



Annual Report 2022
gallatinrivertaskforce.org

FOR THE RIVER



gallatinrivertaskforce.org

TASK FORCE

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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

Photo credits: Cove photo by Ryan Turner. Additional photos throughout provided by Dave Pecunies, David Tucker, and Rich Addicks.



A VISION OF HOPE FOR THE GALLATIN:

For the River. This is our pledge launched this summer, through a campaign focused on elevating the message about the value of the Gallatin River, our efforts to protect and preserve this treasured resource, and our goals to engage a strong and dedicated bank of community stewards to join us in our work.

We all have a connection to the Gallatin River; a memory, an experience, a first impression or a lasting discovery. The Gallatin River Task Force's team is no different, and that is what guides our role and responsibility every day for the Gallatin.

Over the past year, our efforts have included monitoring and mitigating nuisance algae blooms, creating resiliency of our waters to drought and development pressure, and reducing degradation occurring from increased recreational use on our rivers and streams.

Our hope is that by creating a pledge, we are encouraging a commitment to address these challenges that face the river with as much passion and purpose as we carry when we face our love of it.

Although these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. With an engaged community that practices stewardship - working together, thinking proactively, acting mindfully, and designing projects purposefully; at the end of the day, we will all make a difference for the Gallatin.

On behalf of the Gallatin River Task Force, we are deeply grateful to all who have contributed to our successes over the past year, whether through time, or investment. **Together we can make a difference, For the River.**

Kristin Gardner, Chief Executive & Science Officer

Ennion Williams, Board Chair



HOW YOU'VE GIVEN

Our work does not succeed without your broad support. Contributions from people and partners within the community are paramount to our progress and to the future health of the Gallatin River. The strides made for the river in 2022 were a result of your investments of time, money, and committing to a healthy and viable watershed.

In 2022:

- You supported us with roughly **\$195,000 in individual donations**
- **Raised over \$200,000** at our fundraising events
- **Over 140 volunteered** for our program work & clean up days
- **215 signed our pledge For the River**
- **Collected over 2000 pounds of trash**, keeping the Gallatin river watershed clean & beautiful

FOR THE RIVER PLEDGE

The Gallatin requires mindful, intentional practices of us to ensure its future health.

We invite you to take the pledge:

I support a clean and healthy Gallatin River. I champion the work of the Gallatin River Task Force and commit to doing my part to conserve, protect, and restore the Gallatin River. This includes putting the Gallatin first, recreating responsibly, mindfully conserving water, advocating for the river, and encouraging my friends and family to do the same.

Montana boasts some of the most beautiful public lands and rivers in the world, and I understand how important it is to protect and conserve our outdoor spaces for future generations. The world-class Gallatin River is a treasured resource in Montana, and specifically in Big Sky and the Gallatin Valley.

The river is vital to our outdoor economy, aquatic life, water supply, ranching and agriculture. Now, more than ever, the Gallatin River and its headwaters are facing increased threats from impacts of pollutants, climate change, rapid growth and visitation, and drought.

This pledge is my commitment to actively and mindfully participate in support of projects and initiatives that help protect the Gallatin River.

Visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org/take-the-pledge and commit to supporting today.

STATE OF THE GALLATIN

Monitoring water quality and quantity on the Gallatin River is the foundational piece of our work. Strategic monitoring is conducted annually to ensure we have the data that provides an accurate picture of the river's health for a snapshot in time, as well as how it varies over weeks, months, and years. This data is used to inform priorities that will ensure a healthy Gallatin for you and generations to come.

MAP OF MONITORING SITES



Legend	
●	Gallatin River sites
●	West Fork sites
●	Taylor Fork sites

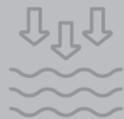
IMPORTANT FINDINGS FROM OUR MONITORING WORK IN 2022:



Widespread nuisance algae blooms did occur in the Gallatin, South Fork, West Fork & Taylor Fork



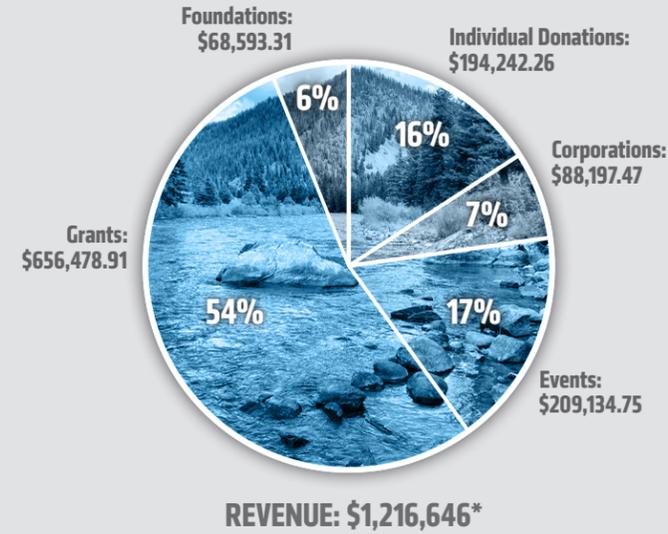
Water temperatures were cool the first half of the summer & **became concerning in August**, resulting from an abundance of bright, warm, sunny days in July



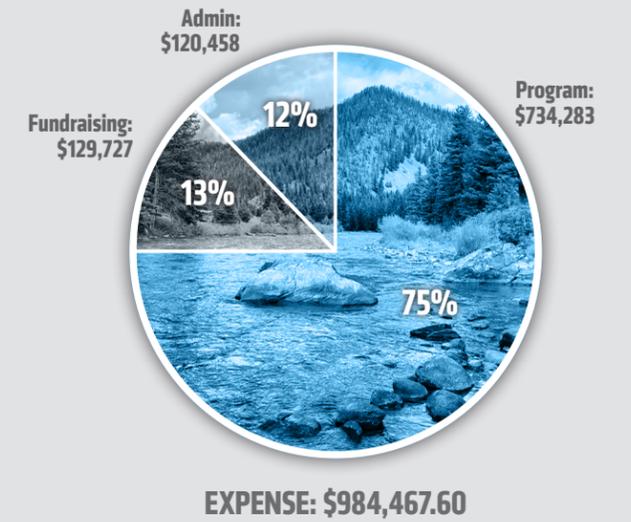
Streamflows were above historic averages in early summer, falling below average by late summer due to a lack of rainfall

For more details on our water monitoring report, visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org/watershed-science.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOTS



*\$184,000 added into reserves as cushion against unexpected events & unbudgeted expenses



IN 2022, 75% OF FUNDING WENT TO PROGRAMMING





TOGETHER WITH YOUR HELP AND INVESTMENTS, WE SUCCEEDED IN:

Implementing the first process-based restoration project on the Middle Fork of the Gallatin River, in partnerships with Big Sky Resort & Trout Unlimited, relying on human labor & natural materials to accelerate recovery of the degraded stream.

This resulted in:



420 feet of stream miles improved



1 acre of wetland/riparian habitat made more resilient



4 beaver dam analog structures installed



5 post assisted log structures installed



Advocating for

- **State impairment designation for the Upper Gallatin** to identify restoration & management activities that would address nuisance algae blooms
- **The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act** to fight for the highest level of federal protection for the Gallatin River



Completing a Gallatin River Restoration Strategy to guide river access & ecological restoration work for the next 10-15 years

- **Restoring 91 sites over a stretch of 45 miles**



ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

A healthy and resilient river system is sustained through a principled approach to watershed stewardship. This includes combining human activities and natural processes that maintain and enhance stream, riparian and wetland conditions, ensuring water remains clean and cold. Our focus this year included tracking water quality trends to provide consistent baseline information and to fill data gaps. We continued advancing our on-the-ground restoration projects, participated in solutions for holistic water and wastewater management, and grew our partnerships in the conservation network to advocate for river protections.

“The Gallatin River is a tremendous natural resource that requires management. This is why it’s so important for us to protect this river for future generations.”

-Taylor Kissell



Advancing designs for Porcupine/Beaver Creek & 20 river access parking areas to protect sensitive streamside areas



Completing an inventory of septic systems to quantify pollution sources & prioritize service areas for the Gallatin Canyon Water & Sewer District





WATER SUPPLY RESILIENCY

Understanding where our water comes from is equally important to understanding how our sources of water are consumed, collected and recycled. These patterns and connections between community water consumption, water recycling and the water in our rivers, streams and groundwater aquifers are key in developing the community's water resilience so that both can thrive through increased and prolonged droughts. Our work this year included elements of water conservation, researching community water supply, water conservation and drought management, raising awareness about water consumption, and exploring water reuse projects with community partners.

"We have the talent, resources, and tools necessary to confront potential threats that face the Gallatin. Our commitment to coordinating efforts and taking action today will keep our watershed healthy for future generations."

- Rick Donaldson

TOGETHER WITH YOUR HELP AND INVESTMENTS, WE SUCCEEDED IN:




Raising community awareness about the importance of water conservation through outreach & marketing in community publications & public-facing opportunities to engage



Expanding & increasing conservation rebates, providing more opportunities for engaging the community in water conservation

New rebate opportunities

- Drip Irrigation
- Turf Conversion
- Water-Wise Plants & Landscaping
- Upgraded Urinals & Flush-o-Meter Toilets

FY22 Program Highlights:

- **230,523 gallons saved**
- **39 community participants** in rebates program
- **25 upgraded fixtures installed**
- **Over 8.5 million gallons saved** since the start of the program



Top takeaways from the Big Sky Groundwater Study:

- **Snowmelt** is the most significant recharge
- **Groundwater & surface water** in the meadow village aquifer are directly connected
- **Future increases in groundwater withdrawals** are likely to reduce baseflow in the Middle Fork of the Gallatin
- **Public water supply & wastewater systems** enhance the capacity for management of the limited & vulnerable community water sources



Advancing water reuse projects that utilize snowmaking, resulting in additional water treatment & replenished water supplies





TOGETHER WITH YOUR HELP AND INVESTMENTS, WE SUCCEEDED IN:



Reaching 190 students through youth engagement activities including local summer camps, school programs, & fly-fishing events



Gathering 6 partner organizations & 51 attendees at the Headwaters Symposium to talk in detail about our work addressing challenges & solutions for the Gallatin



Launching our "For the River" campaign, collecting more than 215 names committed to doing better for the Gallatin



ENGAGED COMMUNITY

Our work is not possible in a silo, and we cannot accomplish what we do without community support. Together we create a successful path forward through outreach, education, and having the information that makes us all better steward of the Gallatin River. Our ability to make progress for the watershed depends on community buy-in, and working with a consistently engaged community through a robust variety of platforms. From community forums to panel presentations, publicity efforts and annual fundraising opportunities, we learned unequivocally that the community of Big Sky is on board to help protect the Gallatin and its tributaries, trusting us to lead the way.

"You come to this river expecting one thing, and you find something so profoundly different and amazing. It is the lifeblood of this community and we have to protect it."

- Nancy Hagen

Hosting 7 Streamside Series events that engaged roughly 50 participants throughout the summer; increasing awareness, elevating projects, & building stewardship



Hosting 230 guests at our annual Hooked on the Gallatin riverside affair, **raising \$250k** from partners and donors for restoration & conservation projects



Creating opportunities for community partners:

Engaging **140 volunteers** to help keep the Gallatin River Watershed clean

Covering 32 sections of clean up along the Gallatin, throughout the community

Collecting 166 pounds of trash during the spring Runoff Cleanoff

Saving the Gallatin from:

- 35 pounds of nitrogen
- 40 pounds of phosphorous
- 1.7 trillion fecal coliform





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