

# Madison River Ranch News

## What's happening at the Ranch



Spring Newsletter

Madison River Ranch Association

2024

### From the desk of MRR Board President

**John Graifemberg**

Over the last several years we have had an increase in lot sales and construction. Prices have increased for raw land, existing houses and new construction. With interest rates expected to continue to drop, I would expect these trends to continue.

Most of the members that have anticipated new construction have volunteered to submit design documents for review and comments. The reviews for the most part found that the proposed



*Photo by Mike Cramer*

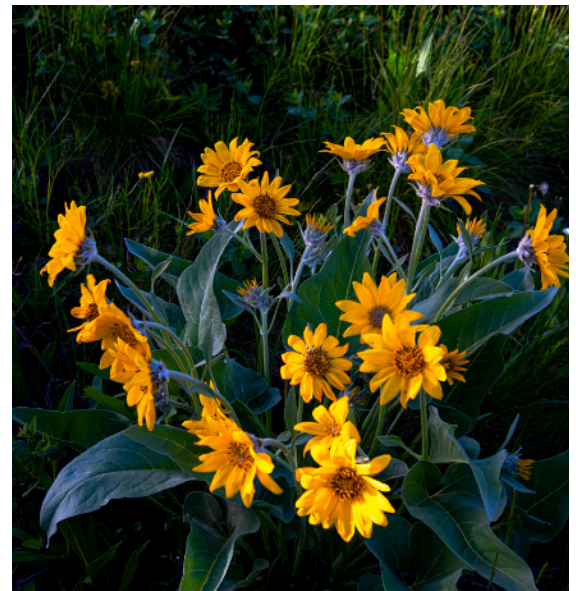
projects met the CC&R requirements. In a few cases minor revisions were suggested and accepted.

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**The Annual MRR Meeting will be held on Saturday June 29 at 10:00 am Gibbs Garage 58 Madison Trail**



*Photo by Mike Cramer*

### Help Us Preserve Reynolds Pass

**Kaye Counts**

Originally named “Low Pass” Reynolds Pass is a reminder of how recently our landscape was traversed solely by Indigenous people and wildlife. For it was in 1859-60, that Captain William F Reynolds, guided by mountaineer Jim Bridger, led scientists, artists, and soldiers in a mapping expedition of present-day Montana and Wyoming.

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**MRR Board President Continued from Page 1**

I have had a couple of members contact me to complain about a neighbor having excessive maintenance issues on their property. I would prefer neighbors try to resolve issues between themselves before they contact the board. CC&R section 6.14 defines required maintenance of property.

This year our annual meeting will be on June 29th. Our secretary Sally Niess will provide addition meeting information in the spring.

**Raynolds Pass Continued from Page 1**

Maps from this expedition showed the public how to access the wonders of the Yellowstone area, drawing newcomers to Yellowstone in waves over the next 160 years. Settlers and ranchers called the Pass home, driving away the Indigenous peoples and consuming a seemingly never-ending supply of resources to sustain their lives. These were families, looking for a better life for themselves and their children. It wasn't easy but it could be done.

More recently, Montana and Raynolds Pass have seen the migration of people from other states and cities, many to purchase land and homes for seasonal recreation. With hunting, fishing, agriculture, and tourism as the backbone of Madison County's economy, the influx was welcomed but it came with unmanaged consequences for everything and everyone, including us.

Over the past two years, I collaborated with neighbors to prevent the development of a large RV Park in the narrowest point of Raynolds Pass. A development which would block wildlife migration corridors and dump more people than inhabit the town of Ennis in an area underserved by emergency services and with questionable water availability. I heard many stories of what the community appreciated, why they enjoy being in Raynolds Pass year after year and what they want to share with future generations. They want to keep the land open, clean, with healthy wildlife, a productive river, and neighbors they know.

What do you feel when you step outside your home and sense the freshness of the air, see the mountain peaks reflecting or absorbing light, deer and elk moving through the land, or spend a day on the Madison River with nothing between you and the trout but water and skill? Do you have the same feelings when you go to a shopping mall, navigate commuter traffic, or look out a window to

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**Wildlife On The Ranch**

**By Karen Roll**

**Trumpeter Swans** are the largest waterfowl species native to North America. They have an all-white body, a black bill and black legs and feet. Juveniles are gray overall with pinkish bills. All ages can show rust-colored staining on the breast and head.

These swans can be found in Alaska, western Canada and in Northwestern US. Their preferred habitats include marshes, lakes and rivers with dense vegetation.

In 1930 Trumpeter Swans were almost extinct in North America due to over hunting for feathers and meat and widespread destruction and degradation of wetlands. Fortunately a small nonmigratory population of less than one hundred survived in the remote mountain valleys of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

Nearly all of the Trumpeter Swans in the Rocky Mountain area including many that migrate from Canada spend winter in the ice-free waters of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem but only a few remain to breed. In 2022 there were 28 swans in Yellowstone Park but only two pairs attempted to nest in the park.

Although I often see Trumpeter Swans in both Yellowstone Park and Red Rock Lakes NWR, this was the first year I had seen them on the ranch- an exciting sight.



*Photo by John Clark  
Common Area Pond*



## Raynolds Pass Continued from Page 2

see house after house, building after building? Of course not, yet without planning and some county-enforced guidelines, you will see versions of that congestion and hubbub emerging every year until Raynolds Pass looks like West Yellowstone or Big Sky. Certainly, your children will see it. A surprise every spring. No open space. No wildlife, no peace on the river. Insufficient water.

What would protective zoning regulations look like and how would they affect you? Right now, we are collaborating with our lawyer, Jecyn Bremer, out of Bozeman to draft

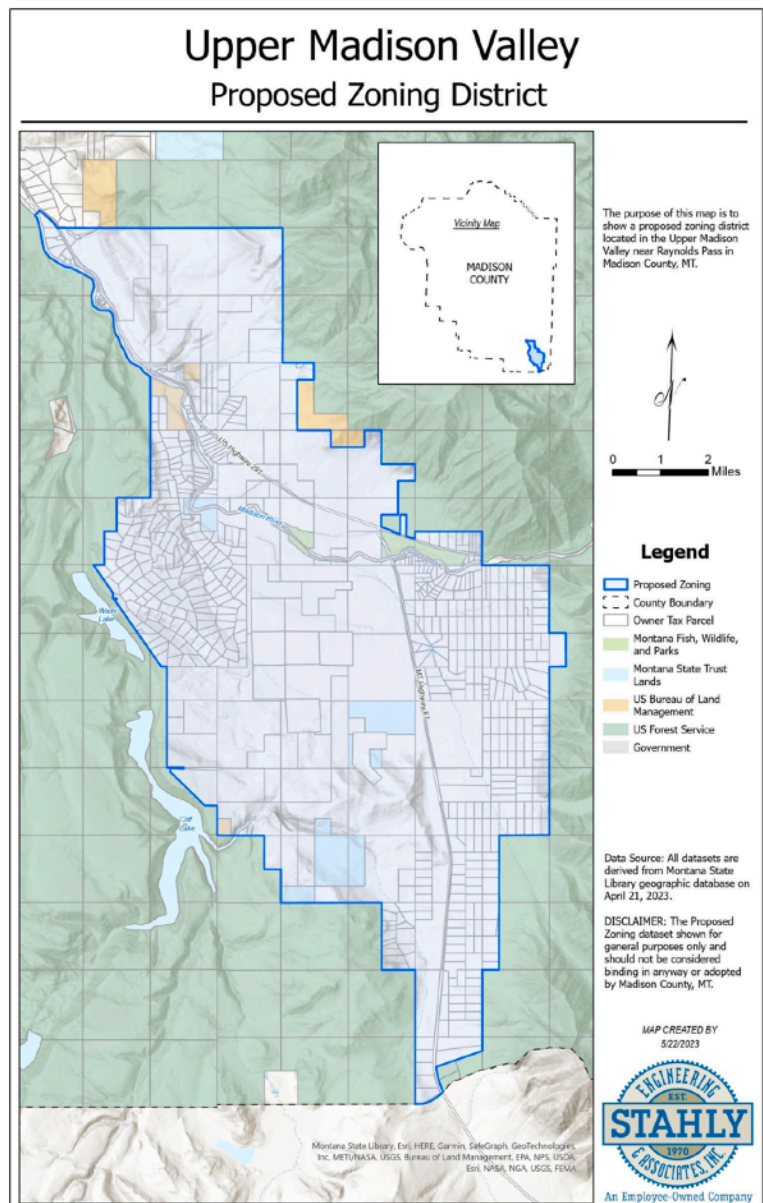
regulations for property owner comments and questions. Jecyn is the one who guided us to success in opposing the big RV Park and she knows Raynolds Pass well. The resulting draft of regulations will be shared in our newsletter and on the website. We will have a panel of experts to answer questions in a Zoom meeting this Spring, Think that your voice doesn't matter? That there are plenty of other property owners who will handle the problems? Or that the big ranches wield all the control? The reality is that every property owner whose name is attached to a parcel has an equal voice. It doesn't matter how many or how few shovels of dirt or the size of your dwelling sitting on it, we all have the same power to make a difference.

MRRRA property owners represent 40% of the signatures needed to protect Raynolds Pass. You are in control of the fate of wildlife and water. Now is the time to become involved in the conversation. Today isn't too late, you can still preserve the wonder and spectacle that is Raynolds Pass. I don't know if I can say the same next year.

Madison County treats signatures differently from the MRRRA HOA process. For answers to questions about Madison County Signature qualification and counting, please visit our FAQ page at <https://www.preserveraynoldspass.org/faqs>

People forget that change is inevitable. Our wishes and dreams can't control it, but our actions can. Go to [www.preserveraynoldspass.org](http://www.preserveraynoldspass.org), learn more and sign up for ongoing news and updates. We'll do the heavy lifting, but your voice will make the difference between preservation and the end of a way of life for us and life itself for many species.

We look forward to hearing from you. Best Wishes, Kaye



## Introducing: Geoff & Barbara Burling

Brits in Montana ?

“So, just how did you guys, a couple of Brits, come to be in Montana even, let alone Madison River Ranch ?” is the question which is posed by fellow ranchers, and most folks from around these parts, when we first come face to face. Its a fair question and the answer is not so long really.

Geoff, an aeronautical engineer by training and an electronic engineer by business (because the pay is better) started his own company in 1979 and very soon struck a deal with a company in Bozeman. This caused him to visit frequently and he was immediately in awe of south west Montana.

In 1986 he sold out to a UK group and took it public on the London stock exchange. That same year Barbara joined the group as an executive assistant, for another executive it must be stressed, and we eventually met. We were married in New York City in 2002 but, prior to that, we had taken a vacation to a place, which Geoff told Barbara “you are going to love”.

We drove from Denver to the Rainbow Ranch lodge at Big Sky and, during our week there, we decided to have a go at this thing called ‘fly fishing’. And that, of course, was the beginning of a second love affair which brought us back to Big Sky most summers, occasionally twice each summer.

And yes, Barbara did indeed fall in love again, this time with Montana. When you are born and grow up in a big city, such as London, but have an immense appreciation of open spaces and wild places then Montana hits the spot. Every year we explored more and discovered places which cannot be described in words or even photographs. Folks back home would say “why do you go to Montana” and we would reply “we cannot tell you - you must find out for yourself”.

Folks back home include the four sons we have between us and their families and, one by one, they’ll be visiting us here on the ranch.

We are also fortunate enough to have four grandchildren with ages ranging from 19 to 5, the five-year-old and just started school and loving it !

And so we came and fished and toured and fished and explored and fished until 2016 when something special happened.

In that fateful year, our one and only fishing guide, whose contact details we’ll be willing to share for a fee :-), just because he’s the best in SW MT !!, alerted us to a parcel of land for sale with fishing rights on none other than the Madison river, which Geoff had fished as a matter of dedication for almost two decades. Later that year we purchased lot 77 MRR without any further intentions other than to be here.

A year on, we were introduced to a builder, Greg Awe, and we got talking about a “small” fishing cabin. Of course, “small” didn’t stay in the vocabulary for long and over the course of 2018-2019 Greg built us the beautiful home which we now enjoy.

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**Geoff and Barbara Burling Continued from Page 4**

Geoff sold the company and retired in 2019 but, very frustratingly, we were denied the planned enjoyment throughout the 2020/21 covid pandemic. Nevertheless we enthusiastically arrived in 2022 to take up summer residence.

The saddest part of our story, by far, is that Greg, who had become a dear friend, passed away in 2022 before we were able to move in and thank him properly for what he had given us. We'll be forever grateful for this home which accommodates us in one of the World's most awesome wonders.

But, the property, scenery and fishing alone are not the entirety of the source of our pleasure at being on MRR. Our neighbours and fellow ranchers, friends, have made us so very welcome and have answered their own question of "Brits in Montana ???". Well, why not ???

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**Supporting Montana public stream access  
Montana Outdoors Nov-Dec 2023**

**By Dustin Temple, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

As you read this, duck and goose hunters are hunkered down in fields or crouched in blinds along lakes, reservoirs, ponds, rivers, and streams across Montana. We're in the heart of the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting season.

State law provides waterfowlers public access to hunt along streams and rivers—as well as allowing others to fish, kayak, and engage in water-based recreation on those waters.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks fully supports the Stream Access Law and the recreation it provides. Users must stay within the bounds of the law by accessing streams and rivers at legal entry points and staying below the ordinary high-water mark.

Few states in the nation have a law like this, which is part of the cherished Montana way of life. In most, like Wyoming, it's illegal to walk along any stream or river without a landowner's express permission. In Colorado, it's even illegal to anchor your boat in a river.

In Montana, stream access is settled law.

In 1984, the Montana Supreme Court held that surface waters capable of recreational use may be used by the public for water-based recreation. In a 2014 ruling on landowner efforts to close off portions of the Ruby River, the state's highest court upheld the Stream Access Law, adding that landowners can't close routes to public land or water where recreationists have a history of use. The following year, the Montana Legislature made clear that streams and rivers could be legally accessed at bridge crossings.

In recent years duck hunters, anglers, and floaters have been challenged by some landowners or their agents while legally accessing streams and rivers. Some landowners may not be familiar with our state's access laws and the important tradition of public access to the state's outdoor recreation culture.

FWP wants everyone who lives in and visits this state to know the law. To be clear:

▷ The public has the legal right to access rivers and streams by crossing state or federal land, including FWP fishing access sites and wildlife management areas, and via public road right-of-ways and easements, including bridges, as well as across private land with the landowner's permission. Landowners may fence

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## Montana public access continued from page 5

bridges to keep livestock off roads, but they can't construct fences or other barriers aimed at keeping the public out.

▷ As long as people legally enter a stream or river, they are not trespassing, even if signs posted at bridges and elsewhere say otherwise.

▷ As long as they stay below the ordinary high-water mark\*, the public can walk in and along a stream or river while partaking in water-based recreation on those waters.

What the public legally can't do is:

▷ Access public waters in any manner not listed above.

▷ Go above the high-water mark to get around a natural obstruction like a steep bank, fallen tree, deep pool, or waterfall. The only exception is when a fence, instream diversion, or other human-caused obstruction prevents safe passage up or down the channel. In that case a person can go around the obstruction.

▷ Hunt big game without landowner permission unless the stream or river is part of public land.

▷ Litter or otherwise degrade private land.

Montana isn't like most states. We've enshrined outdoor recreation as one of our highest values. That appreciation has protected our wild trout, wilderness, wildlife populations, scenic open space, and abundant public access to public lands. It's part of our way of life.

Here at FWP, we want to be sure that landowners and others know what the Stream Access Law says and how important public access is to Montanans.

\* The line that water impresses on the shoreline by covering it for sufficient periods to cause physical characteristics that distinguish the area below the line from the area above it. Generally observable as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank or indicated by terracing, changes in soil characteristics, destruction of vegetation, presence or absence of debris on banks or streamside branches, or other similar characteristics. Floodplains adjacent to surface waters are not considered to lie within the high-water marks.



Duck hunting a legally accessed stream in south-central Montana

## Ranch Recipes

Thanks

Sue McMahan

### Jalapeno Potato Salad

10 cups cubed, boiled and peeled potatoes (5 lbs)

8 boiled eggs, coarsely chopped

10 ribs celery, diced

10 green onion, chopped (1 bunch)

1 large yellow onion, diced

3-4 cups mayonnaise

1/2 cup chopped pickled jalapeños

2 T. juice from jalapeños

1/4 cup chopped parsley

2 tsp. cumin

1 T. black pepper

1 T. salt

In a large bowl combine potatoes, eggs, celery and onions. Combine remaining ingredients and add to potato mixture. Mix well and chill several hours or overnight. Great for picnics or barbecues. Adjust jalapeños to your liking!





## Polite Reminders

### How to Drive on Gravel Roads

#### John Clark

- **SLOW DOWN** – The best thing you can do to prevent rough washboard roads is to slow down. The ideal speed is less than 25 miles per hour. When you drive too fast, the dust trail following you is the smooth part of the road blowing away and leaving washboard and rocks behind. Please limit your speed to save our roads and to protect the people and the animals who live here. If you drive slowly you get to see more of the wildlife and are less likely to run it over. Driving slowly around other vehicles and homes is just good manners. No one wants rocks thrown up damaging their vehicles or their homes. **The slower you go the longer our roads and your tires will last.**
- Once we have maintained the roads near your property, please drive on the whole road and slowly. At lower speeds, your tires compact the road making it more solid and sturdy. If tracks start to form, drive on other parts of the road to compact the rest of it and prevent ruts from forming.
- If your road is wet and muddy please allow it to dry as much as you can before you drive on it. Driving our roads when they are wet and muddy is one of the best ways to damage the roads. If you let the roads dry naturally the damage will be minimized.
- Never speed up when you are traveling up hill. Keep a steady and slow momentum going. This will help prevent washboards.

Another reason to slow down: There are new puppies on the Ranch this Summer.



### Enjoying the Night Sky

MRR Covenants Section 6.17: “No Annoying Lights, Sounds or Odors. No light shall be emitted from any Tract



*Photo by Mike Cramer*

or other portion of the Property which is unreasonably bright or causes unreasonable glare; no sound shall be emitted from any Tract or other portion of the Property which is unreasonably loud or annoying including but without limitation, speakers, horns, whistles, bells or other sound devices; and no odors shall be permitted from any Tract or other portion of the Property which are noxious

Gate Combination on  
Members only section of Website

FedEx / UPS combination  
5971

### Historical Fun Link

Thank you to Gene Welch for sharing this YouTube clip of the Buist family Madison River fishing trip in 1938. We don't know the family, but we do recognize the river, structures such as the gas station, the bridge and those many fish!

[The Good Old Days](#)

**MRR Board of Directors****John Graifemberg, President**

Lot 61

**Sally Niess, Secretary**

Lot 135

**Mark Juranek, Treasurer**

Lot 60

**Phil Botsko, Board Member**

Lot 9

**Hilleary Hoskinson, Board Member**

Lot 97

Marv Gibbs, Webmaster

<http://www.madisonriverranch.org>

Barbara Gibbs, Karen Roll, Newsletter Editors

**Volunteer Opportunities**

Greetings everyone! I hope that you are well. Interested in spending a couple of hours with your neighbors helping on a work project on the Ranch? Last year several Ranch Members got together to build a privacy screen around the porta-pottie in the Common Area, providing cooling shade as well as improving the view. It really was a lot of fun, with the pre-planned design completely scrapped and re-done by our resident "general contractor and jack of all trades" Scott McMahon. We have a few more ideas (and welcome your's) for this year. Get your name in the list by emailing [volunteer@madisonriverranch.org](mailto:volunteer@madisonriverranch.org), with some date ranges and we will match timing to projects.

If you have ideas for other work projects, please send them to the above email. Looking forward to seeing you this summer.

Mark Juranek,

**Thank You All**

Many thanks to all the helpers that make MRR such a special place to be: Board Members, weed sprayers, roadside litter cleaners, photographers, web designers, road crews, gate keepers, crew that built screening for the toilet in the common area, delivery trucks and mail delivery people, newsletter contributors, and YOU.

**We Would Like To Meet You**

We would like to meet our neighbors on the ranch! One of the usual articles in the newsletter is an introduction. There are many new ranch owners that have not yet had a chance to write an article to introduce themselves. It is interesting to learn what drew people to the Madison River Valley and the Madison River Ranch.

To share your introduction contact a Board Director via the ranch website