#### SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Collaborative conservation for the Big Hole River watershed since 1995.



P.O. Box 21 Divide, Montana 59727 406-960-4855 bhwc.org

#### The Flow of Conservation

As we draft this newsletter, we are near the top of the hydrograph, when water is in its full expression. The snowpack, air temperatures, wind, and precipitation did what they did. We don't control that part, so we pray, show gratitude, curse, and shake our fists at the sky, no different than previous generations. And so goes the spirit of a community that depends so closely on a water source – it rises and falls with the hydrograph, but flows on.

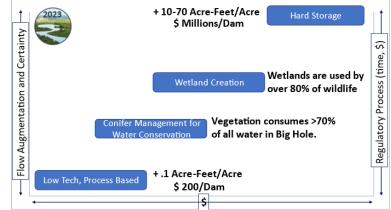
BHWC is in that flow, interested in how water is used and when, and by what species. With us are landowners and resource managers who make decisions that affect how water moves through a landscape. There is a tremendous amount of goodwill in the Big Hole to accomplish meaningful conservation and at scale, and there are a range of ac-

tions that we know benefit water resources. We increasingly do that work through long-term partnership agreements.

The flow is clear. Employ a range of watersaving strategies across the landscape, top to bottom. Follow the science and do sufficient monitoring to build on successes, replicate and scale. Cooperate.

University of Montana researchers recently found a 42% decrease in range productivity due to conifer encroachment. That is a lot of water! This year, we will clear conifer from sagebrush and riparian areas with the BLM and the Forest Service.

We know measuring water is critical, so we



are designing 7 new diversions with 4 measuring devices on key ditches to better control water, including old headgates that currently can't be closed. New large landowners are seeking our partnership to help deliver conservation from their lands to the river. We checked off one Superfund site this year and have a 6-figure budget to substantially move design forward at another. Our work minimizes water shortages through ecosystem uplift, one project at a time. It bubbles up from the ground, moving around obstacles. Scaling up conservation is our goal.

But many obstacles come to mind. Fish populations are severely depressed, with no single factor as a cause. Lack of precipitation from July-September is decimating the fishery, and that pain is real for local businesses. Other obstacles to conservation are institutional and most are surmountable. We know that name-calling and finger-pointing get us nowhere. Disingenuous litigation, like on the Grayling, will solve nothing, even if successful in court. Who, other than lawyers, benefits? Litigation does nothing to address the real issues and capacity gaps to getting more conservation delivered.

We turn every donated private dollar into \$5 to deliver real projects and meaningful local cooperation. We hope you continue your support or join us for the first time in the Big Hole!

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Pedro Marques, BHWC Executive Director

# Our Governing Board:

Randy Smith
Chairman, Rancher
Jim Hagenbarth
Vice Chair, Rancher
Steve Luebeck
Treasurer, Sportsman
Roy Morris
Secretary, George Grant
Trout Unlimited

**Dave Ashcraft** Rancher, Business Owner Sean Claffev The Nature Conservancy Peter Frick Rancher Jim Keenan **BSB Cty. Water Utility Liz Jones** Rancher Mark Kambich Rancher **Erik Kalsta** Rancher **Dean Peterson** Rancher **Phil Ralston** Rancher John Reinhardt Rancher John Jackson **BVHD Cty. Commission Andy Suenram** Resident **Eric Thorson Guiding/Outfitting** 

#### **Our Staff:**

**Diane Hutton** 

**Paul Cleary** 

Resident Mark Raffety

Rancher Brian Wheeler

Resident

Pedro Marques
Executive Director
Tana Nulph
Associate Director
Ben LaPorte
Program Manager
Chet Robertson
UBH Range Rider
Johnathan Costa
Wildlife Program Tech.
Allyson Allen
MCC Conservation Fellow
Peyton Butler
Social Media (contractor)

**Big Hole River Foundation** 

#### **Our Focus Areas:**

- Fish & Water
- Wildlife & Uplands
- People

# **Member Spotlight: Ally Allen and Peyton Butler**

Getting to Know our Members

Our Member Spotlight features key board members, partners, and supporters of the BHWC and highlights their commitment to conservation and the Big Hole watershed. This edition features two new additions to the BHWC team—Allyson (Ally) Allen and Peyton Butler.

# Allyson Allen, MCC Conservation Fellow

Ally joined us in the Big Hole in May (her first time in Montana), and is excited to learn all about the Big Hole watershed. She will spend the summer assisting with BHWC's restoration field work on Mount Haggin.

Ally graduated from the University of Dayton (Ohio) in May 2023 with a B.S. in Environmental Biology. She loves being outdoors and exploring.

Connect with Ally at <a href="mailto:aallen@bhwc.org">aallen@bhwc.org</a>.

# Peyton Butler, Social Media Specialist

BHWC contracted Peyton this spring to assist with our social media content and scheduling. Peyton is a recent graduate from the University of Montana. She studied Journalism and Climate Change Studies. She's super excited to be doing social media work for BHWC and loves learning about all of the restoration work we have done.

Peyton is excited to learn more about the Big Hole watershed and help us grow our social media reach and impact. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to see Peyton in action!

Connect with Peyton at <u>peytoncbutler@gmail.com</u>.





# What We've Been Learning

Lessons from our Monthly Meetings

- 1. Montana BioAgriculture and BHWC have been testing the use of fungi to remove metal ions from contaminated water at the historic Elkhorn Mine. The fungal filter works best with higher concentrations of metals and less water, because calcium clogs the system up.
- Youth Employment Program
   (YEP) in Dillon will employ 25
   youths (14+) this summer to
   restore streams, build animal friendly fencing, and control
   erosion in SW Montana.
- The Big Hole is an important migration corridor for both pronghorn and sage grouse.
   MFWP is working to identify and address barriers to their movement in the valley.
- 4. The <u>Public Land Water Access</u>
  <u>Association</u> (PLWA) works to safeguard access to Montana's lands and waters, educate the public about ownership/access rights, and identify and resolve access issues.
- MT Weed Control Association will host the 2023 Weed Whackers Ball at the Wise River Community Center on September 16th!
- Edaphix fertilizes soil using micronutrients that destroy weedy species, giving native perennial grasses a competitive boost.

# **Activities & Events**

## Join Us in Divide or on Zoom

Monthly Public Meetings at the Divide Grange

Our monthly public meetings include committee reports, project updates, time for discussion, coffee & snacks, and special topic presentations. Please join us at 7:00 pm at the Divide Grange or via Zoom!

#### June 21

Big Hole Fishery Update

BHWC does not meet in July

August 16
Old Salt Coop
Farm-to-Market meats

**September 20**Sage Grouse



More info here: bhwc.org/monthly-meetings.

# **Making Memories with Macros in Melrose**

2023 Wildlife Speaker Series Event

Our annual Wildlife Speaker Series event is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14th, 6:00 pm at the Melrose Bar. The topic is macroinvertebrates, which are creatures that lack backbones and can be seen without using a microscope or magnifying glass.

Presenters Rayelynn Brandl and Teal Taylor with the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP) will discuss the importance of macroinvertebrates as indicators of ecological health.

The event will include a potluck meal with the main dish provided by BHWC. You bring a side or dessert. See you there!



# **Finding Followers**

Social Media Helps Us Share and Connect

Did you know that BHWC is on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn? We have a thriving social media presence with followers from around the world! And we are always working to get better at sharing our mission, vision, and the work that we do.

In 2022, our staff participated in a training offered by <u>Lightful Academy</u> through our relationship with Patagonia. The course, titled BRIDGE (Building Resilience in Digital Growth and Engagement) helped us improve our content strategy, tools, and knowledge regarding social media best practices. We also hired social media contractor Peyton Butler (see pg. 2) to help us manage our social profiles, and she is doing an awesome job!

You may be asking, what does this all amount to—why invest in social media? The benefits are many: sharing information about our work, our conservation fund, and ways to get involved; fundraising; and making connections with likeminded people and organizations. We are also very close to monetizing our YouTube channel, meaning paid advertisements will result in extra funding for our programs and projects—we just need a few more followers! Can you help us out?

Subscribe today to help us harness the power of social media!



# Montana Bureau of Mines Studies Lower Big Hole River

Investigating Low Water and High Temperatures

In 2021, BHWC proposed a study to investigate water resources in the Lower Big Hole Watershed. The objective is to improve understanding of how water management and use patterns affect groundwater/surface-water interactions, and to inform stakeholders how these changes may affect late-season river conditions.

The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology's (MBMG) Ground Water Investigation Program (GWIP) began data collection in fall 2022. Data collection is ongoing and includes monthly groundwater-level measurements in and around Glen, between Kalsta's bridge and Notch Bottom (fig. 1). Staff gages were also installed to measure surface-water levels in the river, tributaries and select locations in irrigation ditches (fig. 2). Discharge will be measured in the tributaries and in the Big Hole River.



Figure 1. A GWIP scientist measures the ground-water level in a well in Glen.

Throughout the summer of 2023, GWIP scientists will conduct bi-monthly floats on the Big Hole River to perform temperature imaging surveys. They'll use a thermal infrared camera to visualize areas of cool groundwater discharges to the river. GWIP scientists will also be drilling monitoring wells in the area to help fill in data gaps.

This project would not be possible without BHWC and the support of participating landowners. Any questions about the study can be directed to the project manager, Ron Breitmeyer, at <a href="mailto:rbreitmeyer@mtech.edu">rbreitmeyer@mtech.edu</a>.

Figure 2. A staff gage is used to measure surface-water levels.

## Fish & Water

## **Cause to Celebrate**

BHWC Commemorates Major Milestone in Anaconda Uplands Remediation

Last fall, the EPA signed off on two Remedial Design Units of the Anaconda Superfund complex. This means remedy obligations have been met: vegetation has been established and sediments have been captured in the high country and in the stream bottoms.

This is a huge accomplishment for everyone involved, achieved in a relatively short time period. For over a decade, BHWC and a dedicated team of ecologists, engineers, biologists, and contractors has been working to fix this landscape, addressing contaminated sediments flowing from upland areas at the headwaters of the Clark Fork Superfund site.

While this is cause for celebration, there is still much work to be done. In July,





we'll be entering into a long-term agreement with MFWP for operation and maintenance of the 5000+ acre area.

You can learn more about the project here: <a href="https://bhwc.org/project/mount-haggin-anaconda-uplands/">https://bhwc.org/project/mount-haggin-anaconda-uplands/</a>.

Thank you to our project partners: NRDP, MFWP, MDEQ, Watershed Consulting, Pioneer Technical, WET, and Montana Tech's Restoration Biology Program.

# **Building for Beavers**

Reducing Beaver Conflict in the Big Hole

This spring, BHWC completed a beaver conflict reduction project near Wise River, where beaver had been plugging the landowner's culvert and causing flooding of the road. The landowner wanted to keep the beaver around, so we used a beaver deceiver and pond leveler to keep both the landowner and the beavers happy.

In this particular situation, we installed a culvert fence and pipe device (see photos) to prevent beavers from damming the culvert and establish a maximum pool depth, while still allowing water to drain through. A win-win!

Beavers are sometimes pesky critters who can wreak havoc on ranching operations. Battling them causes headaches and a few curse words. But at BHWC, we believe keeping them on the land-scape is important, so we work to find common ground between beavers and humans. We've completed three of these projects over the last few years and are continually improving our tools to address beaver conflicts using nonlethal methods.

Are you having problems with beavers in the Big Hole? Contact us at <a href="mailto:info@bhwc.org">info@bhwc.org</a> or 303-808-5611. We may be able to help!





### Fish & Water

# **Smith-Sage Springs Project a "Go"**

Collaborating to Restore Wisdom Wetland

This summer, we will implement our Smith-Sage Springs Restoration project which will restore a large wet meadow and an important water source in an otherwise dry country. There are multiple large, active head cuts in the Smith-Sage Springs, migrating upstream and slowly lowering the water table and drying out the surrounding wetland areas. There are also several eroding stream banks below the head cuts that add excessive sediment to the stream, negatively affecting water quality. Construction will take place late summer 2023.



This project came to us from the USFWS and the Upper Big Hole CCAA. This type of collaboration is exactly how things get done in our watershed. Helping to fill the capacity voids to fundraise, plan, coordinate, and implement a project like this is our secret sauce. In a short time, we helped hustle up the money to get this project shovel-ready. We will not only restore the degraded Smith Sage Springs, but also conserve what's left of the intact system. Be on the lookout for more project updates this summer.

You can learn more about this project here: <a href="https://bhwc.org/project/smith-sage/">https://bhwc.org/project/smith-sage/</a>.

Thank you to our project partners: USFWS, CCAA, TNC, DEQ, GGTU, Bass Pro Shop, Trout & Salmon Foundation, MFWP.

# **Cutting Trees in the Eastern Pioneers**

Addressing Conifer Encroachment

This April, we partnered with the BLM and TNC to treat a riparian conifer encroachment reach along the Eastern Pioneer foothills. We removed all Rocky Mountain Juniper and small-diameter Douglas fir trees (12 inches or less) within 23 acres of the riparian area of Browns Gulch near Glen. Next, we will work with the Youth Employment Program out of Dillon to install 80 low-tech structures in the same reach to kick-start recovery trends, giving Browns Gulch a full restoration makeover!

Conifer expansion is a significant threat to the diverse aquatic and riparian ecosystems in the Big Hole. The expansion of woodlands into other habitat types such as sagebrush steppe, aspen, and riparian habitats results in lost deciduous riparian communities and sagebrush steppe grasslands and overstocked, unhealthy forests that are less resilient to wildfire. Cutting conifer trees in riparian areas improves water availability and wildlife habitat and decreases fuel loads.

You can learn more about this project here: <a href="https://bhwc.org/project/eastern-pioneers">https://bhwc.org/project/eastern-pioneers</a>.

Thank you to our project partners: BLM, UMW, YEP-Dillon, TNC-Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership, Anchor Habitat Land Management.



### Fish & Water

#### And in Other News ...

Important Restoration Program Updates

#### Planning Work Continues at the Elkhorn Mine and Mill

Last year, BHWC completed a soils characterization that identified approximately 59,514 cubic yards of heavy-metal-laden mine wastes and contaminated soils still present around the Elkhorn Mine and Mill. These soils negatively impact Elkhorn Creek and cause potential health concerns to the visiting public. The data collected and presented in 2022 is now being used to identify removal alternatives to reach a 30% project design. In 2023, we will investigate the status of the existing repository and how much we can add to it. This summer, we will contract Pioneer Technical Services to conduct a Repository Investigation to find out how much contaminated soil we can add to it and whether or not we will need to add on or build a new repository.

#### Implementing Irrigation Infrastructure Upgrades

BHWC has studied and prioritized irrigation improvement projects for over a decade. Currently, we are focused on irrigation infrastructure priorities to improve local water conservation while benefitting the fisheries resource of the Big Hole. This year, we will be designing 7 new headgates structures in Wise River and Melrose. Updating and improving the conveyance mechanisms (e.g., weirs, screw gates, and ditches) will improve the efficiency of operations for water users. By adding measurement devices to ditches at their points of diversion, irrigators are demonstrating their commitment to conservation, because the more we can measure water and finely control its use, the better we can conserve it.

# Wildlife & Uplands

# Collaboration Finds a Way (and FWP Saves the Day)

BHWC and Partners Overcome Challenges to Provide Spring Carcass Removal

Our livestock carcass removal service faced a major challenge this spring when the dump truck we usually borrow from USFWS got snowed-in at Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Without a truck to pick up carcasses from local ranches, we were unable to transport them to our carcass compost facility outside of Wisdom. That is, until Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks came through with a flatbed trailer—complete with rails, ramps, and a winch.

The trailer (pictured, right, before the rails were welded on) was delivered right in time, and BHWC was able to provide carcass removal services



to local ranches free of charge during the month of May. The trailer will stay at BHWC's compost site and will allow us more flexibility in how and when we provide carcass removal services.

To learn more about our carcass removal and composting program or to arrange for carcass pickup, contact John Costa at (209) 628-2225.

Thank you to our project partners: MFWP, People and Carnivores, Tash T. Diamond Post and Pole, MDT, local ranchers.

# Wildlife & Uplands

# Tana Nulph: Montana is Big Enough for Ranching AND Grizzlies

BHWC Associate Director Guest View Featured in Montana Standard

Divide—In Montana's Big Hole Valley, we have a tradition of coming together to resolve problems.

The Big Hole Valley includes a blue-ribbon trout stream, working farms and ranches, and the biggest national forest in Montana.

In the 1990s, the Big Hole Watershed Committee came together over concerns regarding Arctic grayling and intensifying drought. Next, a growing population of wolves prompted more work. Today, concerns include grizzly bears.

Wildlife and agriculture have coexisted since the first homesteaders. Open rangelands (as opposed to fenced subdivisions) allow for wildlife movement between mountain ranges. We've found that both producers and wildlife can thrive when we come together.

Today, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is considering Montana's petition to delist grizzly bears under the Endangered Species Act. Whichever way that decision falls, we have learned some important lessons about complex wildlife challenges.

Partnership is a key part of our success. United we thrive. Divided, our future is less certain.

In 1995, grayling were candidates for listing under the ESA. Concerned about the future of the fish — and the future of their irrigation supply — local ag producers came up with a voluntary drought management plan. Meanwhile, Fish, Wildlife & Parks revised fishing regulations for the hottest days of summer. This plan has become a model for other Montana communities.

But grayling were just the start. Our wildlife-conflict kit has several tools. We've hired a range-rider, Chet Robertson, who has spent 12 grazing seasons roaming national forests. His purpose is to keep tabs on predators and their movements, as well as discover potential trouble like sick or orphaned livestock. The goal is heading off conflicts before they happen and, if stock is killed, identifying carcasses in a timely manner to help ranchers secure reimbursement for their losses from USDA Wildlife Services

Unfortunately, there is always some livestock deaths during stressful seasons, like calving. If these carcasses are left in the wrong places, they can attract predators. Disposing carcasses at our composting facility near Wisdom, we have been able to reduce those kinds of attractants.

These successes led to more innovation and cooperation. For example, we borrow a dump truck from the USFWS Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge to collect the livestock carcasses. The Montana Department of Livestock's Livestock Loss Board provides funding for the range rider program, and we cost-share with the Montana Department of Transportation on the compost site. People and Carnivores in Dillon offers their expertise to local ranchers, helped us set up our compost site, and has helped us provide bear-resistant garbage cans to local residents. In the past, a predator problem was just "resolved" by destroying that animal. But without addressing the key source

In the past, a predator problem was just "resolved" by destroying that animal. But without addressing the key source of the conflict, the problems just recurred.

Society at large has decided that it wants wolves and bears on the landscape, but it is the local agricultural producers who end up dealing with them on a day-to-day basis and have the impact on their livelihoods. As a society, we must ask if it is fair to livestock producers to shoulder the costs of public wildlife as they expand their range and numbers

Our wildlife-solution toolbox is supported by local ranchers, of course. We provide these tools on a shoestring, knotted together with grants, donations and volunteer labor. We could do even more, if we had more and more consistent funding.

As the federal and state governments figure out a future for the grizzly bear, let's not forget their future depends on healthy ranching communities that connect wildlife habitats to each other. Predator conflict prevention tools need to be a big part of the picture.



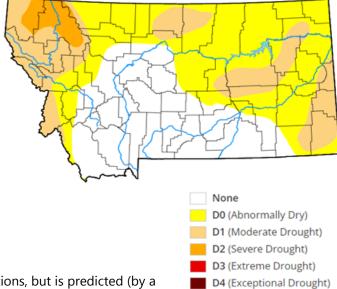
# **Building Drought Resilience in the Big Hole**

## Summer Streamflow, Snowpack & Seasonal Climate Forecast

-Kaitlin Boren, Hydrologist, Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation

**Drought Status:** As of May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, most of the Big Hole Watershed is not under drought conditions, apart from the northwestern portion of the watershed being under D0, or abnormally dry status. Based on the <u>NOAA Spring Outlook</u>, there is a 50% chance of continued drought conditions in the Northern Rockies into the month of June.

**Seasonal Outlook:** NOAA predicts above normal temperatures and equal chances of above or below normal precipitation for the months of June, July, and August. Water users should expect to have water shortages during the early to late summer months if the outlook predictions are correct.

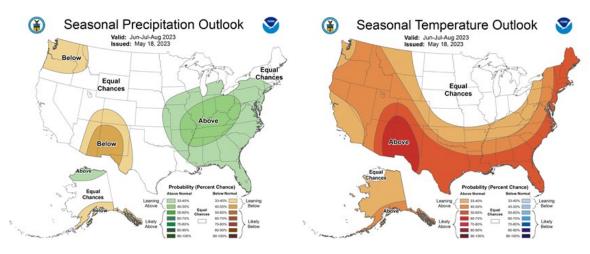


No Data

ENSO Alert System Status: El Niño Watch

**Synopsis** (NOAA): Climate is currently in ENSO-neutral conditions, but is predicted (by a greater than 90% chance) to transition in to El Niño, which will continue into the winter months in the Northern Hemisphere.

**Snowpack and Streamflow:** The remaining snowpack in the Big Hole exists at high elevations. The lower elevation snow melt at the beginning of May caused a significant increase in flows, but with the remaining snowpack, there will be a peak river level still to come in early to mid-June.



# **Helpful Resources**

- BHWC River Conditions webpage: <a href="https://bhwc.org/river-conditions/">https://bhwc.org/river-conditions/</a>
- DNRC Stream and Gage Explorer (StAGE): <a href="https://gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/StAGE/">https://gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/StAGE/</a>
- MFWP Current Water Body Restrictions: <a href="https://fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions/waterbody-closures">https://fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions/waterbody-closures</a>
- US Drought Monitor Montana: <a href="https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?MT">https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?MT</a>

# **Building Drought Resilience in the Big Hole**

# **New Faces, Same Commitment to Conservation**

Personnel Changes in the Big Hole CCAA

The Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) program has been working for Arctic grayling recovery in the Upper Big Hole for the last 17 years. This year, the CCAA has undergone some major changes—not to its commitment to the people—and fish—of the Big Hole, but to the people driving that commitment. So please join us in welcoming Kaitlin Boren, DNRC Hydrologist and Katelin Killoy, MFWP Riparian Ecologist, who are joining Sean Lewis, NRCS District Conservatist (Dillon); Cassandra Kohler, FWP Fisheries Biologist; and longtime grayling champion, Jim Magee, USFWS Partners Program biologist as drivers of the CCAA.

# **Weighing Water Storage Options**

BHWC Engages Stakeholders, Investigates Opportunities

Drought communication and response are important parts of BHWC's work, but at the end of the day, there is only so much water, and drought planning can only get us so far. That is why BHWC is focusing on retaining more water on the landscape through both natural and hard storage opportunities. In 2022, we underwent an intensive review of water storage options in the Big Hole. We went back to the 2005 investigations and alternatives analyses, spoke with residents and engineers, and convened a water storage subcommittee of irrigators, residents, and agency experts.

This is what we learned:

#### Improving just 1% of the basin's water yield would = 17,000 acre-feet or 189 cfs/month, July-September

BHWC is investigating the use of small seepage sites on private ground, low-tech process-based projects (wetlands), and hard storage (reservoirs) as potential methods of storing water in the Big Hole. We have secured funding through MWCC's watershed fund to work with local landowners to identify the best locations for water storage projects in our watershed, and that process is now underway.

Do you have an idea or want to get involved? Reach out to us at (406) 552-2369 or info@bhwc.org.

## **Weekly Drought Updates**

River Conditions via Text Message

Last summer, we recognized the need for regular, up-to-date reports on Big Hole River conditions and a convenient way for stakeholders to receive them. Thus was born our weekly text message updates list.

Sure, conditions can be viewed via USGS and DNRC websites, but many people don't have the time or desire to get on their computer, pull up each gage's website, and review the data. That's where we come in! Each Thursday, we send text message updates to our list of recipients highlighting flow and temperature for each Big Hole River stream gage as well as section status. A quick and easy way to keep tabs on the river.

Sign up today to receive our weekly updates!



# **Building Partnerships to Fund Conservation**

# **Big Hole Conservation Fund Up and Rolling**

Sunrise Fly Shop Enrolls as First Conservation Fund Partner

In April 2023, Sunrise Fly Shop in Melrose signed the paperwork to become BHWC's first partner business in the Big Hole Conservation Fund. Starting this summer, their clients will have the opportunity to add a percentage to their bill to be donated through the fund to BHWC. Their tax-deductible contributions will support important restoration and conservation projects on the Big Hole River. In return, BHWC will promote partner businesses through our communication channels, including newsletters, email, website, and social media.



# Want to get involved?

BHWC will hold open enrollment periods for the conservation fund each spring to sign up partner businesses prior to the summer season. If you're interested in enrolling your business, please reach out to BHWC today to get the conversation started! We all benefit from our beautiful river, so let's join forces to take part in maintaining it.

# Help BHWC Help the River

Your Contributions Make all the Difference

Donate online: Point your phone's camera at this QR code or visit bhwc.org.

**Donate by text**: BIGHOLE to 26989 to donate from your phone.

Donate by mail: Send checks to P.O. Box 21, Divide, MT 59727.

**Donate livestock:** Click for more information: bhwc.org/giving/livestock.

Give extra to partner businesses in the Big Hole Conservation Fund.

Contact us by phone (406-960-4855) or email (info@bhwc.org) to donate items for auction or raffle.





Big Hole Watershed Committee P.O. Box 21 Divide, MT 59727

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SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER



Conservation Through Consensus.

P.O. Box 21 Divide, Montana 59727

Phone: 406-960-4855 E-mail: info@bhwc.org



Donate online!
Visit <a href="bhwc.org">bhwc.org</a> and click the "Donate" button.

# **Conservation Through Consensus Since 1995**

**Mission:** To seek understanding and agreement among individuals and groups with diverse viewpoints on water use and management in the Big Hole River watershed of Southwest Montana.

Established in 1995, the Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC) is a collaborative organization representing diverse regional interests, including ranchers, sportsmen, conservationists, tourists, and community members. For two decades, BHWC has taken a leadership role in enhancing the vitality of the Big Hole River, the surrounding watershed and communities, and the diverse and rare wildlife that inhabits the Big Hole Valley. The Big Hole River is the lifeblood for the surrounding area's natural and agricultural legacies, and the foundation for the region's economy. By proactively working to conserve this precious resource, BHWC is enriching one of Montana's last, best places for local residents and visitors from around the world.

BHWC is a consensus-driven, multi-stakeholder entity that works closely with other conservation organizations as well as local, State, and Federal agencies on watershed restoration and management plans.

The Big Hole Watershed Committee is a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax deductible as allowable by law. *Our tax identification number is 11-3737644*.