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THE BITTERROOT COMPASS

Summer 2004



"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

— John Muir

IN THIS ISSUE

Bitterroot Back Country Trails	1
Gardens, Fair and Fun	2
Mountain Eats	2
Bitterroot Flora	2
Bitterroot 101	3
New "Bitterrooters"	3
Montana Statistics: Things to Know and Forget	4

"The Bitterroot Compass" is created by King Real Estate's staff & friends.

Back County Trails

Summer in the Bitterroot starts in late June, with snow still visible on the highest mountain peaks. When summer arrives in earnest, the days are unbelievably long. It is still light enough at 10:00 p.m. for evening walks or that last cast in a good bug hatch on the river. The true definition of twilight is found as you enjoy an opportunity to hike, fish, and trail ride under the shadow of the silver tipped silhouette of the Bitterroot Mountains.

Without leaving town, you can have a hiking experience on Hieronymus Park Trail, just north of town, and Kiwanis Park Trail just south of Main Street along the Bitterroot River. Both areas are wild enough that they make you forget that you are just barely out of town. Watch out for the moose!

Even if you live on Main Street Hamilton, you can be on a hiking trail within ten minutes. With just a little more planning, the Blodgett Trailhead is easy to get to and offers a gradual ascent into the scenic Blodgett Canyon (see photo on this page). The trail winds below a solid rock face that changes with the light and weather. There are countless birds and wildflowers in every season as well as elk, deer, and black bears. Waterfalls invite a restful picnic, photo opportunities and time to soothe the soul. Tired hot feet can be

revived, when dangled into the cold mountain stream. The wildfires of 2000 burned some of this canyon and regeneration of the forest creates a new look with grasses, brush and wildflowers.

Many of the trails arrive at high mountain lakes. Twin Lakes, Bass Lake, Big Creek Lake and Burnt Fork Lake are just a few on a long list that would take many summers to visit. Back country fishing is legendary in the Bitterroot Valley. Just a few gray hackle peacocks, humpies, and a fly rod will net you enough small fish for supper. Even though the trails are well marked, it is still back country and it is not uncommon to be the only hiker on the trail—like having one's own mountain. Pack some dry food, a water filter, and a few emergency supplies just in case of injury.

Many people enjoy riding their horses on the extensive trail systems in the Bitterroot. The Bitterroot Back Country Horsemen and the Bitterroot Saddle Tramps are two local groups that organize and appreciate all things related to horses and mountain trails.

Summer days extend far into September in the Bitterroot back country...so when you see a "Gone Fishin'" or "On Vacation" sign on a local business just know that the shopkeeper has discovered the secrets of the Bitterroot Mountains. ☼

Gardens, Fair and Fun

We have a short gardening season here in the Bitterroot Valley, even though the valley is considered a “Banana Belt” in Montana. Despite the challenges of a shorter season, local gardens are known for a variety of fruits, vegetables and abundant flowers. New varieties of seed, especially produced for a short season, helps increase the success rate for home gardeners. The secret seems to be in planting at the right time.

Gardeners are constantly challenged with deer intruders unless they fence or employ other deterrents. Whitetail deer seem to dislike marigolds, daylilies and iris, leaving the blossoms alone for everyone to enjoy.

Every Saturday from May to October, there is the local Farmer’s Market in Hamilton on Bedford Street. The streets are lined with colorful booths marketing everything from locally grown produce to log furniture, crafts, jewelry, fresh baked bread, jams, and pies. Bitterrooters are friendly and willing to share their interests and hints for successful gardening.

The Ravalli County Fair is scheduled around Labor Day weekend. This is the annual showcase for local gardeners and 4-H kids that includes a carnival, rodeo and food, food, and more food! Businesses and banks close early allowing everyone to attend because missing the fair would be like missing a reunion. It’s a chance to catch up with old friends and participate in an annual community event. The quality of entertainment and information that can be enjoyed at the Ravalli County Fair cannot be overstated. Plan more than one day to enjoy it all and be sure to buy an Elephant Ear pastry from the swim team—YUM.

The conclusion of the Ravalli County fair is the unofficial end of summer in the Bitterroot. This is the time to start wrapping up garden chores such as rototilling, mulching and planning next year’s garden layout. Most schools in the valley don’t start until after Labor Day weekend. Summer turns to Fall and thoughts turn toward high school and University of Montana “Grizzly” football games. ☀

Mountain Eats

Hoyt Axton’s Bitterroot Baked Pancake

1 cup of milk
6 eggs
1 cup of flour
1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
6 tablespoons of margarine or butter

Put margarine or butter in a 9 x 13 pan and place in 400 degree oven to melt. Do not burn! Put milk, eggs, flour and vanilla in a blender and mix well. When margarine or butter is melted, pour remaining ingredients in pan. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown. This recipe is easy and fun. Top with huckleberries, or other fruits, yogurt, syrup, powdered sugar or anything else that sounds tasty.

“Hoyt Axton was a friend, who died at the age of 61. He was an Oklahoma born, country-rock singer known for “Joy to the World” and “Never Been to Spain” and his movie role in “Gremlins.” Hoyt was generous, had a gentle heart and enjoyed time at his Montana ranch in the Bitterroot Valley. This is a recipe he liked to serve to friends.” —Jan King ☀



Bitterroot Flora

Huckleberries

There are about 40 species of huckleberries located in the United States. Here in Montana, the species we are most familiar with is the Montana blue huckleberry, *Vaccinium globulare*. Because of the acidity of the soil, mountain sunlight and temperatures, most Montanans will tell you that Montana huckleberries have a distinctly superior flavor! Many people confuse the huckleberry with the blueberry because they look so similar.

The huckleberry is a native plant harvested from the wild for thousands of years by several Native American tribes. Not only was it a source of nutrition for native tribes, it was also a source of medicine and various other ingenious uses.

Some seasons produce huckleberries in abundance while others produce lots of leaves but few berries. It will often vary from patch to patch and from one drainage to another. It may take over an hour to pickle less than a gallon of berries. That is why so many wise bakers mix apple sauce with berries for a full pie.



There are huckleberry patches throughout the Bitterroot Valley. Although some people are very tight-lipped about their favorite patches, don’t be discouraged! Take a drive up Lost Horse Rd, St. Mary’s Mountain, and Skalkaho Canyon. A gallon of clean huckleberries commanded \$21.00 in 2003. Enjoy the quest for this small purple wonder but be aware that wildlife also love them. For more information about huckleberries visit this site on the web:

www.montana.edu/news/0997395513.html



BITTERROOT 101

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area

The Bitterroot Range creates the boundary between Montana and Idaho and is part of the 1,337,681 acre wilderness area known as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Almost 5 million acres in the Northern Region; North Idaho and Montana, have been classified as wilderness, with slightly over 20 percent or 267,536 acres, of that literally right next door.

The Lochsa and Selway Rivers drain into Idaho and our own Bitterroot River originates high in the mountains of the wilderness. Elevations range from a dizzying 10,131 feet at the summit of Trapper Peak, to a low of 1,600 feet on the Selway River.

“Wilderness” creates images in our minds of untouched beauty, wild animals and high mountain lakes. All of these features can be found in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, but not by motorized vehicle! The wilderness is within two to five miles of town, buffered by United States Forest Service property and roads or private property. It will take some planning and preparation, but opportunities to enjoy and learn from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness are available to the general public.

Backpacking and horseback are the best ways to see the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Unless you are experienced, it is advisable to find an outfitter guide to provide a safe, enjoyable opportunity for you to get to know the great outdoors in a positive way.

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is forested with soaring mountain peaks, deep canyons, rough terrain and thousands of miles of trails. Only the primary trails are maintained. While on those trails you will see areas of burned forests, as fire has traveled through the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness repeatedly. Wild animals abound: mountain goats, black bear, moose, deer and elk. Cold clear mountain lakes and rushing streams provide fishing for Rainbows, Browns, Cutthroat and Brook trout.

Floating the Selway river is an adrenaline rush, not for the faint of heart, that takes you through the last remnants of pristine scenery. It is a complicated river with multiple personalities— a few quiet pools out numbered by stretches of unbroken whitewater, barely hidden rocks and a vertical drop of 28 feet between the Paradise Guard Station and Selway Falls. Though the Selway river is 47 miles long and has less volume of water than the Colorado, Snake and Salmon rivers, there are several Class III and Class IV rapids requiring whitewater skills and experience. Permits are required to float the Selway river from May 15 to July 31. You can contact the West Fork Ranger Station in Darby, Montana 59826 or by phone (406)821-3269.

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is an impressive ever-present neighbor just waiting for an introduction. If you want to know more about the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, contact the Bitterroot National Forest at 1801 N First Street Hamilton, MT 59840 (406)363-7100. ☀



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accelerated real estate

Every year affluence and technology make it possible to build more homes in the wooded areas of Montana. What was once considered a rather ordinary practice of obtaining a quote for insurance is no longer. The wildfires throughout the nation have added another layer of due diligence and inquiry to the real estate transaction involving the purchase of mountain land for new construction or an existing mountain home.

The revised Montana Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement now features a clause for obtaining acceptable insurance coverage at a rate approved of by the buyer as a contingency of the sale. This is in response to the “risk tolerance” of the insurance underwriters and the availability of information about both the property and the buyer to the insurance companies.

For example, homes that are constructed with less flammable roof materials, such as tile, metal, or composition asphalt shingles, are rated better than wood shakes. The insurance companies like to see a good defensible space around the home - tree limbs trimmed and picked up off the ground, green grass, and rock landscaping.

Road access and the distance to the nearest fire station and fire district are big considerations. Many Montana areas are served by volunteer fire departments. Road types, grade, bridges, and distance of travel play a huge part in the response time and effectiveness of fire suppression.

Use of a home for vacations only can add additional insurance premiums as well. Ask your real estate professional to assist you in the due diligence review for insurance coverage and premium quotes before closing the real estate transaction. Visit: www.firewise.org for more important information.

“New Bitterrooters” The Stricklins

(Too busy playin’ for a photo.)



“We vacationed in the Bitterroot Valley several times in the past and thought it would be a great place to retire. We came from a cattle ranch in the Missouri Ozarks and found that making it through winter was just fine, no worse than where we came from. Our favorite part of the valley is Victor west, with lots of peace, quiet, privacy, wildlife, tall pines, cattle close by, and secluded but close to town. Our favorite hobby is hiking the canyons in the Bitterroot National Forest with clear rushing streams, spectacular scenery and clean mountain air. A perfect day here is early Fall, sunny and cool, low humidity, no bugs, hiking all our favorite spots before winter and watching the Aspen and Larch turn golden.” ☀



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1031 EXCHANGES

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Montana Statistics

Things to Know and Forget

During World War II, Montana license plates were made out of soybean fiberboard, and goats were known to eat them occasionally.

Hay bales are the medium used to create sculpture in the roadside art contest, known as the "What the Hay" contest, between Windham and Hobson every summer.

34% of adult residents in Montana, women and men, buy a fishing license each year.

Forming the western boundary, the Bitterroot Mountains is the longest mountain range in the state.

The biggest Native American rodeo in the state of Montana, The Crow Fair, also the biggest Pow Wow in the U.S., sells over 40,000 tickets a year.

Montana reaches its lowest elevation, 1,820 feet, in the northwest corner of the state where the Kootenai River enters Idaho.

The top awarded selling agent in the Bitterroot Valley for the past 6 years.



Jan King, Kathie and Carole Anne



Jan King, president/broker owner, has been a leader in luxury mountain real estate in the Bitterroot Valley and Montana for 26-plus years. Her knowledge of rural land empowers her to identify the right property for her customers. Whether it's a fly-fishing property, a log home, a horse ranch or a country home, Jan provides the diligence to complete the transaction. She has been the recipient of the top sales award in the Valley for the last six years with the help of her professional staff. Her company's use of technology and their scientific approach to the task makes it easy to be an out-of-the-area buyer. Jan is the perfect guide to mountain real estate.

A GUIDE TO MOUNTAIN REAL ESTATE