



**GROW
WILD**

2024

Annual Report



Singing Sky Photography
Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*)
Syrphid Fly (*Syrphidae*)
© Crail Gardens

Cultivating Change

In 2004, two local fishermen stood in Gallatin Canyon, alarmed by the relentless spread of spotted knapweed across the landscape they loved. What began as a simple act of concern has grown into something extraordinary. That moment of urgency marked the beginning of Grow Wild, an organization dedicated to conserve Montana's native ecosystems, safeguard biodiversity, and empower our community to be stewards of the land.

At the heart of our work lies the belief that land stewardship is not just an act of preservation - it's an investment in the future. By protecting the wildlands that surround us, we protect the health of our watersheds, the habitats of countless species, and the natural heritage that sustains us all. From restoring native plant communities to educating our neighbors about the role they can play in managing invasive species, we aim to create lasting, positive change for our ecosystem.

A Year of Growth

72% more property inspections

44% more miles traveled

45% more kids educated

20% more education events



Grow Wild is more than a name — it's a call to action. It represents our commitment to growing native plants that strengthen habitats, growing a community of informed and engaged land stewards, and growing our capacity to meet the challenges of the future.

As you read this report, you'll see the story of what we've accomplished together - a story rooted in the soil of Montana's wildlands and nourished by the passion of those who call this place home.

Thank you for being
part of our journey.



Jennifer Mohler
Jennifer Mohler
Executive Director



John Councilman
John Councilman
Board Chair

Mike Jones
Cathy Gunther
Don McAndrew
Larry Holzworth

Danielle Jones
Krisy Hammond
Ann Cook
Jennie Cohen

Our Mission

To conserve native species in the Upper Gallatin Watershed through education, habitat restoration, and collaborative land stewardship.



Land Stewardship

The cornerstone of our work is empowering landowners with the knowledge, tools, and resources to sustainably manage their land while controlling invasive plants through best management practices and adaptive strategies.

From those we've helped -

- “ Grow Wild has been a very helpful resource to convince other neighborhood owners to work to control their weeds and how to do it in a safe and effective manner.
- “ Excellent help and advice for managing our property.
- “ We are grateful for their advice and help on our property.
- “ Just great service and ideas and information.
- “ These resources have been incredibly helpful to me as a resident of Big Sky and I would like to see many others take advantage of them.

2024

91 property inspections
1,093 acres inspected

Lifetime

17 years
1,093 property inspections
12,932 acres inspected

Project Partners



Awareness Level

At the end of the field season, we surveyed the landowners we assisted.
Here are the results.



92% actively manage noxious weeds on their property.

100% think wildlife are affected by noxious weeds.

42% do not think this community takes the threat of invasive species seriously.

75% have heard of our new partnership, Alpenscapes.



92% are aware that recreation can facilitate spread of invasive species.

33% have recognized our PlayCleanGo signs.

100% of those used the associated boot brush!

83% are aware that aquatic invasive species are a threat to the Gallatin River.

58% are familiar with the Clean.Drain.Dry. campaign to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



83% think Big Sky would benefit from implementing more green infrastructure projects.

75% have visited Crail Gardens.

42% said the gardens have inspired their landscaping choices.

50% enjoyed its aesthetic and community value.

58% have used Grow Wild's online resources to incorporate native plants in their landscape.

100% responded that the visit by Grow Wild was helpful in their understanding of noxious weed management.

Pollinator Pathway

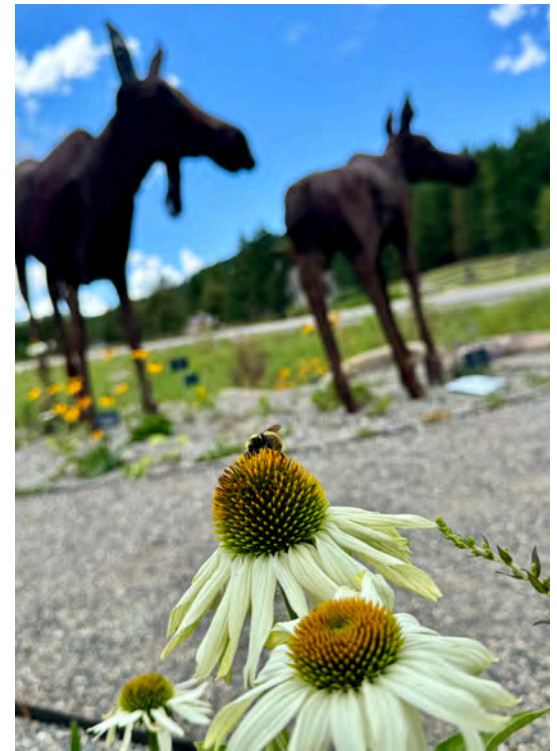
We built a pollinator garden at the Moose Pair Sculpture at Ousel Falls!

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 - built a native pollinator garden beneath the moose pair sculpture at the Ousel Falls trailhead.

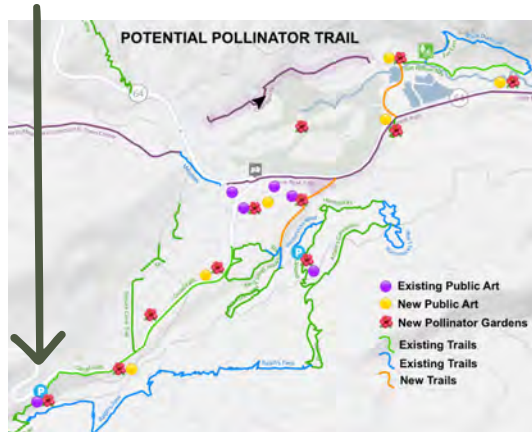


This high-traffic location provides a perfect opportunity to showcase the benefits of pollinator-friendly gardening to countless residents and visitors.

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



Ousel Falls Trailhead



Restoring Biodiversity

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



Volunteers are the heart of Grow Wild's success. Their dedication and expertise make projects like this possible. In just one day, our amazing volunteers transformed this space, skillfully planting and mulching to bring our vision to life. Their hard work and commitment are truly inspiring!

Moose Pollinator Garden

9 volunteers
41 hours
290 wildflowers
18 species

Pollinators are Keystone Species!

Pollinators play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Countless other species rely on them for survival, as their pollination enables plants to produce fruits and seeds that sustain a diverse array of wildlife—from tiny insects and songbirds to large mammals like grizzly bears. Without pollinators, entire food webs would be disrupted, highlighting their irreplaceable role in nature.

Thank you partners & funders!



MIDNIGHT
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



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.



3,945 Miles!

In 2024, we traveled nearly 4,000 miles with our interactive education trailer, engaging communities and amplifying our conservation message.

Designed to inspire and educate, the trailer provides visitors with an immersive learning experience centered on protecting Montana's ecosystems.

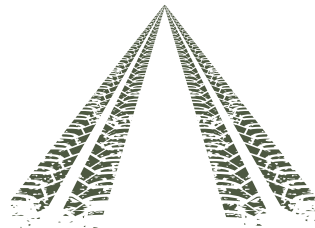
2024 additions:

- A ceiling graphic of 5 vegetation zones, highlighting keystone species found in each zone.
- A display showcasing handcrafted paper weeds & wildflowers.



With these updates, the education trailer continues to be a dynamic tool in fostering awareness, encouraging land stewardship, and advancing our mission to protect and restore Montana's natural landscapes.

3,945 miles
44 events
1,165 kids
1,770 adults



2023 to 2024...

13% increase in # of events!

115% increase in # of kids educated!

57% increase in # of adults educated!



...and counting!

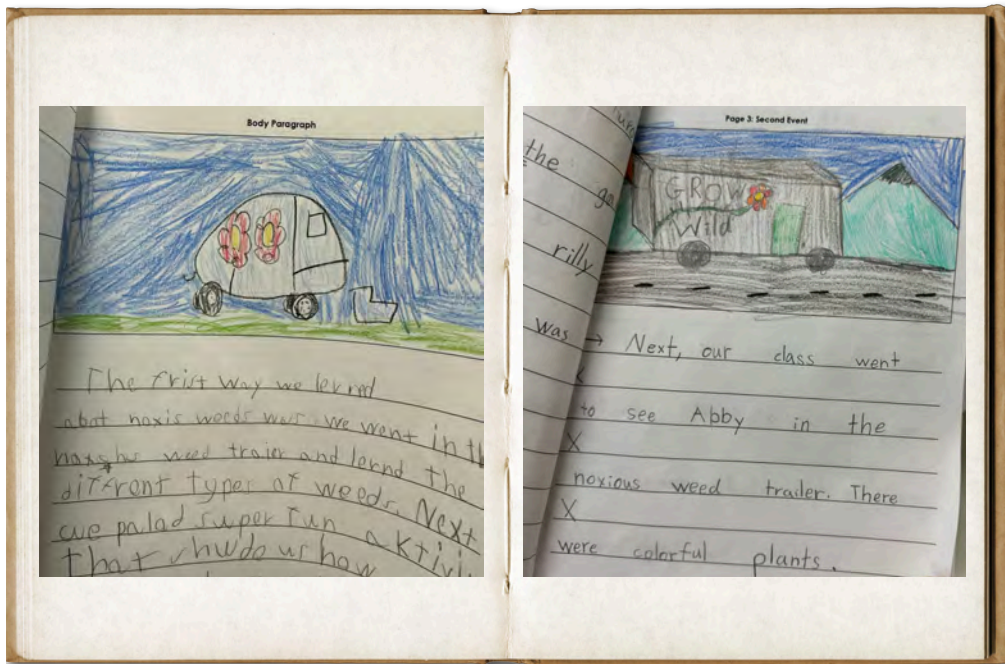


We are inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders!

Having Grow Wild come and help with our Spring Field Trip was amazing! Jen brought a team of volunteers who were helpful, knowledgeable and engaging. Her trailer was interesting and informative. She created activities and games that were engaging to the students and created unique opportunities for them to learn. The students were excited to learn and actively engaged.

Grow Wild is community centered and helps a future generation of Montanans to be mindful of our environment and be responsible citizens.

Sincerely, Robin Hooper



Education

Through engaging classes and events, we empower our community to become knowledgeable conservation advocates and responsible land stewards.

Grow Wild was the perfect addition to our first grade field trip to the pond. Jen had wonderfully engaging volunteers, games and lessons that appealed to students' curiosity and thirst for knowing the why behind each topic.

We were enamored with Grow Wild's education trailer. Students were able to see up close Montana native and noxious flowers and identify which ones they had seen before.

My students especially enjoyed the Aquatic Invasive Species activity where they learned about the importance of Clean. Drain. Dry. through a fun music game that illustrated how invasive species spread in waterways.

Thank you Grow Wild, Mrs. Pechishev

2024

2,747 kids

2,066 adults

68 classes & events

Lifetime

17 years

17,165 kids

7,483 adults

331 classes & events



Ophir

175 Students

600 pounds of weeds pulled
from Ophir campus

This year, we partnered with Ophir School's second and fourth graders to foster a deeper understanding of conservation and empower them as the land stewards of tomorrow.

The partnership included All About Invasives field trips at Porcupine and the Community Park, as well as Campus Beautification Week in October. During these events, students pulled weeds and planted wildflowers, restoring native plants that support wildlife with food and habitat.

These initiatives reflect our unwavering commitment to educating and inspiring the next generation to care for the land and lead conservation efforts in their communities.

The Grow Wild organization went above and beyond, not only for our second grade class, but for our entire school...We are so thankful for the time Grow Wild has put into helping every single student at our school learn while also ensuring they have fun at the same time.

Thank you Grow Wild! Julie B.



Weed Pulls

Partnering with our community to protect the places we love!

For 16 years, we've worked to inspire our community to join us in combating the spread of invasive species, often referred to as ecological tumors due to their ability to disrupt and damage ecosystems.

Together, we've removed noxious weeds from public lands, parks, trailheads, and river access sites to prevent them from overtaking native habitats.

By protecting these cherished spaces, we help preserve the delicate balance of ecosystems that sustain wildlife and maintain the natural beauty of the places we all love.



We broke a record with
2,745 pounds of weeds pulled!

2024

233 volunteers

197 hours

2,745 pounds of noxious weeds

Lifetime

16 years

51 weed pulls

1,683 volunteers

25,554 pounds of noxious weeds



Clean Recreation

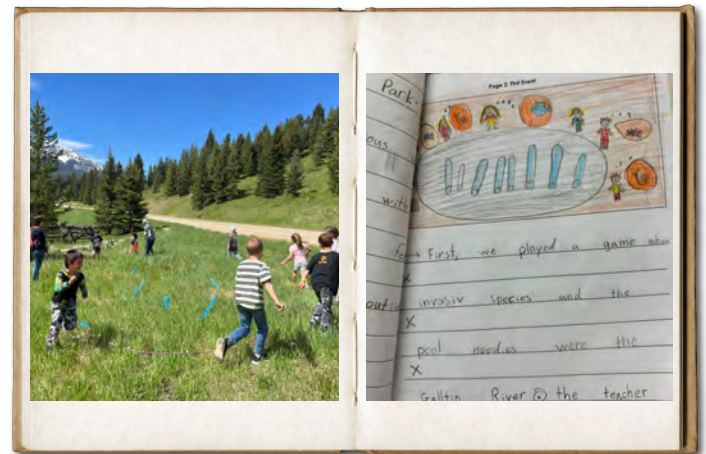
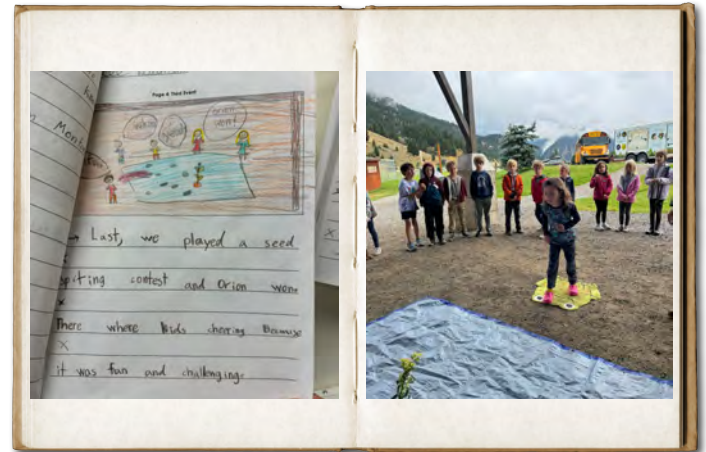
2016-2024

8 PCG trailhead signs
642 PCG kids kits distributed
7.9M media impressions
23M billboard views
29.9K PR items distributed

Since 2016, Grow Wild has championed nationally recognized campaigns dedicated to protecting our lands and waters.

By focusing on prevention through education, these initiatives emphasize the critical role awareness plays in safeguarding natural ecosystems.

Empowering individuals with knowledge helps prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, ensuring our shared resources remain healthy and resilient for future generations.



PlayCleanGo

On May 24, we installed our 8th PlayCleanGo trailhead sign at Porcupine Trailhead with the help of Ophir School 4th graders and a moose!



We installed a PlayCleanGo billboard on Highway 191, that reached an impressive 797,500 drivers over its two-month display period from July to August.

**STOP
INVASIVE
SPECIES
IN YOUR
TRACKS.**

PlayCleanGo.org



Clean.Drain.Dry.

Aquatic invaders are currently absent from the Upper Gallatin Watershed, but the introduction of invasive species or harmful pathogens could devastate its ecosystem and fisheries.



Since 2016, Grow Wild has been at the forefront of promoting the "Clean.Drain.Dry." initiative, working to educate both residents and the growing number of visitors about the importance of responsible recreation.

By reinforcing Montana's strong conservation ethos, this effort aims to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the Upper Gallatin Watershed.

Through outreach, education, and community engagement, we strive to protect our waters for generations to come.

2024

9.5M	canyon sign views
1K+	social media video views
1.2M	print ad reach
10,954	promotional items distributed
68	outreach events

Project
Partners



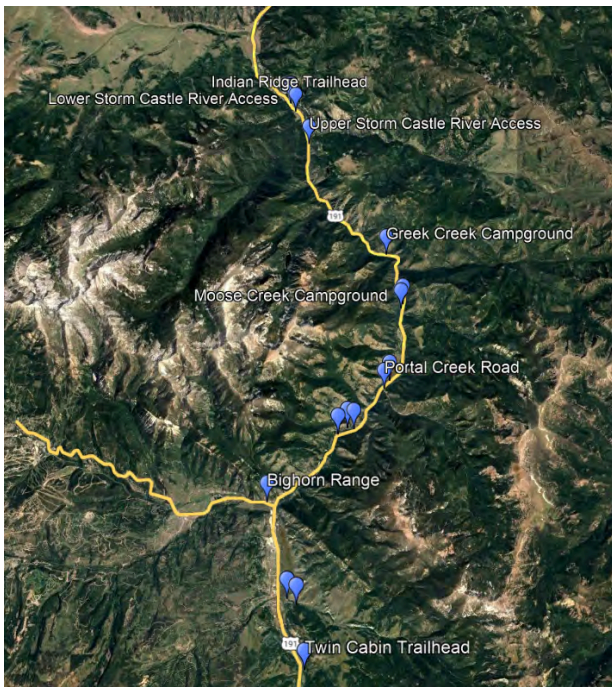
Conserve Our Canyon

Conserve Our Canyon cooperative project aims to facilitate effective management of noxious weeds in the Gallatin Canyon and protect its natural resources for the benefit of all who enjoy and rely upon them.

We secure and provide funding to Custer Gallatin National Forest to hire the Montana Conservation Corps Wildlands Restoration Team to manage noxious weeds. We identify areas of concern and work closely with our partners to treat heavily used public lands such as trailheads, fishing access sites, campgrounds, national forest system roads, and river restoration sites.

Locations

Shenango Helibase · Lower Storm Castle River Access
Upper Storm Castle River Access · Indian Ridge Trailhead
Greek Creek Restoration Area · Moose Creek Campground
Portal Creek Flats · Portal Creek Road
Deer Creek Trailhead · Upper Deer Creek Restoration Area
Bighorn Range · Porcupine Flats · Twin Cabin Trailhead



2024

13 # sites treated

7 # acres treated

83 # acres covered

\$6,400 contributed \$

\$8,569 matching \$

Lifetime

6 years

87 # sites treated

418 # acres treated

1,541 # acres covered

\$24,475 contributed \$

\$61,211 matching \$

Bighorn Habitat



Since 2010, Grow Wild has been working to improve the Spanish Peaks bighorn sheep herd's habitat by managing noxious weeds and experimenting with native plant restoration.

Designated as a "species of conservation concern" by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Spanish Peaks bighorn sheep herd faces habitat fragmentation, loss, and degradation.

To improve conditions, we've partnered with Montana State University, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Custer Gallatin National Forest, the Gallatin County Weed District, and various organizations and agencies.



Field Research

In 2022, project partners laid out test plots with different percent canopy cover of cheatgrass. Plots were treated with Indaziflam, a pre-emergent herbicide that inhibits germination of seedlings. This approach aims to suppress annual invasives, enabling native plants to regenerate and outcompete them.

We are continuously evaluating these sites to assess ongoing response of the desired species to cheatgrass control with Indaziflam.



2016-2024

14 years

8 partners

\$15,879 our investment

\$160,679 matching funds

Crail Gardens



In 2019, Grow Wild built a demonstration garden at Crail Ranch using native plants that are wildlife friendly, water wise, and preserving of the historic landscape.



Native plants, wildlife, and ecosystems are deeply interconnected.

Sustainable landscaping requires a new mindset, but the rewards are limitless.

Explore resources at growwildmt.org and join us in restoring biodiversity!



2019-2024

52 native species
190 volunteers
656 hours
1,543 wildflowers planted

Crail Garden
Benefactors



Defensible Landscapes: A Modern Paradigm for Fire-Resistant Design

When Crail Gardens was initially planned, pea gravel was chosen as the preferred mulch due to its durability and firewise properties. However, conditions outside our control resulted in us pivoting to using shredded cedar mulch.

By 2021, we revisited the use of pea gravel, starting with an experimental swap in the smallest garden. Initially, we were concerned that the gravel's heat-retaining properties might increase the plants' water needs by raising soil temperatures. To our surprise and delight, the results showed the opposite: not only did the pea gravel conserve water, but it also created ideal conditions for the native wildflowers, particularly low-growing species, to thrive.

Encouraged by these findings, we expanded the use of pea gravel in 2022, replacing the cedar mulch in the west garden.

In 2024, with the help of dedicated volunteers and nearly the entire Big Sky Fire Department team, we completed the transition to pea gravel in the two largest gardens.

By choosing fire-resistant mulch, we enhanced the gardens' resilience to wildfire risks, while continuing to support thriving native ecosystems.



New Partnerships

Alpenscapes: native and sustainable landscaping that thrives in Big Sky, to help Big Sky thrive.



Alpenscapes is a partnership formed by four existing Big Sky organizations based on the belief that landscapes can be both beautiful and beneficial to the environment.

We believe in a future where wildfire-resistant, water-wise, and wildlife-friendly landscaping is the norm.

Crail Gardens serves as both an inspiration and a tangible example of the sustainable landscaping we collectively promote. In July, we celebrated the launch of this partnership at the gardens, engaging with 65 attendees.

This collaboration is already showing results, as evidenced by Grow Wild's growing number of site visit requests for 2024. Meanwhile, our Alpencapes website, filled with valuable information and resources, has attracted over 1,600 sessions since its launch.

Stay tuned for more valuable resources from the partnership coming soon.

In 2024...

we conducted
72% more
property inspections
in part due to
Alpenscapes reach!



Community

2024

53 sponsors
156 donors
117 partners
161 volunteers
374 volunteer hours

2024's MVG
MOST VALUABLE
GARDENERS

Stan & Cyndee
Button



For over 20 years, Grow Wild has built successful collaborations, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to conserving natural resources.

Through strong partnerships and dedicated leadership, we continue to expand our impact, ensuring conservation efforts remain effective and sustainable.

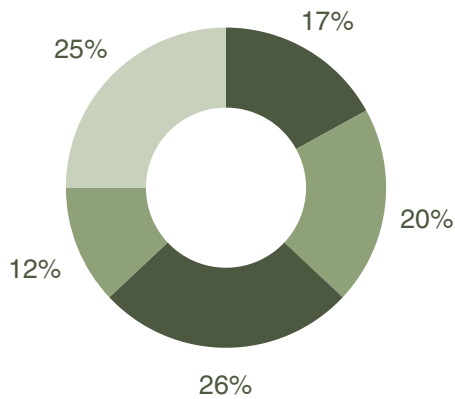
Our dedicated volunteers and supporters make this possible, driving conservation and restoration of the landscapes we all love.



Conservation doesn't just happen — it requires collective commitment, long-term vision, and sustained investment to create lasting impact.

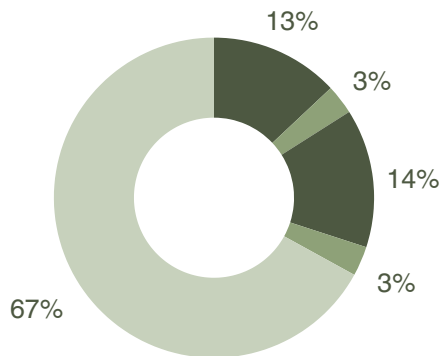


2024 Financials



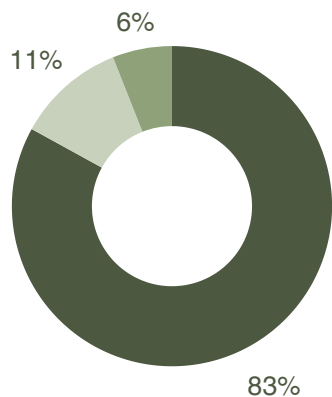
Program Investments

- 17% clean recreation
- 20% education & outreach
- 26% landowner assistance
- 12% wildlife habitat restoration
- 25% biodiversity (*native gardens*)



Total Revenue: \$308,079

- 13% foundations
- 3% events
- 14% individual donors
- 3% earned revenue
- 67% grants



Total Expenses: \$269,010

- 83% programs
- 11% administration
- 6% fundraising

Notations:

- 83 cents of every dollar allocated to programs
- \$159,761 of in-kind donations (*not included in revenue/expenses*)
- Net \$39,069 is allocated to reserve fund, 2025 projects, and staff addition

With Appreciation!



The vital work of nonprofits depends on strong partnerships and generous support. Our impact is made possible by the dedication of our partners, funders, and donors, whose contributions drive meaningful change and help us protect and restore the natural world.

Ace Hardware · Alpenscapes · American Bank · Andrea Kavert · Andrea & Mike Manship · Ann & Brian Cook · Anne Fetzer · Anonymous · Arts Council of Big Sky · Becky Clements · Ben Pierce · Bernie Dan · Big Sky Build · Big Sky Community Organization · Big Sky Conoco · Big Sky Farmers Market · Big Sky Fire Department · Big Sky Landscaping · Big Sky Owners Association · Big Sky Resort · Big Sky Resort Tax · Big Sky SNO · Bureau of Land Management · Bozeman Brewing · Bozeman Chronicle · Bud the Wonder Dog · Camp Big Sky · Carolyn & Steve Jones · Cathy DeVries · Cathy & Mark Gunther · Coffee Pot Bakery Café · Christel Boeljo · Chuck Buker · Custer Gallatin National Forest · Cyndee & Stan Button · Cynthia Heumpfner · Deb Lewis · Deb Moore · Erica Pearlman · Esther Campbell · Gallatin Canyon Women's Club · Gallatin Conservation District · Gallatin County · Gallatin County Weed District · Gallatin Gateway Youth Group · Gallatin National Forest Resource Advisory Committee · Gallatin River Task Force · Gallatin Valley Earth Day · Gallatin Valley Farm Fair · Gallatin Valley YMCA · Gateway Conservation Alliance · Great Bear Native Plants · H.J. Mohler · Hammond Property Management · Historic Crail Ranch · Hungry Moose Market & Deli · Jack Creek Preserve · Jacob Zimmerer · JeNelle Johnson · Jennie Cohen · Joanna McCoy · John Ansley · John Councilman · John Karl · Katie Alvin · Katie Colman · Katie Futch · Krisy Hammond · Laurie H. · Lisa Knorr · Lorri Lagerbloom · Lone Mountain Land Company · Lucky Dog Ranch · M. Parker · Madison County · Madison County Weed District · Madison Gallatin Trout Unlimited · Marcie Funk · Marianne Filloux · Marie Rapp · Marilyn Flint · Marjorie Jordan · Margaret Hillhouse · Mary Connaughton · Michelle Kristula-Green · Mitch Immenschuh · Monika Pokorny · Montana Conservation Corps · Montana Dept. Natural Resources Conservation Service · Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks · Montana State University · Montana Weed Control Association · Moonlight Community Foundation · MSU Extension · Murdoch's · Native Plant Patrons (61) · One Valley Community Foundation · Ophir School · Outlaw Partners · Outside Bozeman · Patrick Collins · Peak Photography · Quint & Cicely Drennan · Regen Market · Rhonda and Stephen Karl · Robbie Shelby · Rosemary Volosin · Rotary Club of Big Sky · Ruby Valley Conservation District · Sandra Knight · Sandra Young · Sara Berkstresser · Simms · Singing Sky Photography · Sotheby's · Spanish Peaks Community Foundation · Steve & Judy Mohler · Steven Patterson · Tracy Olsen · Trout Unlimited Home Initiative · Visit Big Sky · Volunteers · Westcape Nursery · Yellowstone Club Community Foundation

Grow Wild is a 501c3 charitable nonprofit.



**GROW
WILD**

GROWWILDMT.ORG



Shawn Mohler
Male bumble bee (*Bombus*)
Sedum (species unknown)