the-art treatment plant as we can. Spend Resort Tax money on environmental solutions instead of more marketing. Xeriscape and conserve water. Don't use a bunch of fertilizers on lawns and golf courses. Cover and compost livestock manure away from streams. Maintain septic systems, or better yet get rid of them and hook up to the treatment plant.

"To avoid the catastrophe, we have to get people to not waste water—individuals and the big players. All these things add up, but consumptive water use could be Big Sky's biggest challenge, and the big one is irrigation."

In the summer, Big Sky's water usage spikes dramatically, primarily because people are watering their lawns. "Most of that water's leaving—kiss it goodbye," Mike says. "The grass is sucking it up, and it evaporates on a hot day. Poof! Gone."

Because irrigation is a mostly consumptive use of water, Mike is encouraged by recent progress on centralized collection of wastewater and the upgraded treatment plant. "Reuse this wastewater in the smartest way that we can. Groundwater discharge of treated effluent potentially has a real use in Big Sky because that water is headed to your stream via the shallow groundwater system, and if it's been treated to a really high level, then it's an asset rather than a pollutant. Using this water where it's going to have another go around in

the groundwater and stream system is going to be important—call it groundwater catch and release."

Here, it's easy to see how Mike's technical experience informs his stance on local water-management decisions, and how these decisions will impact the river that he loves. It should come as no surprise that he is encouraged by the progress being made. After all, he helped shape the policies and strategies the Task Force is now implementing.

**LIKE MANY OF US, IT WAS
LONE PEAK THAT DREW
MIKE TO BIG SKY, BUT THE
GALLATIN THAT CONVINCED
HIM TO STAY. "FISHING IS
SUCH A GREAT WAY TO GET
TO KNOW A RIVER, AND I
GOT SUCKED IN BIG TIME."**

As we prepare to part ways, he leaves me with one more nugget of wisdom. "It's a resilient system, and that's motivation to keep working on it. If you live in this watershed, your actions as an individual actually do matter. It's the people that are gonna wreck this thing or save it—and don't forget to get out and go fishing. It's still damn good if you can find a parking spot!" 🐟

Mike Richter retired from the Gallatin River Task Force board of directors in 2021. He spends many a summer day on the Gallatin, but good luck finding him.



JOYFUL WARRIORS

▲ John and Margie Regan perform watershed-monitoring duties as volunteers with the Task Force.

TASK FORCE VOLUNTEERS REFLECT ON GIVING BACK TO THE GALLATIN

This summer, we were joined on our monitoring missions by two enthusiastic and engaging volunteers, the kind of folks that inspire us in our work and enable our conservation mission. John and Margie Regan spent hours with us on the Gallatin, collecting water samples, restoring habitat, and learning the ropes of fishing this blue-ribbon waterway. We can't thank them—

and all of our volunteers—enough for their commitment to this river, nor can we undervalue their contribution to protecting it for future generations. See what they have to say about why they volunteer, and why you should too.

GRTF: Why the Task Force? There are so many worthy nonprofits in the area, what drew you to volunteering for the Gallatin?

J&M: As a result of visiting and now living in Bozeman, we've come to recognize that the Gallatin River is a precious resource that plays a pivotal role within a much larger community. This part will only become more important for future generations. So it seemed imperative to offer our time to help preserve a river which, under no circumstances, can be neglected or abused. Having said that,

we chose the Gallatin River Task Force specifically because from our first activity with them, the staff made us feel welcome, appreciated and have taken the time to teach us so much about the river and their work to protect it. We've participated in a bunch of activities this year including habitat restoration, water monitoring, and even fishing classes. Each one has been interesting, informative, and a lot of fun.

WE'VE COME TO
RECOGNIZE THAT THE
GALLATIN RIVER IS A
PRECIOUS RESOURCE
THAT PLAYS A PIVOTAL
ROLE WITHIN A MUCH
LARGER COMMUNITY

GRTF: What did you learn in your time on the river this summer? Was there anything that particularly surprised you?

J&M: To the casual observer, a river is just water running down a canyon. However, we learned this summer that the Gallatin River and adjacent riparian areas form a complex interconnected ecosystem. Without protection and care, the river's health can quickly deteriorate,



DAVE PECUNIES

leading to problems for the river, wildlife, and all of us who recreate there. Among the most surprising things we learned were how important the riparian areas, even though they are small, are to the overall health of a river and that algae blooms can be a significant problem on the Gallatin. Our appreciation of how the water, fish, aquatic insects, and land are intimately interconnected has definitely grown.

GRTF: What was your favorite part of volunteering for the Task Force?

J&M: Our favorite part of volunteering was definitely moving up the learning curve to get a better appreciation of a healthy river. We are both scientists by training and enjoyed the opportunity to learn about and actually help monitor and maintain the river’s water quality, as well as the flora and fauna surrounding it. The Task Force members are excellent, patient teachers and their passion for the outdoors and protecting the Gallatin is always evident. We truly enjoyed spending time with them and other volunteers learning and having fun during each outing!

GRTF: Have you always loved rivers? Are you able to enjoy the Gallatin much in your free time?

J&M: A love of rivers must be nearly universal—it’s hard to remain unmoved when standing on the banks of a beautiful river. We enjoyed fishing prior to moving to Bozeman, however the sheer beauty of the Gallatin River and its fishing opportunities puts it in a class of its own. Our work with the Task Force has led us to new places to fish and we’ve taken the opportunity to revisit as many of them this summer with our fishing gear as possible.

GRTF: If you could change one thing about the current condition of the Gallatin, what would it be?

J&M: The low water levels and high temperatures seen this summer are very concerning for the future health of the river and fish. We recognize that these likely represent long-term issues brought about in part by climate change and that they will require action on a global, national, and local level. We hope that we can continue to do our part to help with local efforts so that the Gallatin is in good shape for future generations.

GRTF: What do you hope to contribute through volunteering for the river?

J&M: We hope to show our care and concern for the river and the plants, animals, and people it supports. Our hope is that our contributions, whether planting trees, gathering scientific data, or helping in other ways, will help to secure the health of the river and riparian areas for the next generation of river lovers. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all work together to leave them a river that is even better protected and healthier than it is today?

GRTF: If you were trying to convince a new acquaintance to join in on a water monitoring week next summer, what would your pitch be?

J&M: We would tell them that a week of volunteering on the river is better than a semester at college. They will learn new skills and lots of river facts, and get an appreciation of the complex dynamics of the river ecosystem that will last a lifetime. They’ll also have lots of fun enjoying nature and being with great people. And lastly, there are no tests! 🐟



▲ Volunteers Margie and John Regan collect algae samples along the main stem Gallatin.

THANK YOU DONORS & SUPPORTERS

Protecting the Gallatin is a community effort, and our community continues to step up to the challenge year after year. Thank you to everyone who gave generously over the last year. Together, we'll keep the Gallatin cold and clean for future generations.

\$5,000+

Anonymous Donor
Barrows-Flanagan Family Fund
Big Sky PBR
Big Sky Resort Area District
Bill Bruner
Bozeman Health
Bud the Wonder Dog Fund
Eric Ladd
Gallatin River Guides
Highline Partners
James Corwin Fine Art
Jane Griffith
Jay & Kelly Jacobs
Jeffrey Kelter
Jones Family Gift Fund
Kara & Mark Edgar
Lone Mountain Land Company
Madison County
Margaret & Chuck Buker
Marilyn Flint
Martin & Kathy Dudley
Mike & Andrea Scholz
Mike & Sue Arneson
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Montana Watershed Coordination Council
Moonlight Community Foundation
Nancy Hagen
National Forest Foundation
Oleg Nodelman
Outlaw Partners
Rick & Michelle Donaldson
Robert & Diana Carter
Rocchio Family Foundation
Samuel T. Byrne
Sara Sipe
Sarah Blechta
Spanish Peaks
Community Foundation
Ted & Erica Pappendick
The Collins Family
Tim McKenna
Trout Unlimited
United States Forest Service - Custer Gallatin
W. Hardy Eshbaugh
William Eelkema
Yellowstone Club
Community Foundation
Yellowstone Club Development

\$1,000+

ACE Hardware Big Sky
AE2S
Alan & Rebecca Johnson
Andrew Schreiner
Ania Bulis
Anonymous Donor
Ashley Quande
Becky & Gerald Pape
Betsey & David Stewart
Betsy & Peter Snow
Big Sky Conoco
Big Sky Shuttle
Big Sky Vacation Rentals
Bill Morton
Bill Rode
Bob & Jana Norton
Bob & Sandy Young
Bozeman Spirits
Callie & Dave Pecunies
Carolyn & Scott Heppel
Carrie Morgridge
Cathy & Doug DeVries
Cheryl & Roger Ladd
Christian Community Foundation

Ciara & Michael Wolfe
Curtis Wilson
Dave Pecunies Photography
David & Katherine Linden
Emily & Matt Tracy
Ennion Williams
Eric Leffers
First Security Bank
Gavin Falk
George Hill
Geyser Whitewater Expeditions
Grand Teton Fly Fishing
Greg & Cori Murphy
Gregory Bennis
Haas Builders
Heather & Kevin Budd
Heather Rapp Artist
Hollis Shaw
Hungry Moose
Jamie & Kristen Browne
Jason & Karin Mittelstaedt
Jason Cummins
Jay Reader
JeNelle Johnson & Fred Orgas
Joe Miller
Joel Walberg
John & Katharine Stowe
John & Vanessa McGuire
John Calnan
Julie Chapman
Karlie Roland Fly Fishing
Katie Fletcher
Kira Fercho
Knight Foundation
Laura Sacchi

Linda Meade & Jack Luechtefeld
Lisa Radick
Lone Peak Physical Therapy
Marjorie Jordan
Mark Maruszewski
Martha Crocker
Matt & Sheena Kidd
Matt Daniels
Matt Johnson
Michael Jacquard
Michael Piper
Michael Thomas
Mike & Kirsten King
Mindy Espinosa
Miranda Ming
Natalie's Estate Winery
Northwestern Energy
Paul Shlee
Peter Mathieson
Quint & Cicely Drennan
REI
Reid Smith Architects
Rich & Lori Addicks
Rick & Melinda Reed
Rob & Liz McRae
Robert & Bonnie Donner & Wolff
Ryan Newcomb
Ryan Turner Photography
Sara Pierson
Scott & Pam Altman
Shelly Bermont Jewlery
Snow Family
Steve & Carolyn Jones
Steve Sweningson

Stuart & Mindy Goldberg
Taylor & Stephanie Kissell
The Wilson Hotel
Tim & Peggy Kunkel
Todd Mohr
Tom & Kay Reeves
Ursula & Kevin Corgan
William & Cathleen Osborn
Yellowstone Scenic Tours

Up to \$1,000

Aaron Scifres
Adventure Outfitting
Aimee Gordon
Alan McClain
Albert Lockwood
Alexandra Isern
Alexandra Putnam
All Saints Big Sky
Allison Scumaci
Amazon Smile
Amy Smith
Andrei & Allison Oros
Andrew Flood
Andrew Kick
Andy Sriubas
Angela Staup
Angi Turner
Anna Schweissinger
Anonymous Donor
Audrey Ruggieri
Austin Meyers
Barbara & Mark Lunney & Fisher
Barbara French

GIVING BACK TO THE GALLATIN

TASK FORCE DONORS ON WHY THEY SUPPORT RIVER CONSERVATION



KEVIN BARTON

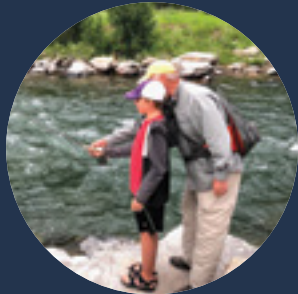
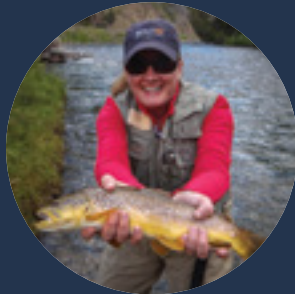
Thinking back on my nearly 50-year history with the Gallatin River and its tributaries, I am struck by the amount of development, too often at the expense of this very limited resource. Big Sky has been put on the global map, which has been fantastic for our economic prosperity, but that prosperity comes at the expense of some of the natural glory that brought us here in the first place. I see the efforts of the Gallatin River Task Force as essential to saving this resource.



ALAN & BECKY JOHNSON

Preserving the river and its tributaries is one of the most important legacies we can leave for our children, grandchildren, and their children. We want future generations of our family to enjoy the river as much as we have. Much of my childhood was spent picnicking and fishing along the Gallatin River, as my parents shared their love of the outdoors with my siblings and me. We've had the privilege of watching our children and now our grandchildren create those same memories.

We support the Task Force because of their vigilant stewardship of the Gallatin River Watershed. We have confidence in their proven ability to make a positive impact on the river and to preserve water resources in Big Sky. The team at GRTF is highly skilled and energized for action—they know how to get the job done!



- Barbara Van Erp

Barry Sturges

Bayard Dominick

Ben Almy

Betsey French-Biggerstaff

Betty Steffens

Big Sky Fitness Fusion & Pilates LLC

Big Sky Resort

Bill Baskin

Bill Dryer

Bill Watson

Blair Mohn

Blue Ribbon Nets

Bob & Jane Sauerberg/Kennedy

Bonnie Gebhardt

Brad Clemens

Brammie Cook

Brandy Moses Straub

Brendan O'Connor

Brian & Michelle Rayner

Brian Hamill

Brian Hill

Brian Hurlbut

Brian Long

Brian Mitchell

Bruce & Galen Campbell

Bruce James

Cal Thomas

Careen Little

Carli Stensrud

Carol & Bert Bennett
- Caroline Campbell

Caroline Henley

Caroline Sielschott

Carolyn & Terry O'Neill

Carrie Hammond

Caryl & James Dearing

Catharine Lentz

Catherine Gorman & Tim Cyr

Cathy Castaneda

Cathy Popp Hoffman

Charles Callander

Charles Miller

Chris Bruner

Chris McCloud

Chris Stamp

Christa Moran

Christina Julian

Christine Alexander

Christine Sundnas

Christopher Blair

Christopher Dunkerson

Claire Pedrick

Clyde & Janet Folley

Cody Stender

Colleen & Jon Dudley

Colleen Helm

Connie & Chris Lunt

Connor Wager

Conrad Hooge & Kathy Colwell

Cora Rajola

Courtney Collins

Curt Oberg

Cyndee & Stan Button

Three generations of the Johnson family have enjoyed the Gallatin; Alan and Becky, their daughter Amanda, and her son Sam are all stewards of this special place. Photos courtesy Alan and Becky Johnson.

- Cynthia & CL Miiller

Cynthia & George Hearon

Cynthia May

Dan Andersohn

Dane Smith

Daniel Bierschwale

Daniel Freeman

Dave & Linda Harder

David & Betsy Quammen

David Blesch

David Cohen

David Osterberg

Debbie Crowther

Debby & David Kvam

Deborah & Mark Stannard

Debra Bell

Debra Lewis

Dee-O-Gee

Deirdre Quinn

Denise Kestner

Don Leeke

Doug & Sarah Crowther

Doyle & Kim Ranstrom

Duncan & Eva Patten

Ed Hawthorne

Elizabeth & Jed Hogan

Elizabeth Brennan

Elizabeth Geiger

Elizabeth McFadden & Philip Fluke

Elizabeth Peyton

Emily & Joe O'Connor

Emily Casey

Emma Yourd

Eric & Shannon Becker

Eric Bertelson
- Erin & Scott Ferrell

Erin Cluff

Ethan Caldwell

Fletcher & Kim Moppert

Gallatin Canyon Women's Club

Gallatin International LLC

Gary Kachadurian

Glenn & Mary Richter

Gloria & John Burgos

Glynnis Harvey

Grace Pepin

Grant & Fern Hilton

Greg Bauso

Greg Tovar

Gregory Alff

Gretchen Fay

Guido Mosca

Hamp Atkinson

Herbert & Ann Lewis

Isabella Vendramin

Jack & Carol McGuire

James Azzolini

James Goodrich

Jana & John Bounds & Derby

Jane & William Pasich

Jane Ward

Janet & Mike Lampe & Malmanus

Jared Tausig

Jean Behr

Jeanne Irwin

Jeff Carrell

Jeff Lake

Jennifer & Jeremy Stark

Jennifer Mathiowetz

Jenny & Jay Leopold



DAVID BLESCH

The Gallatin has been at the center of many fond memories of fly-fishing adventures over the years for my family. When my mother passed away unexpectedly in 2020, I knew a memorial fund to the Task Force in her name would be a great way to honor her memory and that of my father and brother who passed before her. Through my financial support and volunteer time with the Task Force, I believe I am doing my part to ensure the Gallatin is protected for future generations.

- Jenny Mummert

Jerry Scott

Jessica Martin-Trulen

Jessica Olson

Jill Flyckt

Joanna & Don Erickson/Angelos

Joanne Pallo

JoDean & Doug Bing
- Jodi & Kevin Daily

John & Armella Pierce

John & Marguerite Blangiardo

John & Nancy Cook

John Haas

John Kern

John Lahey

John Peregrin



NANCY HAGEN

“The importance of an environment that supports clean water cannot be understated. It impacts all walks of life.

Human consumption of fresh water and production of wastewater in our Big Sky ecosystem must find balance. Our work now will ensure the health and enjoyment of our river for future generations of humans and wildlife.

John, Bonnie & Hannah Hyun
Jon & Sharon Holtzman
Jonathan Gans
Joseph & Peggy Atkinson/Hanley
Joseph Zink
Joy Rogers
Karen & Curtis Steele
Karen & Scott Amero
Karen Olson
Kari & Leo Ness

Kate & Rick Tomkinson
Katharine & Kenneth Goetz
Katherine Foley
Kathryn Bell
Kathryn Szumki
Katie Alvin
Kayla Darini
Kayte Kaminski
Ken Burgwin & Joanna McCoy
Ken Ketchum
Kenneth & Kimberly Johnson

Kent & Kathleen Hansen
Kent Volosin
Kevin Jones
Kevin Sullivan
Kimberly Small
Kimbie Noble
Krista Lee & Geoff Evams/Lane
Kristin Drain
Kristin Gardner & Jeremy Harder
Kurt Reinhard
Langlas & Associates
Lani Curtis
Larry & Carol Adelman
Laura Brin
Laura Schilke
Laura Seyfang
Lauren Knox
Lee Lewis
Lesha Neidert
Lisa & Fred Teifke
Lisa Gerrard
Lisa Goschen
Lisa Neumann
Lissa Villanueva
Lone Mountain Ranch
Loran & Robert Morse
Lori Elliott
Louis Kwall
Luke & Gabrielle Torres/Wirth
Luke & Kathleen Newcomb
Lynn Hudson
Mac Warfield
Madison Lawton
Maggie Biggerstaff
Maggie Luchini
Margot Ogburn

Marilyn & BW Perk Hoecker
Marilyn Hill
Mark & Gay Berg
Mark & Pam McCurley
Mark Engle
Marla Ganoom
Mary Grundman
Mary Lou Schreiner
Mary O'Connell
Mary Pat & Jim Harris
Matt & Heather Morris
Matt Tyson
Matt Walker
Matthew Lydens
Max Haller
Megan Anderson
Megan Mohn
Mel Field
Michael Klechefski
Michael Nichols
Michael Whalen
Michelle Kristula-Green
Mike & Jodi Richter
Mike Cimonetti
Mike Myer
Mike Rotar
Miriam Schmidt
Monica Bowes
Nancy A. Flikkema
Nathaniel Miller
Neil Kochenour
Nelda Zilis
Nicole, Seth, Logan, & Liam Barker
Owen Legacy Group
Padraic Stoy
Paige Brown

Pat & Carol Collins
Pat Lapekas
Patrick McClellan Fine Art
Paul Farrell
Paul Mann
Paul Wulf
Perri Harmon
Pete Bell
Peter Freund
Peter Johnson
Phil & Gay Moppert
Philip & Lori Keipper
PJ Bell
Pollard Hotel
Rachel Azzolini
Rachel Hicks
Renaë & Steve Schumacher
Rene Kraus
Rich Baumann
Rich Chandler
Richard & Phoebe McEldowney

Richard Pemberton
Rick Hamm
Rick O'Connell
Rob & San Goveia
Robert & Barbara Vanyo
Robert & Jeanne Lang
Rod & Lori Ray
Ron Boggs
Rowan Wren
Roxy's Market
Rumsey Young
Sabrina Torrado
Sarah Howell
Sarah King
Scott Bosse
Sean Slade
Shane McKay
Shannon & Sarah Odom
Shannon Hanssler
Sharon & Carl Warren
Shirley Schwartz

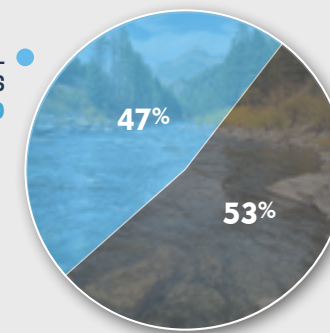
Sierra Harris
Silas Jones
Skylar Bradley
Stacey Fancher
Stacie Bruno
Stephanie Desmarais
Stephanie Quinn
Stephen & Teri Kendziorski
Stephen Dolan
Steven Mandurano
Stewart Peacock
Susan & Benjamin Vendramin
Tana & Dan Sholly
Tatianna Marku
The Rocks Tasting Room
Thomas Hawkins
Thomas Middleton
Tim Kirley
Tim Mayeda
Todd & LeAnn Shaw
Todd Davis

Todd Van Kekerix
Tom Dolan
Tommy Filop
Toni Delzer
Toni Lucker
Tracey Flynn
Treston Wold
Troy & Megan Paulson
Tucker Harris
Uncle Dan's Cookies
Valley of the Flowers
Vanessa Wilson
Vicki & James Erickson
Walker Bagby
Walter & Cassidy Brophy
Walter & Nancy Schroth
Wendi Urie
Wesley Overvold
Will & Whitney Littman
Zenalou Bennis

TASK FORCE FINANCIALS

INCOME: **\$777,741**

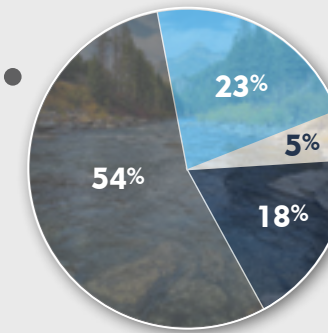
INDIVIDUAL
DONORS
\$362,140



PRIVATE
& PUBLIC
GRANTS
\$415,601

EXPENSES: **\$937,909***

CONSERVATION
& RESTORATION
\$510,075



ADMIN &
FUNDRAISING
\$212,116

WATERSHED
MONITORING
\$46,895

EDUCATION,
OUTREACH &
ADVOCACY
\$168,823

** Includes expenses associated with previously recognized revenue from our Gallatin River Forever campaign.*

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

Vision: *A healthy Gallatin River Watershed for future generations*



GallatinRiverTaskForce.org | (406) 993-2519