



Winter/ Spring 2011

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Wow! What a snow year it has been! A graph of snow water equivalent (swe) from the Northwest River Forecast Center shows May observed swe (black) surpassed maximum recorded swe. SWE is the amount of water contained within the snowpack. Impacts on streamflow will be dependant on the combination of sun, temperature, and precipitation in May and June.

Upper Gallatin Watershed Restoration Plan: A blueprint for water quality improvement.

▶ BWTF is currently developing a Watershed Restoration Plan for the Upper Gallatin watershed to identify and address problem areas. This plan will prioritize watershed restoration projects for the next 3 to 5 years, after which time BWTF will review and update the plan. BWTF will submit the plan to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MTDEQ) for approval. A MTDEQ approved Watershed Restoration Plan will improve the chances of receiving watershed restoration grants. BWTF will be encouraging public comment once a draft plan is completed. For more information, please contact Kristin at (406) 993-2519 or kristin@bluewatertaskforce.org.

Mark your Calendar!
Saturday, May 28th
5k, 10k, or kids fun run
www.runfortherivers.com

Learn While You Burn: BWTF seeking funds for interpretive signage along the new Big Sky Community Park Trail.

▶ Interpretive trails can turn an ordinary stroll into a learning adventure. This is the hope for the interpretive signage project to be installed on the new Big Sky Community Park Trail, which meanders along the West Fork of the Gallatin River. BWTF is currently fundraising to support installation of five interpretive signs describing water issues relevant to the Big Sky Community. For more details on supporting this project, please contact Kristin at (406) 993-2519 or kristin@bluewatertaskforce.org.



The new Big Sky Community Park Trail is the location set for future interpretive signage describing water issues relevant to the Big Sky Community.

The Gallatin Watershed Rain Garden Initiative: Simple landscaping tools for individual landowners to help improve water quality.

► Rain gardens are a best management practice (BMP) that can be used in both existing and new developments to reduce sediment and nutrient loading to streams. In addition, rain gardens produce substantial environmental benefits by helping to:

- Increase the amount of water filtering into the ground, which recharges local and regional aquifers.
- Protect communities from drainage and flooding problems.
- Enhance the aesthetics in yards and in neighborhoods.
- Provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and insects.

BWTF is partnering with the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council (GGWC) on a rain garden initiative for the Gallatin watershed. The rain garden initiative aims to educate and promote the use of rain gardens to reduce stormwater runoff to local rivers and streams. GGWC started the rain garden initiative last year with a demonstration rain garden at the Bozeman City Hall.

This year, BWTF will install a demonstration rain garden at Ophir School, while GGWC will install one at Sacajawea School. If you are interested in helping with either rain garden project, be on the lookout for “community dig days”. In addition, nurseries in Big Sky and Bozeman (e.g. Wildwood in Big Sky) will be participating in a “donate a plant” program. For more information, please contact Kristin at 993-2519 or kristin@bluewatertaskforce.org.



Before (above) and after (below) rain garden installation at the Bozeman City Hall. Rain gardens are landscaping tools to improve water quality and increase water filtration to groundwater.

Explore “Water through the Seasons”: a series of water events co-hosted with the Big Sky Institute.



► *What do skiing, rafting, and fishing all have in common? Water, and its quality and availability, are critical to continue enjoying the mountain ecosystem in which we live. Explore the seasons of water with the Big Sky Institute and the Blue Water Task Force. The spring runoff “Water Through the Seasons” event will be held on Wednesday, June 1st at 3 pm at the Ousel Falls Trailhead. Participants will get a first look at the new natural history interpretive trail along the Ousel Falls Trail developed by the Ophir School’s 6th grade class. Families will compete to uncover the interpretive trail sites from a list of clues and hydrology facts with the thunderous boom of high flow on the South Fork in the background. Afterwards, at the BSI office, Ophir School 6th graders will reveal the answers and hand out prizes. For more information, contact Kristin Gardner at 993-2519 or Jessica Wiese at 995-9355.*



Above: Participants of the first “Water Through the Seasons Event”, “Avalanche Safety and the Dynamic Science of Snow”, learned first hand how to dig and assess snow pits. Below: Following a day on the slopes, workshop attendees gathered for an interactive snow science panel with leading experts in the field from Montana State University, the Gallatin Avalanche Center, and Big Sky Resort.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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.....through community education, citizen involvement in water quality monitoring, and scientific data collection.