Arterial Drive on Tap for Music For the Wild

Mark your calendars, dust off your dancing shoes, and get ready for a lively evening of music, fun, and philanthropy. The Eastern Wildlands Chapter is taking over Yellowstone Valley Brewing (2123 1st Ave N., Billings, MT) on Saturday, May 18th from 5:30pm-8pm for our annual Music for the Wild event. This year we are very pleased to announce that local sensation Arterial Drive will be the musical entertainment for the evening. There will be a silent auction featuring a wide range of items donated by area businesses and individuals, as well as a raffle for an ultralight packable racks which weighs an astonishingly light two pounds.

Music for the Wild has been a popular community event for over a decade, featuring the talents of area musicians, brewers, activists, and food truck vendors. It is the primary fundraiser for the EWC and money raised at Music For the Wild is instrumental in our continued work and partnerships with others also endeavoring to preserve wild landscapes. In recent years this has included supporting research on predator populations in the Beartooth Mountains, sponsoring field studies on endemic plant communities in the Pryors, funding documentaries by local film makers, and collaborating with School District 2 on the creation of a summer outdoor education class designed to develop greater environmental literacy, land management, and conservation skills in area youth.

Admission for the event will be $15 at the door, but are available for purchase in advance online. For people with an interest in conservation, live music, local beer, and conversing with like-minded folks (or all of the above) Music for the Wild is the place to be!

MWA members, friends, volunteers, and supporters enjoy music and much, much more at the 2018 Music For the Wild event. MWA File Photo
Take a Walk on the Wild Side - Wilderness Walks 2019
by: Roger Otstot, EWC Board Chair

This year the Eastern Wildlands Chapter of the MWA has an exceptional lineup of 15 Wilderness Walks which offer a little something everyone should enjoy. If you like pristine mountain lakes check out the hike to Timberline Lake near Red Lodge. If you're fascinated by dinosaurs there will be opportunities for paleontological exploration in the badlands of Makoshika State Park and the Musselshell Breaks. There will be three hikes in the Pryor Mountains which is a tremendously special landscape. One of the annual favorite Wilderness Walks is in the Terry Badlands, an important and spectacular area. Located way off the beaten path out in the easternmost part of Montana will be a Walk in the Chalk Buttes, as well as another in the Medicine Rocks State Park. If you are in Billings, and want to something local, there will be two opportunities to do a family-friendly nature walk in the Four Dances recreation area. Alternately there are more than a hundred Wilderness Walks statewide so if you want to take a road trip there will be lots of opportunity to explore other parts of the state.

This year, the schedule and sign-ups will be a little different than in past season. There will be two seasons of Wilderness Walks and each will have a separate designated sign-up period. For MWA members, sign-ups for the Early Season (May-July) Walks will be on April 15th beginning at 9am MST; for the Late Season (Aug-Sep) Walks sign-ups will be on July 15th beginning at 9am MST. Sign-ups for the general public for the Early Season (May-July) will begin on April 29th at 9am MST; for the Late Season (Aug-Sep) will begin on July 29th at 9am MST.

Hopefully you have seen the Discover Wild Montana trail book, but if you haven’t, you can go to our website at wildmontana.org to see the opportunities for the Summer Wilderness Walks. Have fun hiking!

Follow-Up: Trails Stewardship Volunteers

Back in the January edition of the newsletter the EWC announced a newly formed Trails Stewardship committee. Volunteers on this committee would help plan, schedule, and execute stewardship and upkeep/maintenance trail projects. No prior experience is required to join the group, just a desire to have a wild experience while also helping maintain safe and easy access to our wildlands through putting in a little sweat on the trail. It is a very unique way to experience some breathtaking landscapes and trail crew participants typically report it to be both rewarding and fun.

We still welcome additional volunteers so if you’re interested please contact Aubrey Bertram, Eastern Montana Field Director at abertram@wildmontana.org.
Absaroka-Beartooth Trail Ambassadors and Trail Crew

Our friends at the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation (ABWF) invite EWC members to join them this summer as they show some love to the breathtaking AB Wilderness. The ABWF is hosting ten trail stewardship projects across the AB and they have something for just about every skill level and time commitment: from day trips to multi-night trips, from car camping to packing in with the Backcountry Horsemen. If you didn't get a spot on one of MWA's trail crews or want to do some work a little closer to home check out the ABWF's opportunities and contact Heather, ABWF program director, at heatherbrigg@gmail.com.

Not looking to get sweaty and dirty, but still want to pitch in for the AB? Check out the ABWF's Trail Ambassadors program! Trail ambassadors are volunteers stationed at busy trailheads during the summer who provide information to visitors, such as reminders of Wilderness regulations, Leave No Trace practices, and current trail condition updates. Ambassadors also help collect important data about usage for the Forest Service. Shifts are just a few hours and you pick the days you want to volunteer. All Trail Ambassadors must first complete a 1-hour training. Join us on: April 27th at 2 pm in Lion's Park during Red Lodge's Earth Day celebration; and on May 23rd at 6pm at The Base Camp in Billings. If you have more questions or want to RSVP for a training please contact Heather, ABWF program director, at heatherbrigg@gmail.com.

Spring into Summer Wilderness Walks Kick Off Events

The Eastern Wildlands Chapter is pleased to invite you to a couple fun nights of community and conversation as we celebrate the launch of another Wilderness Walks season. This year we are pleased to offer an impressive 123 Walks across the state.

The EWC is pleased to partner with Red Lodge Ales (1445 Broadway Ave, Red Lodge, MT) for a Spring into Summer event on Tuesday, April 23rd from 4pm-8pm and with Last Chance Pub & Cider Mill (2203 Montana Ave, Billings, MT) on Tuesday, April 30th from 5pm-8pm.

These gatherings are part of the statewide Spring into Summer Walks Kick-off. In addition to being an opportunity to converse with other wilderness and hiking enthusiasts all MWA members will also be able to pick up their 2019 Wilderness Walks books, packed full of all the details.

Come on down to one or both events and learn about this year’s Walks line-up and the other exciting projects and opportunities currently in the works at the MWA. There will be an chance to support the MWA by purchasing a raffle ticket for an ultralight Alpacka packable raft as well as door prizes giveaways for attendees. We hope to see you there!
Encompassing everything from soaring alpine peaks near Bozeman to sandstone outcroppings in the prairies around Ekalaka the Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) is one of the most diverse national forests in the country. The U.S. Forest Service is currently in the midst of revising its plan for managing this 3 million-acre national forest that spans across the southern portion of Montana, from West Yellowstone to South Dakota. The Forest Service recently released a draft of the revised plan, and opened up a 90-day comment period in which the public is welcome to weigh in and submit comments on the draft.

The wild legacy of southern Montana is at stake in the outcome of this forest planning revision which may or may not mandate the Forest Service to protect the Gallatin Range, the Crazy Mountains, the Pryor Mountains, and other revered wildlands for the next 20 to 30 years. That makes it absolutely imperative that those who care about the preservation of wildlands across southern Montana submit comments.

The deadline for comments is June 6th, 2019.

The draft plan includes five different alternatives, each of which provides options for how the Forest Service could manage the CGNF for decades to come. The Forest Service can pick and choose specific points from each of the alternatives to formulate a final decision, so it’s important to tell the Forest Service what parts of each alternative best protects our wilderness heritage.

We know you care about the wild country in the CGNF, so this is your opportunity to shape its future. The good news is that we’re here to make participating in the planning process as simple as possible. Your comments can have a big impact on the final decisions made by the Forest Service to protect wildlands, clean drinking water, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities.

Looking at the maps of the alternatives in Appendix A of the DEIS might be helpful. You may also check out our guide to writing effective comments.

For more information, check out this overview detailing some of the most important and sensitive areas in the CGNF and how we can protect them in the new forest plan.
If you want even more help writing a comment please join us at one of the following events where we’ll be breaking down the planning revision process and providing guidance for writing effective comments:

**Bozeman:** April 10th, 6 - 7 p.m. at the Bozeman Event Space, 14 S. Tracy Ave

**Billings:** May 7th, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Craft Local, 2413 Montana Ave
(The first 20 people to write a comment at this event will receive a free glass of beer, wine, or cider!)

**Red Lodge:** May 15th, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Red Lodge Ales/Sam’s Tap Room, 1445 Broadway Ave. N.
(The first 20 people to write a comment at this event will receive a free beer or cider!)

If you’re ready, click [here](#) to comment right now!

If you have more questions or need more information, feel free to reach out to Emily in Bozeman at [ecleveland@wildmontana.org](mailto:ecleveland@wildmontana.org) or Aubrey in Billings at [abertram@wildmontana.org](mailto:abertram@wildmontana.org).
Live at the Garage!

Music for the Wild
(A Fundraiser for MWA’s Eastern Wildlands Chapter)
featuring Arterial Drive

SATURDAY 5/18
DOORS 5:30PM  SHOW 6:00PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
YELLOWSTONEVALLEYBREWING.COM &
AT THE DOOR (2123 1ST AVE N, SUITE C)
Have a comment or concern? Want to volunteer? Want to share a program or project suggestion? We want to hear from you!

Montana Wilderness Association
Eastern Wildlands Chapter
2822 3rd Ave N., Suite 204
Billings, MT 59101
Phone: 303-956-5263
E-mail: abertram@wildmontana.org
www.wildmontana.org