Welcome to the summer issue of The Wilderness Voice and the first issue under our new Wild Montana banner. I hope that most of you have found a way to enjoy our public lands and waters this summer despite the smoke and heat. I think we appreciate the value of our wonderful mountains and streams even more when we lose the opportunity to visit them due to Covid, heat, or smoke. It reminds me of that old saying "You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone.” But the pandemic, heat, and smoke will eventually pass, the other more permanent threats to our public lands will persist until they receive the protection they deserve.

So, let’s all make an extra effort to support the efforts of Wild Montana to protect and preserve them for our kids and grandkids. One easy way to do so is to call Sen. Daines and encourage him to move forward on passage of the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act, which is currently the top priority for Wild Montana and is supported by a strong majority of Montanans of all political persuasions. We need his support to advance this bill out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Wait until after the Senate’s August recess and then please call his office at (202) 224-2651 and let his staff know that you want him to support this legislation. You will feel good for reaching out to your senator and letting him know your priorities.

We are pleased to welcome our new field director Maddy Munson, who joined Wild Montana on Aug. 2 and will be covering both the Madison-
Welcome Maddy – we look forward to working with you!

Locally, our Wilderness Walks are well underway across the state with many interesting trips planned before Sept. 30. You can still sign up for some of those hikes while checking out at our new website at wildmontana.org/mgc.

Our local Adopt-A-Trail volunteers and Wilderness Stewards have been busy on area trails demonstrating our commitment to the care of our resources and the education of its users. Please read Dean Center’s article (page 5) to catch up with the recent work.

Our Madison-Gallatin Chapter’s Leadership Council has met several times and is trying to coalesce as a working group as our board tries to find the best way to support and encourage them. They sponsored a well-attended pint night at Mountains Walking Brewery in June. We continue to explore new ways to reach out to a broader audience across Gallatin, Madison, and Park counties.

Since our spring newsletter our chapter has held two “Wilderness And ...” events, one featuring April Craighead and her research on pikas in Gallatin Canyon and one featuring former Wild Montana president Lee Boman speaking about the virtues of the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act. More events are planned for late summer and fall, so watch your email for announcements. And please save the date of Nov. 30 for our annual membership meeting. We are planning an in-person meeting (Covid contingent) for that evening at the Bozeman Event Space on S. Tracy Ave and our guest speaker will be Denver Holt, founder and president of the Owl Research Institute. Denver is a wonderful presenter, owl expert extraordinaire, and has a full repertoire of owl calls. More details to come later this fall.

After about 15 months of remote meetings via Zoom, our board celebrated the end of our isolation with a backyard BBQ on May 29 and held our first face-to-face board meeting on June 15. And we have a new venue for our meetings at the community room of Bozeman Fire Station #3, just east of the Gallatin County Regional Park. We continue to meet on the third Tuesday of every month from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Members are welcome to attend.

And our family continues to grow with the birth of a baby girl to Madison-Gallatin Chapter Vice President Forrest Schoessow and wife Beth Shirley on Aug. 2, and the marriage of Wild Montana’s Conservation Director Emily Cleveland and Henry Worobec on July 31. Congratulations and best wishes to all!

I also want to thank our many volunteers that continue to step up in support of our chapter and help make our work enjoyable and effective. We have 22 walk leaders or co-leaders this summer, dozens of Adopt-A-Trail crew and Wilderness Steward volunteers, 12 board members who do much more than attend board meetings, and other active members who help with committees, events, and activities. We truly couldn’t do what we do without you, so thanks very much! Our committees are always looking for more help, so please let us know if you’d like to join the team.

Be sure to visit our chapter webpage at wildmontana.org/mgc.
As the summer races by, it’s hard not to reflect on the heat and poor air quality we have experienced this summer. The release of the Greater Yellowstone Climate Assessment earlier this summer emphasized that we are witnessing the consequences of climate change in real time and that those consequences will only worsen.

Wild Montana is examining ways to improve the resiliency of our public lands, wildlife, and communities in the face of these challenges. One example of this work is the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement. The proposal will protect the headwaters that provide 80% of Bozeman’s drinking water, prevent further habitat fragmentation, and keep wildlife corridors on public lands intact. By preventing land use change and continued development on our public lands, we can create space for plants and wildlife to adapt to a changing climate and protect resources that are essential to the wellbeing of our communities. To learn more about the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement, check out our newly developed story map at wildmontana.org/gfp.

We expect to see the revised Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan released this September, bringing the four-year revision process to an end. We hope the plan will closely reflect the GFP Agreement, and we’ll share the outcome and next steps with you as soon as the plan is made public.

Last, we’re thrilled to announce that we have hired a new field director, Maddy Munson, who will lead our work across the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Feel free to reach out to Maddy and help welcome her to the position. We look forward to seeing all that Maddy will achieve in this role.

Hello, everyone!

I am excited to join the passionate Wild Montana team and meet our Madison-Gallatin Chapter members. I found my enthusiasm for conservation through hiking, camping, and skiing on our public lands near my hometown of Boise, Idaho. That interest continued to grow as I received a B.A. in Environmental Studies and Public Policy from the University of Oregon. After spending a summer working in St. Mary and a few years in Jackson, Wyoming, I wanted to become more involved in protecting wild public lands and waters, in addition to finding collaborative approaches to land management.

I went on to earn a Juris Doctorate and certificate in Environmental and Natural Resources Law from Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon. Prior to joining Wild Montana, I worked as a law clerk for the Oregon Natural Desert Association and Earthrise Law Center, focusing on natural resources issues across diverse ecosystems like the sagebrush steppe and lush Pacific Northwest forests. In my free time, you can find me out looking for wildflowers, swimming in mountain lakes, or playing with my cat Tater Tot. I can’t wait to get to work amplifying the voices of our community and diving deep into the issues facing the Custer Gallatin National Forest and other wild public lands in our chapter area. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Cheers,
Maddy Munson
mmunson@wildmontana.org
With last year’s trail work canceled due to the pandemic, our goal for 2021 was to double up and do four work trips this early season – and we succeeded.

Our first trip was weathered out by snow at the end of May and rescheduled, so our first trip out was on Saturday, June 5 on Cliff Creek Trail. This day was very special for us as Alzada Roche, who was crucial to getting our program off the ground, returned to help lead our crew in 2021. We were fortunate that she reserved some time in her busy life to join us once again.

A crew totaling nine volunteers installed a new sign where the Cliff Creek Trail takes off from the Big Creek Trail and removed downed trees. They then worked hard to create a new section of trail, allowing hikers to bypass a section of trail that now has the creek running down it. Trail building is extremely physically demanding but well worth the effort.

The very next day, June 6, another crew headed out for a rescheduled workday on the Lava Lake Trail. This outing was a little different because it was divided into four sub-groups, each with a specific set of goals. The saw group, led by Heidi Genito, was staffed with our most experienced volunteers who cut a couple of dicey “widowmakers” (fallen tree limbs or tops) leaning across the trail, as well as a half dozen more logs. The sign group, led by U.S. Forest Service Volunteer Coordinator Bill Miller, installed a new Wilderness boundary sign and then hiked to the lake to install a new Table Mountain directional sign. The bridge group spent the day removing the broken rail on the log bridge, making a new rail and support, and bolting the new parts onto the existing bridge. The erosion group, led by Madison-Gallatin Chapter Vice President Forrest Schoessow, cleaned out and regraded water bars and drainage pans.

On Saturday, June 19, a group of eight under the leadership of team captains Dustin and Susan returned to the Cliff Creek Trail and threw themselves into trail building. With a Herculean effort, they were able to complete the job! Now, with a new sign to show you where to go and the reroute complete, this is a great time to investigate the Cliff Creek Trail. It’s a surprisingly cool and verdant trail that offers plenty of solitude for those who venture. Plus, boots packing down the newly-worked tread will be very helpful in maintaining the trail. This outing featured the deft help of our very first teen volunteer Chloe Hammond. Our final early-season trail workday was in a brand new place for us. Former Forest Service Volunteer Coordinator Cody Yeatts had developed a proposal to reduce user impact on the most heavily used trail in the Big Sky area and chapter board member and Big Sky resident Mark Gunther was passionate about us taking on the

(continued)
task this year. On Saturday, June 26, our crew of eight volunteers met up at the Beehive Basin Trailhead to shut down user-created shortcuts on a switchback section. On paper, this didn’t sound like much work, but Mark and Forrest (our captains) showed us not only how to obscure shortcuts, but how to obliterate them. I swear I saw teen volunteer (our second, if you’re counting) Alaric Skejlver carrying an entire tree on his shoulders! Ranger Bill Miller led a couple of volunteers farther up the trail to tackle some blowdowns as well. This outing was much needed, as evidenced by a nearly continuous flow of hikers up and down the trail to whom we were able to explain why we were doing the job and how cutting switchbacks destroys vegetation and causes erosion.

Our early season work went well, with our typical mix of familiar faces and newbies. The Wilderness Stewards joined us on our canyon outings and were much appreciated. We got a lot of valuable work done for the Custer Gallatin National Forest, and everyone came back achy but safe, having had a fun and satisfying experience. We are planning 2-3 workdays for this fall. Why don’t you join us in September to break a sweat and have some fun? Contact us at MGAdoptatrail@gmail.com.

Work days are now scheduled for Sept. 11 and 18 on Cliff Creek Trail in the Gallatin Range.
Connections are driving forces behind much of what we do and who we are. We rely on friends and family for companionship and support, our communities for unity and resources, and nature for food sources, recreation, and personal wellbeing. Spending time outside reminds us that we are a part of something bigger than ourselves – and it’s crucial that we do our part to protect it.

We’ve all experienced less-than-ideal conduct from fellow outdoor recreators. Littering, carving names into trees, feeding wildlife, leaving pet waste, and cutting switchbacks are just a few examples of destructive behavior. Sometimes the damage has already been done and the culprits are long gone, but oftentimes it happens right in front of us, providing opportunities to initiate conversation and make a lasting difference.

How we approach these situations will determine our success. It’s important to be patient, considerate, and tactful, for the goal is to facilitate a positive learning experience. There are tools and resources we can use when approaching someone participating in undesirable activity, including the seven Leave No Trace principles for outdoor ethics and the "Authority of the Resource Technique" developed by Dr. George N. Wallace.

Land management agencies began utilizing early concepts of “leave no trace” in the mid-1980s. The need for an organization to teach and provide educational resources for environmental responsibility and stewardship grew quickly and in 1994, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics was created. While many outdoor enthusiasts have incorporated these principles as a way of life, there are still many that have yet to learn about them.

A useful method for confronting those not practicing Leave No Trace is the “Authority of the Resource Technique” (ART), which involves an effort to let nature wield its own innate authority by thoughtfully offering insights on the effects of visitor’s actions on the resource. Dr. Wallace’s article on ART explains how to objectively incorporate education into these interactions and make a lasting difference.

More and more people are drawn to the outdoors every year, and for good reason. The benefits of spending time in nature are many, including improved mood, decreased stress and blood pressure, and better focus. Immersion in the environment also provides a sense of connection, vibrancy, and awe. It’s no wonder that we turn to outdoor recreation in difficult times. Keep this in mind on your next adventure and use your new tools and resources to encourage others to keep our wild spaces wild and wonderful.

### The Center developed seven core principles for minimizing impacts in nature:

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfire impacts.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.
On Aug. 26, an international team of scientists will embark upon the 2021 Beartooth Traverse – a research expedition spanning 96 kilometers across the Beartooth Plateau – proudly sponsored by Wild Montana’s Madison-Gallatin Chapter.

The expedition team is led by researchers from the Byrd Polar & Climate Research Center and includes scientists from Montana State and Montana Tech – all of whom have extensive experience maintaining a minimal backcountry footprint while conducting field investigations in ecologically sensitive alpine environments.

We will use a combination of remote and in-situ glacier, lake, and botanical measures to extract records documenting climatic change along a 96-kilometer transect route across the Beartooth Plateau. Our chief scientific objectives include: 1) measuring changes in glacier mass loss and alpine water storage; 2) extracting records of high-altitude climate trends from lake sediment cores; and 3) evaluating the response of sensitive alpine plant species to accelerating glacier loss.

By characterizing the rates and amplitude of these changes, we will help address outstanding scientific knowledge gaps in this region and provide a foundation for more robust evaluation of potential future impacts on alpine biodiversity and stream ecology. Learn more at wildmontana.org/beartoothtraverse.

Furthermore, because education and outreach are important to us, our team also includes two STEAM (STEM + Art) engagement professionals focused on environmental science communication and promoting the importance of wilderness stewardship.

Madison-Gallatin Chapter is excited to support this scientific campaign and looks forward to working together to help advance the mission of Wild Montana.

To read more about the science and mission the Beartooth Traverse Expedition, please follow this link or follow along on the Madison-Gallatin Chapter website: wildmontana.org/mgc.

Artist’s Corner

Alex T. Ross
Alex is a London-based artist working in both traditional and digital mediums. Over the past decade, he has joined field scientists working on the Mississippi River and in the Peruvian Andes, and is joining the team of scientists on the upcoming Beartooth Plateau research expedition.

His portfolio includes numerous collaborative projects which fuse STEM and Art (STEAM) to captivate, inform, and empower audiences to strive for tangible change in their world.

Enjoy more of Alex’s work here: atrossart.com
Our last hike together was to my favorite spot on the Gallatin Crest Trail. It was his first time there. I’d wanted him to do this hike for years but we never made it happen despite his several trips to Montana. Over the decades we’d done lots of hikes together – too many to remember all the details, probably even all the destinations.

We all have our reasons for spending time in the wilderness. We share many of those reasons but I suspect we each also have a few we consider more personal, a special connection. He and I loved the spiritual; the mystical connections and equilibrium of the wilderness. A place to find peace of mind and spirit and rebalance the world where we worked and lived. We also found healing; me from the loss of loved ones and he more from the travails of personal relationships, although we didn’t make a habit of discussing it.

We’d been friends for more than 50 years, hiking and camping together for over three decades. He remained rooted in the Blue Ridge and Appalachians of our youth, while I rambled a bit wider. But we often connected in wild spots from the Adirondacks to Katahdin, the dark hollows and highland balds of the Smokies, the peaks and lakes of the Canadian Rockies, the austerity of the Wind Rivers and the high Sierras. Each time searching and finding the respite and recharge of wilderness while enjoying our fellowship.

His life was otherwise difficult with family and marriage troubles and financial woes, but I knew he also found healing in wild places. And I knew he was seeking that on our hike – emotional, spiritual, and physical healing as he pulled his life together once again. As we climbed from dense forest to alpine meadow, he occasionally violated the only rule that always governed our trips – no whining. Turns out he was well on his way to a new hip joint, another journey I would also take a year or two later.

Not long after that hike, he died in a single-car crash on the Blue Ridge Parkway, a road that ran through his life like the blood in his veins. Ironically, he was on his way to a family reunion that I knew he was conflicted about attending, and which I had encouraged him to join.

It took me two years to write these thoughts, and deciding to share them publicly was another hurdle that I cleared only after the third anniversary of his passing. But I’m sure that my feelings about the healing powers of wild places are shared by others, and a reaffirmation of the psychological benefits derived from wilderness is good for our souls and should be encouraged. And I certainly know that we all suffer loss, losses that mount with age.

I try to return several times a year to that spot on the crest, a pilgrimage of sorts, and to many other special places, seeking their healing powers and the spiritual solace they generate. The vast views and endless freedom, the relentless wind, and the calming presence that it brings. I don’t always need the healing, but it’s always there and I always find peace.
Wilderness Walks

Exploring the Backcountry of Yellowstone National Park

ROGER JENKINS
Madison-Gallatin Chapter Treasurer

The morning of July 25 arrived, with cool temperatures, and while it was smoky and hazy in Bozeman, things improved as we headed south to Yellowstone National Park.

Hiking up Black Butte Creek is a delight. It features a mix of flat and small climbs, some woods, and open terrain. Of course, we kept our eye out for our four-legged furry friends with humps on their backs. Sadly, we saw none, even from a desirable long distance. The group seemed pretty congenial, with a few different conversations going on as we spread out over a short distance. The trail splits about two miles into the hike, with the right fork heading toward the summit of Big Horn Peak, and the left fork heading for the low point in a ridge that separates the Black Butte and Dailey Creek drainages.

The total climb on the hike is only about a thousand feet, so there were no expressions of relief from the crew as we crested the high point. Maybe everyone’s thoughts were turned to “when is lunchtime?” We ran into our first “other people” of the day as we started our descent. While the front country of Yellowstone might be overwhelmed with tourists, the backcountry seemed to be nice and empty for a weekend day. We found a great log in the shade and had a relaxing lunch break.

We chatted on the way down the valley, drinking in the views (made a bit more prominent due to reduced smoke and haze) and perhaps realizing that our time together was getting shorter. Okay, the last hour of the hike was downright toasty, but with the thought of ice-cold drinks awaiting us at a gas station in Big Sky Junction, it was not too hard to keep hiking. What a wonderful way to spend a warm, slightly smoky day in the mountains. One could do a whole lot worse.

If you missed our recent Wilderness Walk along Black Butte Trail, you can plan your own trip — visit hikewildmontana.org for trail details.

Our guided Wilderness Walks are filling up quickly, but there are still spots available for some hikes and if the hike you’re interested in is full, sign up for the waitlist — cancellations are common and we often contact folks to fill spots. Read about the available hikes and sign up at wildmontana.org/walks.
Find us at the Gallatin Farmers Market this Summer!

9 a.m.—noon on Saturday, Aug. 21 and Sept. 4.
at the Bozeman Fairgrounds

Wilderness Essay Contest Opens this October

JEANETTE HALL
Madison-Gallatin Chapter Collaborative Member

The Madison-Gallatin Chapter will hold our third annual Wilderness Essay Contest this fall. The contest will be open to seniors attending Bozeman High School, Gallatin High School, Bozeman Charter Academy, Belgrade High, and Belgrade Alternative High School, Park High School, Three Forks, Manhattan, Ennis, Twin Bridges, Harrison, and Sheridan high schools.

The purpose of the contest is to elevate the awareness and appreciation of Wilderness and other wild public lands and waters, as well as to create awareness of Wild Montana and the Madison-Gallatin Chapter among high school seniors. By taking part in the process of preparing an essay, students have the opportunity to examine, develop, and strengthen their own thoughts and values about the importance of Wilderness and other wild public lands and waters. In an effort to provide students with creative methods for expressing their ideas, the format for submission will be expanded to include written essays and other creative media including artwork, photography, and videos.

Applications for submitting essays will be available in each high school at the end of October 2021. There will be one major award and one merit award for each essay category. The monetary awards are not tied to a scholarship. Awards will be presented during the month of May.