

2024



# Moose Pair Pollinator Garden

Ousel Falls Trailhead, Big Sky



# We built a pollinator garden!

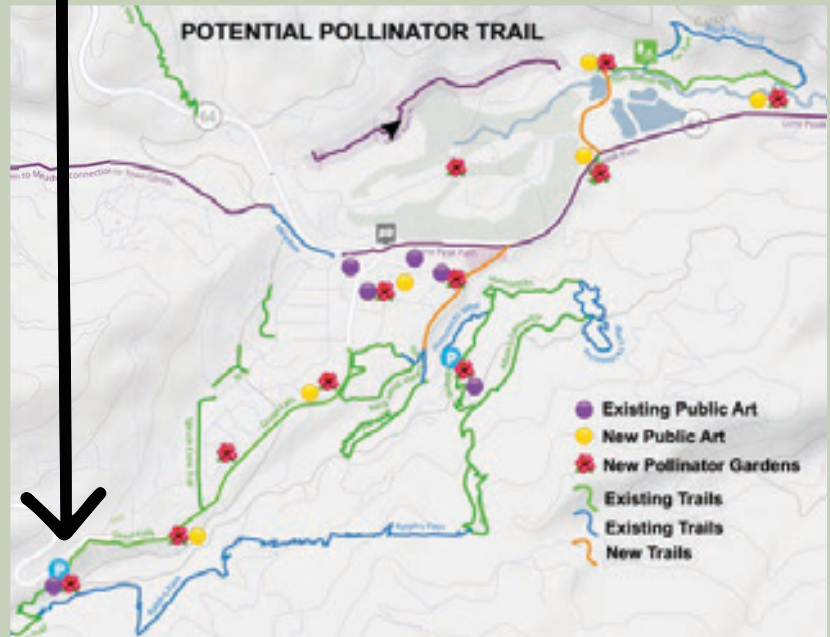
On July 3, 2024, Grow Wild, in partnership with the Arts Council of Big Sky, Gallatin Conservation District, and Big Sky Community Organization - and with the support of dedicated volunteers and partners - established a native pollinator garden beneath the moose pair sculpture at the Ousel Falls trailhead. This high-traffic location provides a perfect opportunity to showcase the benefits of pollinator-friendly gardening to countless visitors.

This is the first pollinator garden of many that will create a Pollinator Pathway at Public Art Installations that educate the community about pollinators, pollinator habitat, and native plants with the goal of inspiring landowners to create habitat of their own.

## Moose Pair



## Ousel Falls Trailhead



Ousel Falls is the busiest trailhead in Big Sky, with over 90,000 visitors in 2021. As iconic as Lone Peak itself, Ousel Falls Trail and its surrounding park are a favorite for both locals and visitors from around the world. This 1.6-mile hike, which crosses a ravine over the South Fork of the West Fork of the Gallatin River and meanders through the woods before ending at a 100-foot waterfall, is an impressive hike worth visiting any time of year. As Ousel Falls Road is one of the busiest in Big Sky, this pollinator garden will be highly visible to trail visitors and travelers on the road.



# Our Partners

Starting in the fall of 2023, planning of the Moose Pair Pollinator Garden began by identifying partners and funding opportunities.

## Project Partners



Over the winter, GW, GCD, and ACBS pursued fundraising via private donors and local foundations. In early spring, Big Sky Landscaping created the garden design, the moose sculptures were relocated, and garden construction began once weather and site conditions allowed. Earthwork, hardscape, irrigation, and sculpture re-setting was completed at the end of June, allowing for planting to begin.





# Garden Build

We organized a volunteer planting day originally scheduled to begin on July 1, with additional days planned for the 2nd and 3rd if necessary. However, unexpected rain caused a delay. We quickly informed our partners and volunteers, rescheduling the planting day to Wednesday, July 3, with a backup date of July 5.

Despite concerns that the holiday might reduce volunteer turnout, nine dedicated individuals showed up to help. Their hard work and teamwork allowed us to complete the planting and apply the pea gravel mulch in just one day!



**We planted 290 wildflowers with early, mid, and late bloom periods, carefully selected to thrive in the site's conditions and planting zone!**



**We are truly amazed that this project was completed in just one day - a testament to the skill and dedication of our incredible volunteers!**



# Wildflower Species

Given the area's heavy traffic from both hikers and wildlife, we incorporated a few non-native plants into the garden. The carefully selected non-natives species are more resilient to wildlife grazing and human trampling while still offering essential habitat for pollinators. Although native plants are preferred in most cases, this demonstrates how flexibility can help achieve the goal of supporting wildlife while maintaining ecological benefits in high-traffic areas.

## Moose Garden Plant List



### Native Cultivar

Creeping Phlox 'Snowflake'  
Buckwheat 'Kannah Creek'  
'White Swan' Coneflower  
Goldenrod 'Fireworks'  
Terracotta Yarrow  
Paprika Yarrow

### Native

Anise Hyssop  
Yellow Columbine  
Prairie Sage  
Pale Purple Coneflower  
Showy Fleabane Daisy  
Common Blanketflower  
Small-flowered Penstemon  
Wild Blue Flax  
Wild Bergamot

### Non-Native

Catmint 'Walker's Low'  
Black Eyed Susan



## It didn't take long for plants to establish and pollinators to visit!



A Goldenrod crab spider sits on 'Terracotta' Yarrow.

Although known for eating pollinators, studies show that the payoff from the the spider's control of aphids and grasshoppers is an overall benefit for pollinators.



# The Power of Pollinators

Pollinators are keystone species within our ecosystem, meaning that other species depend on them for the roles they perform.

The act of pollinating a flower allows it to produce fruit that will be eaten by a diversity of wildlife, from songbirds to grizzly bears.

Additionally, pollination increases genetic diversity. The more diverse a plant's genes, the more likely they are to survive and reproduce under stressful conditions (e.g., drought or disease).





# Educational Resources

To inspire, we must educate! That's why we created...

A garden interpretive sign.



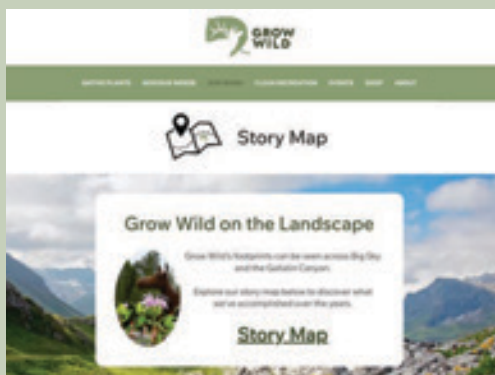
A how to guide.



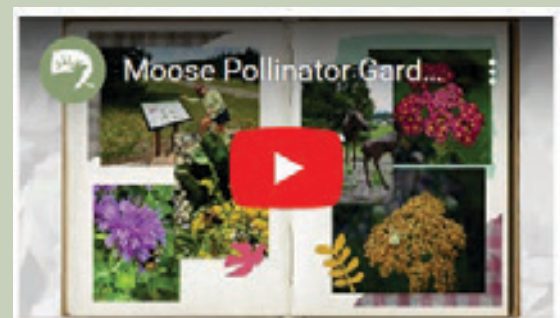
A RAC card.



A website story map.



A video.



Resources available online at [growwildmt.org](http://growwildmt.org)



# Celebrating Success!

## Moose Pair Pollinator Garden Partners & Funders



Heartfelt thanks to our garden partners and funders! Your invaluable support made this extraordinary community asset possible—a space that nurtures wildlife habitat, restores biodiversity, and inspires others to join in creating a healthier, more vibrant environment.



We're excited about the incredible opportunities ahead in 2025 at the garden! From volunteer events like garden cleanups, planting, and maintenance to our annual hike and tour during Grow Wild's wildflower festival, this is just the beginning.



**Together, we'll continue to grow, connect, and create lasting impacts for our community and the environment.**