Welcome to the latest edition of The Wilderness Voice, the newsletter of Wild Montana’s Madison-Gallatin Chapter. As we start seeing spring flowers arise out of the frozen ground at low elevations, our mountains are still thankfully receiving much-needed snow as we await the swelling of our rivers over the next months. Spring in Montana is a wondrous time!

Our chapter board has some exciting changes and events to share with you. The board has been in a transitional period with Tom Ross joining Wild Montana’s Board of Directors and Jeanette Hall making the move to Whitefish. Tom continues as an active board member for our chapter and Jeanette will surely be continuing her tenure as part of the Flathead-Kootenai Chapter.

As vice president, I have stepped in as acting president of the chapter and we plan to hold official elections this summer.

We’re excited to share that the volunteer wilderness ranger position that we partnered with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest to create has been filled with the hire of Gillian Shannon. We thank all who helped to fund this important position by donating to the fundraiser spearheaded by our very own Lisa Lenard. We think Gillian is great for the role and will provide updates as the summer progresses (more on page 8).

The Wilderness Essay committee was hard at work this past semester and received 16 submissions to review. Winners were recently announced. As a first, two multimedia submissions were awarded (an original song and a short film) along with many inspirational essays (more on page 9).

Our Adopt-A-Trail and the Wilderness Stewards program are in need of volunteers! Find the project dates on page 4 as well as on our website. We’re especially in need of volunteers to help us maintain the Cliff Creek and Lave Lake trails this summer. These volunteer days are rewarding, a lot of fun, and are also a chance for us to get to know each other and our local trails.

In addition to our past and current initiatives, we have some cool projects on the horizon. A main focus of ours is to not only increase awareness of important campaigns and initiatives happening across south-central Montana (and statewide) but to further engage members in active participation. We encourage you to attend our board meetings, which are every third Tuesday from 6-8 p.m. at the Bozeman Fire Station #3 at 1705 Vaquero Pkwy. We always welcome chapter members and we are currently seeking new board members. If you are interested in learning more about how to become a board member please reach out to us at madison.gallatin@wildmontana.org. Please also reach out to share your thoughts, experiences, photos, and stories — we love hearing from our members!
The year started with exciting news, as the Custer Gallatin National Forest concluded its six-year forest plan revision process, setting the course for over three million acres of National Forest for the next several decades.

Overall, we’re pleased that the plan provides more than 400,000 acres of conservation protections by designating eight recommended wilderness areas and 13 backcountry areas. It also recommends 30 wild and scenic rivers and two key linkage areas to maintain habitat connectivity.

Here are some of the highlights for landscapes within the Madison Gallatin Chapter area:

### Madison and Gallatin Ranges

The final plan includes over 200,000 acres of new protections in the Madison and Gallatin Ranges. These designations help ensure the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area will remain just as wild as it is today. The final plan incorporates many, though not all, aspects of the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement that Wild Montana helped craft (you can learn more at gallatinpartners.org), and we’re committed to passing historic legislation to protect even more acreage.

The final plan recommends 110,174 acres of wilderness in the Madison and Gallatin Ranges, with 92,532 acres of recommended wilderness in the Gallatins - the range’s first ever recommended wilderness - and 17,642 acres of recommended wilderness additions to the Lee Metcalf Wilderness in the Madisons. It protects a further 62,891 acres in Buffalo Horn, South Cottonwood, and West Pine as backcountry areas, which allow existing recreation but add conservation measures to limit commercial timber production, road building, trail construction, new developed recreation sites, and mineral extraction.

The final plan also designates Recreation Emphasis Areas in Hyalite, in Storm Castle, and along the Gallatin River.

### Crazy Mountains

The plan also recommends wilderness in the Crazy Mountains for the first time. In addition to a 9,618-acre recommended wilderness area, the plan names the Crazies as an Area of Tribal Importance in recognition of their historical and cultural significance to the Apsáalooke (Crow) and includes a large 30,642 acre non-motorized and non-mechanized backcountry area.

### Absaroka and Beartooth Mountains

The forest plan retains 802 acres of recommended Wilderness around Timberline Lake and prohibits mountain bike or motorized use in the 18,712-acre Bad Canyon Backcountry Area. However, the plan also eliminates several recommended Wilderness areas from the previous Forest plan, including Republic Mountain, Burnt Mountain, and around Mystic Lake.

For more information about the whole Custer Gallatin Forest Plan, visit our blog about landscapes in the Eastern Wildlands Chapter area at wildmontana.org/cgnfplan. At the bottom of the blog, find handy maps showing new recommended Wilderness, backcountry areas, and other designations.

We thank each and every one of you who has taken the time over the six-year planning process to attend meetings, write comments and objections, and stand up for the wild places in this plan. We’ve made historic progress in getting to this point, and with you by our side, we’re poised to keep making more by passing legislation to permanently protect even more of this special place. I hope you explore it this summer, and consider taking us along with you by tagging us in your summer adventure photos with the hashtag #hikewildmontana.
Volunteer on a Madison-Gallatin Chapter Trail Crew this Summer

DEAN CENTER AND RICHARD LYON
Madison-Gallatin Chapter Stewardship Committee co-chairs

If you like hiking in wild places, we have an opportunity for you! A chance to thank the people who came before and built the trails you enjoy so much. A chance to give back for all you have received.

This year, the Madison Gallatin Chapter’s Adopt-A-Trail program features an expanded schedule for the coming season, kicking off with basic trail maintenance on our adopted trails. In the late season, we will have our first overnight work detail on Cliff Creek with a frontcountry campsite near the Big Creek Trailhead, and a day of long-deferred trail work on the Dudley Creek trail, north of Big Sky. Please sign up — we cannot continue the program without your help — contact us at mgaadoptatrail@gmail.com.

Summer 2022 Projects

- **Saturday, June 4** – Cliff Creek
  Leaders: Dustin Rothenberg and Susan Davis
- **Saturday, June 11** – Lava Lake
  Leaders: Heidi Genito and Dean Center
- **July, TBD** (possibly an overnight) – Emerald Lake clean-up |
  Sponsored by Friends of Hyalite. Visit hyalite.org/volunteer to sign up.
- **Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9–11** – Cliff Creek (frontcountry) |
  | Leaders TBD
- **Saturday or Sunday, TBD** – Dudley Creek
  Leaders: Dean Center and Heidi Genito

The USFS will be offering a crosscut saw class this spring. If you already are certified in crosscut, your certification has been extended to the end of 2022. Our USFS contact has said you still need a current First Aid card, though, and they will be offering a First Aid/CPR class this spring as well. Email us at MGAAdoptatrail@gmail.com if you are interested in either of these classes.

It’s hard to believe, but if not for Covid this would be our fifth year sending out trail crews to improve hiking access in the Custer Gallatin National Forest. We could not have gotten past the first year without the valuable leadership of our experienced trail captains, a strong partnership with staff and administration in the USFS, and the willingness of people just like you to give back to the national forest.

Over those years, we’ve trained volunteers in first aid and crosscut sawing, learned how to evaluate the needs of a trail, and...
trail, brushed and cleared miles of trail, built and maintained dozens of drainage structures, struggled with mud on the Lava Lake Trail, and simply finding the trail at Cliff Creek. Happily, we’ve been pleased to have no injuries, safely accomplished some precarious trail tasks, and expanded our trail work to the Big Sky area.

Most remarkable to me, as I think back, are the wonderful people we’ve met. The USFS staff have been terrific to work with, hardworking, and enthusiastic. Our volunteers have put up with last-minute rescheduling due to weather, mud, and long hikes, and have universally been enjoyable, effective crew members who have immediately become family. We’ve had young adults working off community service requirements and teens who have proven to be hardy, industrious, and thoroughly enjoyable to have by our side. The Wilderness Stewards have been immensely helpful at keeping everyone forewarned and safe. The hikers we have met while working have been gracious, understanding, and appreciative (except for a couple dodoheads who cut the switchbacks we were closing off at Beehive Basin). The Wild Montana “stewardship boys,” Matt Bowser and Sonny Mazzullo, have been extremely helpful by teaching, sharing knowledge, getting us tools, and promoting our work — the value of their role modeling, encouragement, and positive energy has been immense.

And our captains. From the first meeting with Alzada Roche, Amanda Garrant, and Heidi Genito, providing the expertise and enthusiasm and optimism that we could actually make this program happen, to Dustin and Buzz and Susan and Forrest and Mark stepping up to keep us going. We absolutely could not have done this without them. Thank you all.

Since our beginning, several other Wild Montana chapters have developed their own stewardship programs. Each is unique, taking advantage of the personnel, resources, and needs of their locale. Richard and I recently met with a group in Missoula, and if we didn’t baffle and overwhelm them with too much information, they will be starting a new trail program in the Bitterroots this year.

If you have questions or, better still, want to join us in having great fun while breaking a sweat in giving back to our wildlands, drop us a line at MGAadoptatrail@gmail.com.

More information can be found at wildmontana.org/mgc/stewardship.

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Madison-Gallatin Trivia
This might *pique* your interest

Test your knowledge of our region’s high peaks, and then check your responses against the answers found on our webpage, [wildmontana.org/mgc/trivia](http://wildmontana.org/mgc/trivia)

1. What’s the tallest peak in Park County at 12,799 feet?  
*Hint: It’s in the Absaroka Range and the A-B Wilderness and is #1 in MT.*

2. What’s the tallest peak in Madison County at 11,300 feet?  
*Hint: It’s in the Taylor-Hilgard Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness.*

3. What’s the tallest peak in Gallatin County at 10,705 feet?  
*Hint: It’s in the Spanish Peaks Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness.*

4. At 11,106 feet, why is Gallatin Peak not the tallest in Gallatin County?  
*Hint: You don’t need a hint for this one.*

5. What’s the tallest peak in Sweet Grass County at 11,282 feet?  
*Hint: It’s in the Beartooth Mountains and the A-B Wilderness, not the Crazies.*
Spring Into Summer with Madison-Gallatin Chapter
Please join our chapter at REI’s Memorial Day sale to learn about our summer lineup of free guided hikes and volunteer trail projects in south-central Montana. Spring Into Summer events are a great way to meet fellow wildlands lovers – join us! REI Bozeman | 2220 Tschache Lane

“Wilderness And ...” Presentations Resume this Summer
Martha Apple from Montana Tech University will kick off summer “Wilderness And ...” presentations with her ongoing research into glacial vegetation and how it relates to receding glaciers in the Beartooth Plateau. Learn about Martha Apple’s research and enjoy a complimentary refreshment. Event is free and open to the public. Hope Lutheran Church | 2152 Graf St., Bozeman

Join us for a Day of Fun in Hyalite Canyon
Enjoy a day of your choice: adventure hiking/fishing/biking/relaxing and then come find us at the Hyalite Pavilion where you can enjoy food, refreshments, an informal presentation and mingle with fellow Wild Montana members in our Madison-Gallatin Chapter.

All are welcome and we really hope to see you there!
Hyalite Pavilion south of Bozeman

Join us at the Gallatin Farmer’s Market on Saturdays this Summer
Visit the Madison-Gallatin Chapter at the Gallatin Valley Farmer’s Market kicking off on Saturday, June 18! We’ll be there every Saturday this summer. Come meet your board members and learn more about Wild Montana, chapter initiatives, and pick up some new 2022 swag. Gallatin County Fairgrounds in Haynes Pavilion | 901 North Black Ave., Bozeman | gallatinvalleyfarmersmarket.com

Now Accepting Applications for Wilderness Grants
All are invited to apply for grant funding for a project aiming to enhance Montana’s wilderness and wildlands, the public’s enjoyment and understanding of wildlands, interactions between wildlife, habitat and recreationalists, and other creative research and activities in furtherance of wilderness values. We’re actively accepting grant proposal submissions through June 15. More information can be found at wildmontana.org/mgc/grants.

We’re hosting presentations from past grantees this summer, including Martha Apple’s presentation on June 9.

Deadline: Wednesday June 15
Sign Up For Free Guided Wilderness Walks in South-Central Montana

MADDY MUNSON
Wild Montana public lands director

Our chapter has a great selection of Wilderness Walks, our annual lineup of free guided hikes, this summer. This is your chance to explore the trails, connect with people who share your love of wild places, and learn more about the history or ecology of the area. Registration is currently open for early season (May 8 – July 15) Wilderness Walks and there are still a few openings! Plus, you can always join a waitlist.

Late season (July 16 – Sept. 30) Wilderness Walk registration opens on June 29 for members and July 1 for non-members. Find more information at https://wildmontana.org/walks.

Early-season walks with availability

June 26 – Art in the Wilderness (Moderate): Spending time in nature gives us a sense of place and helps us feel better. Guided by an expressive arts facilitator, we’ll reflect on our life journeys and bring those reflections to life through drawing, creative writing, and dialogue. All art supplies are furnished. Register at wildmontana.org/walk/art.

July 9 – Big Creek (Strenuous): This well-maintained rolling trail parallels Big Creek, traveling through shady forest, past rock formations, and across open meadows. It also provides access to the Cliff Creek Trail, which Wild Montana’s Madison Gallatin Chapter Adopt-a-Trail Crew is maintaining this summer. Register at wildmontana.org/walk/bigcreek.

July 16 – Windy Pass on the Gallatin Crest (Strenuous): How about lunch at 10,000 feet in the brand-new Gallatin Crest Recommended Wilderness, with alpine meadows and views of the Absaroka and Madison ranges? We’ll hike through a mature forest and wildflowers as we climb to the Crest at iconic Windy Pass. Registration coming soon.

July 23 – Gallatin Petrified Tree (Moderate): Come along as we hike through the Gallatin Range to a beautiful standing petrified tree. Most of the walk is across flat ground, although there is a steep off-trail section. Trekking poles are strongly recommended. Registration coming soon.

August 6 – Sunlight Meadows (Strenuous): From Tom Miner Basin, we’ll explore an ancient petrified forest in the Gallatin Crest Recommended Wilderness. At Buffalo Horn Pass, we’ll turn south on a ridge that opens into an expansive meadow. Just north of Yellowstone, this hike provides great bird watching and views. Registration coming soon.
Introducing the 2022 Volunteer Madison Wilderness Ranger

MIKAELA GIOIA HOWIE
Madison-Gallatin Chapter acting president

This spring, Wild Montana’s Madison-Gallatin Chapter is working with our friends at the Forest Service to help support a volunteer wilderness ranger position this summer in the Lee Metcalf Wilderness in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Madison Ranger District.

The volunteer wilderness ranger is an important part of keeping trails and campgrounds accessible and safe as well as educating folks on best Leave No Trace practices. Additionally, the wilderness ranger will assist in campsite inventories, noxious weed monitoring, wilderness trailhead patrols, upkeep of Bear Creek Campground, and more. We are very excited to announce that Gillian Shannon has been hired to fill this position. If you see Gillian on the trail, be sure to say hello!

Meet Wilderness Ranger Gillian Shannon

“I grew up in Arvada, Colorado, and I’m now studying Forestry and Fire Science at the University of Montana. My family is originally from Kalispell, so I grew up camping and hiking in both Colorado and Montana and have fallen in love with the wild areas on this side of the country! I’m so excited to be working with Wild Montana and the Madison Ranger District over the next few months and helping to keep this area beautiful!”

– Gillian Shannon, volunteer wilderness ranger
The Madison-Gallatin Chapter’s third annual Wild Montana Essay Contest ended on April 15 and we are pleased to announce the award winners. The recipient of the major award for a written essay is Erica Berger, from Belgrade High School. Merit award winners are Emmett Rigdon, Bella Raecke, and Reese Covington, all from Bozeman High School. The major award winner for a multimedia essay is Noah Strahn. The merit award winner is Jacqueline Richardson. Noah and Jacqueline are students at Bozeman High School.

We are pleased to recognize the efforts of all of the 16 students from Gallatin, Park, and Madison County high schools who entered this year’s essay contest. In addition to the monetary awards, the first five students who submitted an essay received an invitation for a free one-year Wild Montana membership.

The purpose of each year’s Wild Montana Essay Contest is to recognize and support young people who appreciate Montana’s wilderness and public lands. Students composed their essays in response to questions about how they personally experience and use Montana’s wild public lands and waters, why public lands are important to protect, and threats or conflicts that are of concern. All of the essays conveyed an understanding of the value of our wild public lands, and a need and desire to protect them for future generations. Excerpts from two of the award-winning written essays are examples of this understanding.

"There is something deeply beautiful and cathartic about being immersed in complete nature... Every aspect of human society comes from nature and in many ways, we rely on our environment to sustain us. The destruction of natural areas cut us off from a long and rich history that is embedded in our deep relationship with the natural world.

As fellow inhabitants of this earth, I think many people understand on an innate level the ways in which we are tied to our natural planet. More than that, though, there is evidence that fostering a personal connection with nature is very important for our health."

– Erica Berger

“Overall, I think that public lands are vital for everyone, not only because they help wildlife thrive, but because they help keep our environment and ecosystems intact, so that in the future, people can still experience these lands and what they have to offer. From the clean air and water that they produce for us, to the protection of wildlife, our public lands matter very much, and without them, who knows what the current state of our environment would be like.”

– Emmett Rigdon

In addition to the traditional written essay format, this year’s contest expanded the opportunity for creativity of expression to include a multimedia essay. Noah Strahn’s essay is a song he composed and sang about his personal experience with environmental pollution and the damage and pain that it causes. Jacqueline Richardson submitted a video of drawings, photos and a written narrative that expresses her understanding of the value of wild public lands and the need to protect them.

Members of the committee, Amy Roach, Holly Jessen, Ruth Kopec, Patti Steinmuller, Stewart Mohr, Tami Clark, and Jeanette Hall express our gratitude to the many staff members at the high schools who helped to promote the contest. Our next step is to evaluate this year’s experience and begin planning for next year. If you are interested in being a member of the essay committee, please contact Tami Clark at tclark.nirai@gmail.com

Find all the written and multimedia entries at wildmontana.org/mgc/entries