



2018 Annual Report

Working to protect our natural resources from the threats of invasive species.

Conservation



Our story began in 2004, when two people witnessed spotted knapweed overtaking Gallatin Canyon and decided to take action. Fourteen years later, our organization has a track record we are proud of.

Tackling invasive species and the impacts they have on the ecosystem is daunting at best. Many don't understand how devastating they can be, the far reaching impacts they can have, nor the dynamic processes that drive effective management.

As our board chair stated: "Resource managers everywhere recognize that invasive non-native species are the biggest threat to the integrity and function of terrestrial and aquatic environments. The Gallatin watershed is no exception. Over several decades of resources management, I have seen landscapes recover from every type of calamity but I have never seen a landscape recover from the introduction of invasive species."

Education



Inspiration



And that's why we are here. We love this land and have the knowledge and developed the partnerships that has lead to our success. In 2018, the Alliance has worked to conserve, educate and inspire the community in an effort to ensure this place remains an extraordinary place to live, work and play. Read on to learn more about our accomplishments.



Conservation

Bighorn Winter Range

Invasive species, like spotted knapweed, are known as

"habitat transformers"

because they change the physical structure and forage availability in habitats, eventually pushing resident wildlife out. Since 2010, the Alliance has worked to address invasive species impacting Big Sky's local herd of bighorn sheep. Not only are we seeing progress, but we are putting science to work.

Science in the Field

- 2015** The year the Alliance established vegetation test plots to determine what native plants (grass and forbs) could compete in the shallow soils and on the steep hillside.
- 2018** Test plots were evaluated for stand density (plants/ft²) and to determine if there were more seeded plants within the grazing exclosures than outside of them.
- Prairie coneflower, Lewis flax, and thickspike wheatgrass were the seeded species with the highest densities. They established well on the weedy, southern aspect.
 - Protecting seeded species from grazing improved the density of all species.
- 2019** The Alliance is planning new test plots to assess pre-emergent treatment on cheatgrass to see if that will improve seeded species establishment.

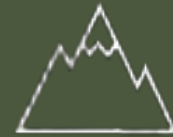


6 Partners

Gallatin County Weed District
Gallatin National Forest
Montana Department of Transportation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wild Sheep Foundation
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

8 Years

Treating noxious weeds on
bighorn sheep winter range



\$117,124

Matching funds by agency partners
towards bighorn sheep
winter range improvements.





Conservation

Community Weed Pulls



Removing noxious weeds from public lands & parks, trail heads, and river access sites helps protect the places we love.



10
Years



16,122
Pounds



1,039
Volunteers



2,177
Volunteer Hours





Education

Residents

According to Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
“most impacts on wildlife habitats are human induced.”

This is why the Alliance works to educate landowners, as Big Sky is comprised of roughly 50,000 acres of private land surrounded by national forest and wilderness. Invasive species don't recognize property lines, thus how private landowners manage their property can have a long-lasting impact on neighboring private and public lands.

34

landowners
assisted in 2018

926

acres
inspected in 2018

741

total landowners
assisted

9,946

total acres
inspected

“The work the Alliance does is invaluable to maintaining the native flora in our rapidly developing area. I've contacted them numerous times over the past ten years via phone and site visits and have found them responsive, knowledgeable and eager to help. Everyone who lives in or visits this beautiful place we call home benefits from the work they do to maintain the balance of our ecosystem.” ~ C. Jones



Most common
noxious weed species
in 2018:

1. Canada thistle
2. Houndstongue
3. Oxeye daisy
4. Musk thistle
5. Hoary alyssum
6. Spotted knapweed





Education

Residents, recreationalists, & visitors

Recreationalists are the main mechanism for spread of invasive species, both by land and by water. The Alliance is actively promoting two national campaigns to prevent the spread of invasive species.



PlayCleanGo

4

Gallatin Canyon Signs



2.8 million
annual views

4

Trailhead Signs



120,000
annual views

300

Kits for Kids



distribution began in
fall of 2018

Clean.Drain.Dry

A cooperative project with
Gallatin River Task Force



1500+

youth educated at schools,
camps, and events

Hundreds

reached via farmer's market
& social media

Thousands

reached via
print advertising



Inspiration

“An understanding of the natural world and what’s in it is a source of not only a great curiosity but great fulfillment.” David Attenborough

Wildflower & Weed Hikes



“This was my first trip to Big Sky...I had heard about (these hikes) for years and was finally privileged to actually be there. Our guide’s enthusiasm and passion for nature’s bounty was contagious to us “teachable tourists.” I valued the opportunity to be given a new appreciation for what is around us and needs to be cared for on behalf of those who come after us.”

~ D. Tolton

Educate a landowner, and they’ll be inspired to make a difference in their community.

After individual landowners were educated, they acted and began working to address invasive species in their neighborhood. The alliance took it one step further, in helping landowners by leveraging partnerships with county agencies to provide \$72,835 in noxious weed treatment at no cost.

Cooperative Treatment Days



Crail Ranch Native Demonstration Garden



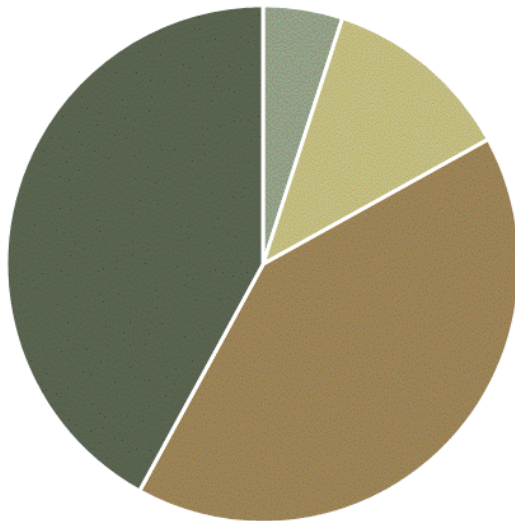
With a consortium of partners, the Alliance is building an inspiring demonstration garden at Crail Ranch using native plants that are both wildlife friendly and water wise, helping to preserve the historic landscape. Construction started in the fall of 2018 and will resume next spring. Join us and grow native!



Financial Report:

Revenues by source

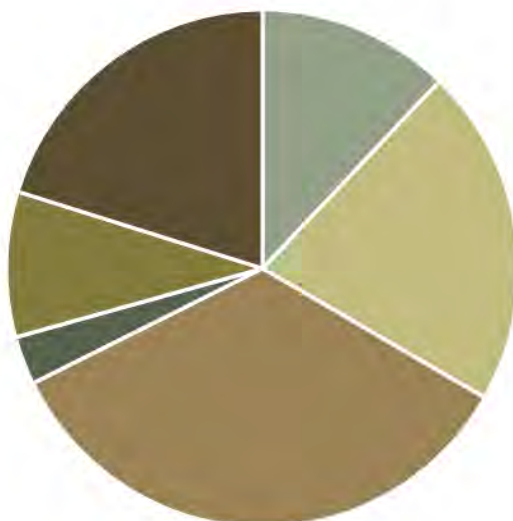
Total \$144,225



- Fundraising 5%
- Grants 12%
- BSRAD Grant 41%
- In Kind 42%

Expenses by Program

Total \$134,396



- Admin 12%
- Community Program 21%
- Education & Outreach 34%
- Fundraising 3%
- Habitat Conservation 9%
- Landowner Assistance 20%

A recent study commissioned by the Outdoor Alliance found that 93% of residents in the region chose to live here because of the outdoor recreation opportunities. We are proud to be a part of that group, and work hard to mitigate the negative impacts on our irreplaceable natural resources.

The value of what we bring to the community:

- \$72,835** The value of cooperative treatment efforts in the Big Sky community initiated in 2013
- \$24,314** The amount of partner / sponsor support of our two annual weed pulls
- \$117,124** Matching funds by partners in treating bighorn sheep winter range & implementing test plots
- \$1.85** 7 year average match of in-kind to grant funding
- \$15,000** Grant funding awarded to our partners for cooperative projects with the Alliance (funds not included in the Alliance's revenue or expenses)

“If we take care of it, the land will yield recreational economic benefits for perpetuity.”





Thank you

**Donors • Funders • Partners
Sponsors • Volunteers**

The Alliance spends significant time and effort toward its goal of coordinating efforts and working cooperatively with various federal, state, and local agencies. Their commitment and willingness to participate are major contributors to the successes the Alliance has achieved over the past fourteen years.

Big Sky Community Corporation
Big Sky Owners Association
Big Sky Resort
Big Sky Resort Tax
Big Sky Youth Empowerment
Bridger Brewing Company
Jack Creek Preserve
Gallatin County GIS Department
Gallatin County MSU Extension
Gallatin County Weed District
Gallatin River Task Force
Gallatin Valley Land Trust

Greater Gallatin Watershed Council
Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Cmte
Madison County Weed District
Moonlight Basin
Moonlight Community Foundation
Montana Conservation Corps
Montana Department of Agriculture
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Montana Noxious Weed Control Assoc.
Montana State University
MT Statewide Noxious Weed Campaign

Board of Directors

John Councilman, Chair
Michael Jones, Chair
Katie Coleman, Secretary
Don McAndrew
Larry Holzworth
Lorri Lagerbloom
Daniel Jones

Staff

Jennifer Mohler, Executive Director

Multiple Big Sky HOA's
Mystery Ranch
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Ophir School
Simms
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club
Sola Café
Trout Unlimited
U.S.F.S., Custer Gallatin National Forest
Yellowstone Club
Yellowstone Club Community Foundation
Wild Sheep Foundation

