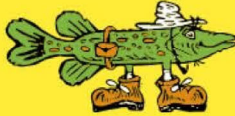


2023 Annual MTRPA Conference

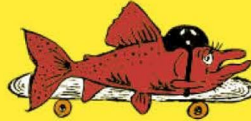
GO FISH!



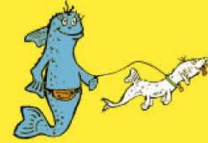
Montana Fish



Trail Fish



Rec Fish



Park Fish

All Fish in WHITEFISH, MT



April 2nd– 5th 2023

Grouse Mountain Lodge

2 Fairway Dr

Whitefish, MT

Sponsors

Paddlefish



Exclusive Representative of **Burke**



Pallid Sturgeon



Mountain Whitefish



Sponsors

Arctic Grayling



Western Cutthroat



Welcome Tote Sponsors



Prize Sponsors



WELCOME



Whitefish Parks and Recreation would like to oh-**fish**-ially welcome you to the MTRPA 2023 Annual Conference. We bring this conference to you through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are excited to welcome **M**ontana Fish, **T**rail Fish, **R**ec Fish, **P**ark Fish, **A**ll Fish to Whitefish. We have several fun activities and engaging educational sessions for you all to **dive** into. We have a **pool** of exhibitors who are sure to make a **splash**. Use those Fish Funds by bidding on items at our Gear Swap Silent Auction; nominate your friend (or enemy) to take an icy dip in Whitefish Lake or buy yourself out of the frigid **flop** in our Perch Plunge; buy a chance to **hook** yourself a prize with our Go Fish Game; **scale** up the mountain with our Big Mountain Scenic Tour; or take the **bait** to try and win our 50/50 raffle while you're dancing your **tail** off to *Way Down North* at our Monday Night Social. Don't have Fish Funds yet? They can be **perch**-ased at the registration desk. You can also use cash to participate in all activities. No matter how you participate, these activities are designed to **lure** you in. Some off-site activities require sign-ups to reserve your spot on the shuttle bus or bike rental, so don't get **schooled**; sign up for your spot at the registration desk. We hope to keep you **reeling** with laughter and **net**-working throughout the week.

Nordic Room and Alpine Rooms are located upstairs and do not have a public elevator. If you need accommodations to access these rooms, please speak with a conference host (just let **minnow** ☺).

Open your **line** of communication by accessing Grouse Mountain Lodge Wi-Fi with the conference password: GML_2021



Sunday April 2nd

MTRPA CONFERENCE 2023

12:00-6:00p.m.

Registration and Gear Swap/Silent Auction

Check-in Open (Continental Divide Foyer)

2:00-5:00p.m.

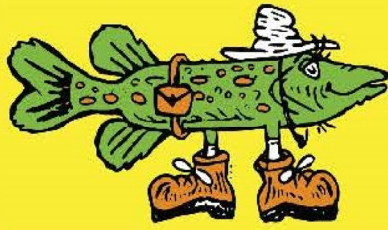
Exhibitor Set-up (Continental Divide Room)

3:30 -5:00p.m.

MTRPA Business Meeting (Whitefish City Hall)

6:00-8:00p.m.

**Exhibitor Social and Dinner – Sponsored by Grondahl
Recreation** (Continental Divide Room)



Monday April 3rd

MTRPA CONFERENCE

- 7:00-12:00p.m. **Registration and Gear Swap/Silent Auction** Check-in
Open (Continental Divide Foyer)
- 8:00-9:00a.m. **Welcome Breakfast—Sponsored by Water and
Environmental Technologies (WET)**
(Continental Divide Room)
- Student/Professional Match-up** —Brie Nikal
- Greeting** - Maria Butts, Director of Whitefish Parks and
Recreation and Mitch Overton, MTRPA President
- Welcome Address** — John Muhlfeld, Whitefish Mayor
- 9-10:30a.m. **Opening Keynote** - Jennifer Pharr Davis

Monday April 3rd

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“The Trailblazer: Keep Going and Travel Light”

Jennifer Pharr Davis

(.15 CEU)



The Appalachian Trail runs 2,190 miles from Georgia to Maine. Jennifer Pharr Davis has hiked it three separate times. In 2011, she set the overall record for men and women by completing the footpath in 46 days, an average of 47 miles per day. Along the way she has learned the importance of maintaining vision and direction, of communicating clearly and directly with your team, and of embracing temporary discomfort to achieve the end goal. By sharing her journey, Jennifer transports you to the green forests and worn peaks of the Appalachians and provides takeaways that can help you go farther and feel better at work and beyond.

Jennifer Pharr Davis is a lover of long trails and good stories. She has inspired women and men across the country with her message that "the trail is there for everyone at every phase of life" and has made a name for herself as a *National Geographic* Adventurer of the Year, hiker, speaker, and author. Jennifer was featured in the 2020 IMAX film *Into America's Wild* narrated by Morgan Freeman, serves on the President's Council for Sports, Fitness and Nutrition, and is founder and owner of Blue Ridge Hiking Company, the guiding service she began in 2008. Jennifer lives in Asheville, North Carolina, with her husband Brew and her children Charlotte and Gus.

Monday April 3rd

10:30-10:45a.m. **Break**

10:45-11:45a.m.

Session 1: Education Sessions

10:45-11:45a.m. **“Zero-Waste Events: The Whitefish Farmers Market” – Gretchen Boyer** (Upper Nordic Room) (.1 CEU)

This session shares the zero-waste journey of Whitefish 's largest public event, the Whitefish Farmers Market. Gretchen Boyer will explain how the decisions were made to create a zero-waste program for the market and will share her how-to-guide for other communities.

10:45-11:45a.m. **“How to get the heck out of the General Fund! A look at achieving 'Independence' through the establishment of a Parks and Trails District” - Mitch Overton, Thom White, and Luke Kline** (Wine Room) (.1 CEU)

This session will provide an overview of the building blocks utilized to create and implement the City of Bozeman, Parks and Trails Special Maintenance District. The presentation will focus on providing the historical context of the process and describe key milestones to help understand the requirements related to public involvement, rules, and laws for establishment, and how a district assessment is created and delivers funding. By the end attendees will have information and resources to use and understand the benefits and unique challenges of creating and implementing a specifically designated funding source using a “Special Maintenance District.”

Monday April 3rd

10:45-11:45a.m. **“Haskill Basin Conservation Easement: Protecting the City of Whitefish’s Municipal Water Supply, Working Forests, and Public Recreation” - John Muhlfeld** (Upper Alpine Room) (.1 CEU)

This session explores the creative partnership between the City of Whitefish, F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the Trust for Public Lands that permanently protected the City of Whitefish’s water supply. This transaction ensured 3,020 acres in the city’s urban wildfire interface remain working forests for the benefit of the local and regional economy, while protecting wildlife habitat, and permanently guaranteeing public access and recreation in perpetuity.

12-1:15p.m. **Lunch & MTRPA Member Meeting - Sponsored by Robert Peccia & Associates** (Continental Divide Room)

1:15-1:45p.m. **Break with Exhibitors** (Continental Divide Room)

Visit exhibitors to get your exhibitor card filled and earn another Go Fish Sticker!

Monday April 3rd

2-4p.m.

Session 2 - Education Sessions

(Note: Some sessions are 1 hour, and others are 2 hours)

2-2:45p.m. **"Recreation Leaders Roundtable Discussion" – Liz Records**

(Upper Nordic Room) (.1 CEU)

Discuss hot topics recreation leaders are facing in this open group discussion.

2-2:45p.m. **"Aquatics Roundtable Discussion" – Tiffany Gould (Wine Room) (.1 CEU)**

Discuss hot topics aquatics leaders are facing in this open group discussion.

3-4p.m. **"When Parks Become Spaces for Expressive Speech" – Angela Jacobs**

(Wine Room) (.1 CEU)

Public parks have become hubs of expressive activity as communities have seen the eruption of protests and marches in the past few years. In this session, Whitefish City Attorney, Angela Jacobs, explores the legal framework of how to evaluate whether speech is constitutionally protected and how cities can legally regulate protected speech in public parks.

3-4p.m. **"How to Pack Your Pack: Life Hacks for Time Management, Balance, and Self-Care" – Jennifer Pharr Davis (Upper Nordic Room) (.1 CEU)**

How do you manage a to-do list that never ends, incorporate wellness into a packed schedule, or find time for yourself when everyone else needs you? You have to be strategic about scheduling your day, intentional about time management, and flexible enough to bend and not break. Easier said than done! However, there are a few tips and tools from the trail that can help you "repack your pack" so it doesn't always feel like you are carrying so much weight. Join Jennifer Pharr Davis for this interactive workshop designed to help you prioritize and strategize your responsibilities and routines in order to feel lighter and go farther.

Monday April 3rd

2-4p.m. **“Intentional Creativity: Pack Your Strengths” – Cassie Lasson**
(Upper Alpine Room) (.2 CEU)

What do people know you for? What are the special gifts that you carry? Tell your Critic to take a back seat and invite your Muse to play with color, paint brushes, and intention to uncover your unique strengths! In this session, Cassie Lasson, Intentional Creativity teacher in training, will guide you through a creative process to identify, amplify, and pack your strengths throughout the conference to help put them into action anytime you need! You will leave with your painted “pack” to use throughout the conference and keep as a memento to reinforce what is uncovered during this Intentional Creativity session.

2-4p.m. **“Holbrook Overlook Trail and Trailhead Tour: A Successful Public/Private Partnership in Whitefish” – Tad Wehunt, Julie Gerrior, Heidi Van Evern, Greg Gunderson, Keith Schmoll, Ron Brandt, Leigh Golden, and Shannon Vaughan** (Off-Site Tour) (.2 CEU) – **Sponsored by Forestoration**

*This is an outdoor tour. Please meet in the Grouse Mountain Lobby at 2pm to get a spot on the shuttle bus. Space is limited on the shuttle bus, but individuals can choose to follow in their own vehicles. Sign up for the shuttle bus during the conference at the registration table. Please dress for the weather. Sturdy boots are recommended for this tour.

The Holbrook Scenic Overlook Trailhead was completed in the summer of 2022 through a partnership of the US Forest Service, Whitefish Legacy Partners, and the City of Whitefish. The trailhead reconstruction and approximate 4 miles of new trail were approved in the Tailor Hellroaring Environ-mental Analysis, signed by the Tally Lake District Ranger in 2019. Forestoration served as construction managers, creating the design, and managing the contractors during implementation. This project serves as a key section of the Whitefish Trail. After a brief overview of the project, participants will be able to choose which partner they would like to take a short hike with for with for deeper discussion and some Q&A.

Monday April 3rd

4:45-5:30p.m. **Perch Plunge** (Whitefish City Beach)

*This fundraising event will take place at Whitefish City Beach. Please meet in the Grouse Mountain Lobby at 4:30pm to secure a spot on the shuttle bus. Space is limited, but individuals can choose to follow in their own vehicles. **Please dress for the weather.**

6-7:30p.m. **Evening Social-Dinner** (Continental Divide Room)

Dinner is sponsored by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and drinks are sponsored by Great Western Recreation.

*Don't miss this special dinner and music event, 50/50 raffle, and Go Fish Game wrap-up.

7pm-9p.m. **Music by *Way Down North*** (Logan's Bar and Grill)

Tuesday April 4th

MTRPA CONFERENCE 2023



7:00-10:00a.m. **Registration and Gear Swap/Silent Auction** Check-in Open
(Continental Divide Foyer)

7:30-8:15a.m. **Breakfast on Your Own**

8:15-9:15a.m. **Morning Announcements & Coffee and Tea with Exhibitors –
Sponsored by Dreamland Skateparks** (Continental Divide Room)

9:30-10:30a.m. Session 3 – Education Sessions

(Note: Some sessions are 1 hour, and others are 2 hours)

9:30-10:30a.m. **“Re-envisioning Montana’s SCORP” – Beth Shumate and Amber
Lopatine** (Wine Room) (.1 CEU)

Re-envisioning Montana’s SCORP will provide an overview of the purpose of SCORP and how it is used by the recreation industry. Attendees will learn about the goals currently outlined in Montana’s 2020-24 SCORP and how they can create a more impactful document during the upcoming 2025-29 SCORP planning process.

9:30-10:30a.m. **“Interpretive Trails: Create a Plan to Share Your Stories” – Lisa
Bickell** (Upper Alpine Room) (.1 CEU)

Interpretive signs help us connect with visitors and share stories about our sites. In this session, learn the fundamental skills of developing an interpretive trail plan. Through goal setting, identification of your audience, and organization of your stories, you can make your visitor trail experience even better.

Tuesday April 4th

9:30-10:30a.m. **“Noxious Weed Trust Fund: The Trust Fund Basics and How to Apply” – Greta Dige** (Upper Nordic Room) (.1CEU)

*This session does not qualify for Pesticide Recertification Credits.

This session will provide attendees with the history of the Noxious Weed Trust Fund and will describe various funding opportunities available to communities. It will highlight local cooperatives and what a project sponsor would need to do to apply for funding. This session will include brief, hands-on activities that will assist sponsors with gathering information from mapping target species, monitoring, and how-to pictures of the problem areas. Please download EDDMapS Pro prior to attending this session. It is free through the App Store and Google Play.

9:30-11:30a.m. **“Tree Species Scavenger Hunt” – Jen Sybrant and Philip Hodge**

(Off-site) (.2 CEU) *This session also provides CEUs through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Please see the session facilitator for more information.

Take a tour around the beautiful city of Whitefish to enjoy some fresh mountain air, beautiful views, and learn about some fascinating trees in our urban forest. The City of Whitefish has over 4,000 trees in the current tree inventory. The Parks Urban Forestry team will provide you with a map to use with a self-guided tour to locate 22 selected trees around town. Learn species names and fun facts associated with them. This tour will start at the James R Bakke Nature Reserve and end at Depot Park.

*This is an outdoor activity. Please meet in the Grouse Mountain Lobby at 9:30am to secure a spot on the shuttle bus. Space is limited on the shuttle bus, but individuals can choose to follow in their own vehicles. Sign up for the shuttle bus during the conference at the registration table. Please dress for the weather.

Tuesday April 4th

10:30-11:00a.m. **Break with Exhibitors** (Continental Divide Room)

11:00-12:00p.m. **“Pesticides and Compliance with the Law” – Tonda Moon**

(Upper Nordic Room) (.1CEU) *This session also qualifies for 1 Pesticide Recertification Credit.

This session will provide attendees with the basics of pesticide law. The audience will be briefed on licensing requirements, the label (best, site, rate, PPE, etc.) calibration, application records, and the need for Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

11:00-12:00p.m. **“Keys to Building Resilient Outdoor Communities”**

– **Diane Conradi and Kate McMahon** (Wine Room) (.1 CEU) - **This session is sponsored by SCJ Alliance.**

We've heard all the figures. At 862 billion dollars nationally, 2.6 billion in Montana and at 4.4% of Montana's GDP, we know that the outdoor recreation economy is an economic driver. High quality outdoor recreation infrastructure can connect business, cultural heritage, and the natural landscape. But the economic impact of outdoor recreation varies from community to community. For some rural communities, there is a delicate balance between leveraging outdoor recreation assets for economic development and tourism while maintaining small town character and quality of life for residents. There can also be a disconnect among funding programs, agencies, public and private land managers, and priorities. This presentation will focus on elements of successful outdoor communities, funding resources for outdoor recreation infrastructure, principles of sustainable recreation development, and examples of how rural communities are overcoming obstacles to leverage national assets.

11:00-12:00p.m. **“A Walking Life: Walking's Role in Personal and Community Wellbeing” – Antonia Malchik** (Upper Alpine Room) (.1 CEU)

This session explores the research behind the physical, mental, and social benefits of walking from the author of *A Walking Life: Reclaiming Our Health and Our Freedom One Step at a Time*. The presentation will include extensive scientific research given in a narrative format, providing time for questions and discussion.

Tuesday April 4th

12:15-1:30p.m. **Awards Lunch – Sponsored by Northwest Playground Equipment**
(Continental Divide Room)

1:45-2:45p.m. Session 5 – Education Sessions

1:45-2:45p.m. **“Implementing Long Term Successful Agency Partnerships” – Jodie Adams and Kim Reser** (Upper Alpine Room) (.1 CEU)

Successful partnerships are key to any strategic development of a dynamic park agency. Equitable design should be applied to every aspect of the partnership framework. In this session attendees will explore partnership alignment, viability, and communications. We will examine partnership agreements, finances, risk management, and human resource assessments. Finally, we will include measurable outcomes and sustainability methods.

1:45-2:45p.m. **“The Pandemic Boom: Soaring Public Land Visitation in Montana” – Melissa Weddell and Megan Schultz** (Wine Room) (.1 CEU)

The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) will present data on increased public land use in Montana since the pandemic began, including resident participation in outdoor recreation and nonresident visitation. Results from surveys, designed to assist public land managers in the state, in addition to ways to communicate with users effectively, will be discussed.

1:45-2:45p.m. **“Whitefish Bike and Pedestrian Path Tour” – Karin Hilding** (Off-site) (.1 CEU) **Bike rentals donated by Glacier Cyclery and Grouse Mountain Lodge.**

*This is an outdoor activity. Please meet in the Grouse Mountain Lobby at 1:45pm to request a bike. We will have 20 bikes available for loan, but individuals can also ride their own bikes. Sign up for a bike rental during the conference at the registration table. Please dress for the weather.

Tour the Whitefish bicycle and pedestrian paths with the City of Whitefish’s own Karin Hilding. Karin will guide attendees along the network of paths providing history and insights along the way.

Tuesday April 4th

1:45-2:45p.m. **“Protecting Montana’s Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species” – Mike Koopal, Tayler Templin, and Jayden Duckworth** (Upper Nordic Room) (.1 CEU)

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are freshwater organisms that are introduced beyond their native range and can cause harm to local water bodies. Harmful effects of an AIS introduction can include a competition with native species, alteration of aquatic food webs, disturbance to recreational pursuits, disruption to local water supply and hydroelectric facilities, and concern for the irrigation community. These myriad effects can directly and indirectly impact local and regional economies. To combat the threat of AIS, the State of Montana, led by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) administers and coordinates the Montana AIS Program. This program provides a framework for watercraft inspection stations throughout the state including a network of partner stations. MFWP also coordinates with partnering groups to conduct early detection monitoring and control efforts.

2:45-3:15p.m. **Snack Break – Sponsored by WGM Group** (Outside of Nordic and Alpine Rooms)

3:00-4:00p.m. **Session 6 – Education Sessions**

3:00-4:00p.m. **“Weeds to Watch For” – Josh Wagoner** (Upper Nordic Room) (.1 CEU)

*This session also qualifies for 1 Pesticide Recertification Credit.

This session discusses the top priority noxious weeds in Montana. These weeds are typically not widespread and often not yet present but are especially difficult to manage. This presentation seeks to increase awareness of these species and to educate attendees to be able to identify and know the proper steps to take if found.

Tuesday April 4th

3:00-4:00p.m. **“The WAG Park: The Story of the Public/Private Partnership that Created the Whitefish Dog Park” – Regan Peschel** (Wine Room) (.1CEU)

The Hugh Rogers Wag Park in Whitefish was named one of the Top 10 Best Dog Parks in the United States by USA TODAY and is an example of a private/public run park. The park is owned and maintained by the City of Whitefish with Whitefish Animal Group (known as WAG) acting in an advisory capacity. This presentation will focus on the unique partnership between the two public and private entities (The City of Whitefish and The Whitefish Animal Group) and how this relationship was able to work together to make significant improvements to the park through their fundraising efforts. The park features fully accessible ADA compliant paths, benches, a drinking fountain for dogs and people, a pond, an agility course, a kiosk, and lots of open space for play. Through diligent fundraising the board of directors for the nonprofit Whitefish Animal Group led the effort to develop the park which opened in 2009. Regan will give a brief history of the dog park and walk listeners through the public/private collaboration, and the methods the volunteer board has used in successful fundraising.

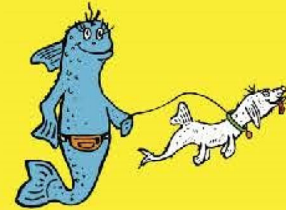
3:00-4:15p.m. **“Story Circles: Engaging the LGBTQ+ Community in Montana Trails, Recreation, and Parks” – Cara Jones** (Upper Alpine Room) (.1 CEU)

In this session, participants will share experiences with LGBTQ+ community members through their work with MTR PA. The goal of the session is to share experiences, identify concerns and issues, and begin to work together to better engage with diverse community members.

4:00p.m. **Dinner on Your Own**

Wednesday April 5th

MTRPA CONFERENCE



7:00-9:00a.m. **Registration and Gear Swap/Silent Auction** Check-in Open
(Continental Divide Foyer)

8:00-8:30a.m. **Breakfast and Coffee To Go** (Continental Divide Room)

9:00-11:00a.m. **Session 7 – Education Sessions**

(Note: Some sessions are 1 hour, some are 1.5 hours, and others are 2 hours.)

9:00-11:00a.m. **“Big Mountain Scenic Tour” – Tad Wehunt, Bill Cubbage, Josh Knight, and Teresa Wenum** (Off-site) (.2 CEU)

*This activity costs \$50. Spaces can be reserved at the registration desk and paid for via cash or Fish Funds.

*This is an outdoor activity. Please meet in the Grouse Mountain Lobby at 8:45 a.m. to secure a spot on the shuttle bus. Space is limited. Sign up during the conference at the registration table. Please dress for the weather and be sure to bring some extra cash for summit house purchases.

Attendees will ride the chair lift to the summit of Big Mountain. On a clear day, Glacier National Park provides stunning views from this summit. Meet representatives from the US Forest Service and Whitefish Mountain Resort and listen to a brief discussion on the public private partnership that makes this ski area possible. With roughly the bottom 3rd of the mountain on private land and the upper 2/3's of the mountain on Forest Service land, presenters will explain how they were able to set up a division of responsibilities in the ski area. Next visit the Nature Center in the summit house. Grab a coffee while you are there and take in the views.

9:00-10:00a.m. **“Urban Forestry Roundtable” – Jen Sybrant and Philip Hodge** (Wine Room) (.1 CEU) * This session also provides CEUs through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Please see the session facilitator for more information.

Discuss hot topics urban forestry leaders are facing in this open group discussion.

Wednesday April 5th

9:30-11:00a.m. **"Tennis and Pickleball: Best Practices for Facility and Program Development – Jodie Adams, Kim Reser, and Andrea Johnson** (Upper Nordic Room) (.15CEU)

This session will examine and identify best practices for facility and program implementation of tennis and pickleball involving public park agencies. Tennis and pickleball are both growing at unprecedented rates throughout the country. With the "public outcry" for more local community court facilities to support both sports, agency leaders will learn about various options to consider in finding a viable solution for their community. Attendees will learn what agencies across the nation are doing to respond to the demand. Learn about court design and materials, programming, event management, and matching financial resources.

9:30-11:00a.m. **"How to Hold Your Center Under Stress: Self-Leadership for Parks and Recreation Professionals" – Cara Jones** (Upper Alpine Room) (.15 CEU)

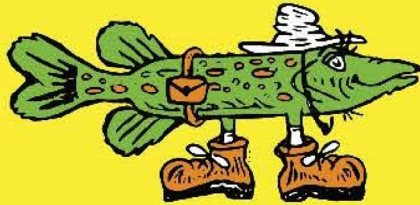
Working with-and for-the public can be quite demanding. In this experiential session, participants will learn how to demonstrate Self-leadership using the Internal Family Systems (IFS) model of psychotherapy. The goal of this session is to help participants identify how they habitually react when under stress and learn ways of internally navigating challenging situations.

10:00-11:00a.m. **"Outdoors for ALL Fish" – Julie Tickle and Jason Stoffer** (Wine Room) (.1 CEU)

The psychological, physical, and cognitive benefits of outdoor recreation and connection to nature may be universal, but access is not. DREAM Adaptive Recreation has been serving the Flathead Valley and beyond since 1985, with a mission to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities by providing access to year-round outdoor recreational opportunities. This session will examine ways to make our outdoor-minded communities more accessible and inclusive through a focus on universal design principles and partnerships.

11:15-11:45a.m. **Gear Swap/Silent Auction** (Continental Divide Room)

11:45-12:00p.m. **Closing Remarks** (Continental Divide Room)



Monday Presenter Bios

Gretchen Boyer—"Zero-Waste Events: The Whitefish Farmers Market"

Gretchen Boyer is the executive director of Land to Hand, a nonprofit working to improve food access and farm-to-school education in the Flathead valley. She is a long-time resident of Whitefish with her husband who is a fisheries biologist for the State. They love to recreate with their 15-year-old son on the amazing public lands and parks of Montana.

Mitch Overton, Thom White, and Luke Kline—"How to get the heck out of the General Fund! A look at achieving "Independence" through the establishment of a Parks and Trails District"

Mitch Overton is the Director of the City of Bozeman Parks and Recreation department, MTRPA President, and is a great tennis player.

Thom White is the Superintendent for the City of Bozeman Parks and Cemetery Division.

Luke Klein is the Contracts Coordinator for the City of Bozeman Parks and Recreation Division.

John Muhlfeld—"Haskill Basin Conservation Easement: Protecting the City of Whitefish's Municipal Water Supply, Working Forests and Public Recreation"

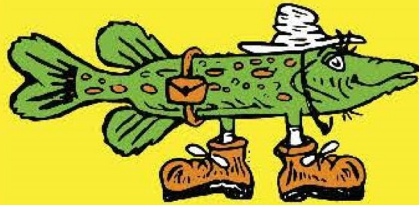
John Muhlfeld is serving his 3rd term as Mayor of the City of Whitefish. In this capacity, John serves on multiple boards and committees and works closely with city staff and his fellow counselors to develop and implement city policies. While not serving as Mayor, John is a principal and restoration hydrologist with River Design Group, a Montana-based consulting firm that specializes in river, aquatic habitat, and wetland restoration throughout the Intermountain West.

Liz Records—"Recreation Leaders Roundtable Discussion"

Liz is the Recreation Coordinator for the City of Whitefish. She has served in various roles during her time in Whitefish.

Tiffany Gould—"Aquatics Roundtable Discussion"

Tiffany is the current Aquatics Manager at the Wave Aquatic and Fitness Center in Whitefish.



Monday Presenter Bios

Angela Jacobs—“When Parks Become Spaces for Expressive Speech”

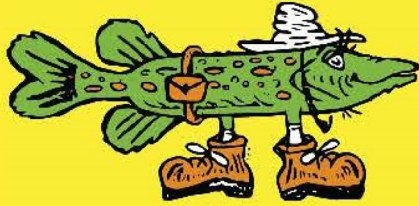
Angela Jacobs is a native Montanan with roots in Glacier National Park. After attending the University of Montana Law School, she represented municipalities in private practice for 12 years. She has been the Whitefish City Attorney since 2015.

Jennifer Pharr Davis—“How to Pack Your Pack: Life Hacks for Time Management, Balance, and Self-Care”

Jennifer Pharr Davis is a lover of long trails and good stories. She has inspired women and men across the country with her message that “the trail is there for everyone at every phase of life” and has made a name for herself as a *National Geographic* Adventurer of the Year, hiker, speaker, and author. Jennifer was featured in the 2020 IMAX film *Into America's Wild* narrated by Morgan Freeman, serves on the President's Council for Sports, Fitness and Nutrition, and is founder and owner of Blue Ridge Hiking Company, the guiding service she began in 2008. Jennifer lives in Asheville, North Carolina, with her husband Brew and her children Charlotte and Gus.

Cassie Lason—“Intentional Creativity: Pack Your Strengths”

Cassie Lason is MTRPA 's Resource Development Coordinator, graphic designer, artist, and Intentional Creativity teacher in training. Cassie lives in the Flathead Valley and works with Parks and Recreation departments from Montana to Colorado and all the way to Florida! Cassie enjoys working on trail sign design, city branding, and scientific illustration. Cassie cares deeply about connecting people to the “other than human world,” promoting expression through creativity and advocating for green spaces, all for the wellbeing of the collective.



Monday Presenter Bios

Tad Wehunt, Julie Gerrior, Heidi Van Evern, Greg Gunderson, Keith Schmoll, Ron Brandt, Leigh Golden, and Shannon Vaughan—“Holbrook Overlook Trail and Trailhead Tour: A Successful Public/Private Partnership in Whitefish”

Tad Wehunt serves as the Flathead National Forest Partnership Coordinator. He has been in the Flathead for the last 25 years working in a variety of roles within recreation management including trails, outfitter and guide permit administration, wilderness management, developed and dispersed recreation, and ski area permit administration.

Julie Gerrior is a Recreation Specialist with the Flathead National Forest where she helps create positive recreation experiences and engages the local youth through natural resources employment opportunities. When not working, Julie can be found frolick-ing with her family on public lands.

Since 2011, Heidi Van Everen has been working as the Executive Director of Whitefish Legacy Partners, growing the organization, and developing strong community connections and solid public-private partnerships to support conservation, recreation, education, and community stewardship throughout the Flathead Valley. As the City of Whitefish's partner creating the Whitefish Trail and leading the community's vision for conservation surrounding Whitefish Lake, WLP has been an effective leader, championing innovative conservation initiatives and ensuring the proposed 55+-mile recreational loop trail is built and managed for the benefit of locals, visitors, and generations to come.

Greg Gunderson founded Forestoration, Inc., in 2002 and serves as the company's president. Greg's professional roles with Forestoration, Inc. include lead planning, co-design, and construction management on park and trail projects and during all phases of forest management consulting, project design, and implementation. Greg also oversees internal company development, including marketing and outreach.

Keith Schmoll joined the Forestoration crew in 2016 when he moved to the Flathead valley from Wyoming. Having done some volunteer trail construction in Jackson Hole, he wanted to pursue trail building as a profession. With Forestoration he has been involved in all aspects of trail development from design to construction. In his free time, he loves to get out and explore nature and all that Montana has to offer.



Monday Presenter Bios

Ron Brandt is the Executive Director of Flathead Area Mountain Bikers (FAMB). He joined the FAMB board in 2015 and spent five years focusing on trails and advocacy within the organization. During his time on the board, he was in the midst of a 20-year career in the outdoor industry. As FAMB Executive Director, he is excited about FAMB's future and the relationships the organization has built with local land managers and partners. He is looking forward to building on this momentum with future work, while creating and maintaining the great resources we are fortunate to have here in the Flathead.

Leigh Golden is a Cinco de Mayo baby born in Florida who fell in love with the West while attending College in New Mexico. She currently lives in Missoula and supports the Forest Service and their partners through her position as a Grants and Agreement Specialist. When she is not working, she's dabbling in all sorts of crafts and outdoorsy adventures.

Shannon Vaughan is a lifelong Missoulitian and former wildland firefighter turned Grants Management Specialist with the Forest Service. She enjoys ice hockey and after the ice melts, hitting western Montana rivers with her pup Tica and husband Jonah.

Tuesday Presenter Bios



Beth Shumate and Amber Lopatine—"Re-envisioning Montana's SCORP"

Beth Shumate is Assistant Administrator of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. In her current role, she helps oversee the management of 55 state parks, 350 Fishing Access Sites and the recreation on 80+ Wildlife Management Areas, as well as 7 Outdoor Recreation Programs that provide funding and resources for all outdoor recreation and trail-related projects. Throughout her career she has gained extensive familiarity with Montana and developed a dynamic approach to building working partnerships with agencies, organizations, divisions, volunteers, and user groups. She believes that time spent outdoors provides all of us, regardless of age or ability, the opportunity towards holistic health through the powers of the natural world. Before her current position, Beth served as the Parks Division Administrator for 4 years and the Montana State Trails Administrator for 9 years.

Amber Lopatine is a Parks and Outdoor Recreation Planner for Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. She is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to our recreation resources and creating opportunities for people to connect with our natural world. Amber recently earned her M.S. from the University of Florida and spends her spare time seeking new outdoor adventures.

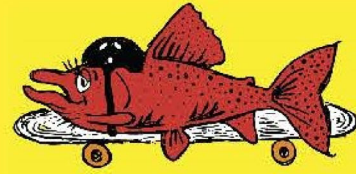
Lisa Bickell—"Interpretive Trails: Create a Plan to Share Your Stories"

Lisa Bickell is a National Association for Interpretation Certified Interpretive Planner and has experience in interpretive media design. Lisa's background is in project management, nonprofit administration, and education. Her mission is to share stories, deepen our sense of place, and make educational interpretation accessible to everyone.

Greta Dige—"Noxious Weed Trust Fund: The Trust Fund Basics and How to Apply"

Greta Dige is the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant Coordinator with the Montana Department of Agriculture. Before joining the Department of Agriculture, she worked at the City of Helena for more than 12 years enforcing several city ordinances and managing more than 2800 acres for noxious weeds. As the trust fund coordinator, she has assisted applicants with navigating the application process from the preparation all the way to the grant hearing. On average the trust fund awards approximately \$2.2 million per year for development, education, research, and local cooperative cost shares.

Tuesday Presenter Bios



Tonda Moon—"Pesticides and Compliance with the Law"

Tonda Moon is the MDA Plant Science Specialist covering District 1 out of the Missoula field office. She has held the position for 10 years, and prior to holding this position she was with MDA in various noxious weed positions for 10 years. Before that she was a forester for Champion Timberlands out of Missoula.

Diane Conradi and Kate McMahon—"Keys to Building Resilient Outdoor Communities"

Diane Conradi has a passion for outdoor recreation close to home. She started Montana Access Project, so communities, nonprofits, and public and private land managers don't have to start at "Square One" when dreaming, creating, and growing the quality outdoor recreation access they seek. As an experienced attorney, founder and advisor to Whitefish Legacy Partners/Whitefish Trail, Montana State Parks Foundation, former member of the Montana Environmental Quality Council, Flathead Reservation Fish Wildlife Commission, and Montana's first State Parks and Recreation Board, she knows the difference that high-quality nature-based recreation access makes to the economic and community vitality for residents.

Kate McMahon has 35 years of community planning experience. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Illinois and a Master's Degree in Educational Technology from George Washington University. She was a member of the Montana Association of Planners, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and Montana Economic Development Association.

Antonia Malchik—A Walking Life: Walking's Role in Personal and Community Wellbeing

Antonia Malchik has written essays and articles for *The Atlantic*, *Orion*, *High Country News*, *Aeon*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and a variety of other publications, and is the author of *A Walking Life*, about the past and future of walking's role in our shared humanity. She advocates for walkable communities and public lands and gives talks on the science and equity of walking access.

Tuesday Presenter Bios



Jodie Adams and Kim Reser—“Implementing Long Term Successful Agency Partnerships”

Jodie Adams - Missouri State University Emeritus Faculty, Retired Director of Springfield-Greene County Park Board, NRPA Ambassadors, NRPA Past President, MPRA Past President, PTR & PPR Certified Teaching Professional, and Co-Founder of Brio2 Solu-tions, LLC

Kim Reser, Assistant Director of Parks, Spingfield-Greene County (MO) Park Board - Manages City/County Recreation Facilities, Programs, Special Events & Division Business Systems, Gold Medal Award Recipient & CAPRA Accredited Agency, USTA National Advocacy Committee & PTR/PPR Certified Teaching Professional, NRPA Past National Committees & Past Member, MPRA Board of Directors, NRPA Director’s School Graduate

Melissa Weddell and Megan Schultz—“The Pandemic Boom: Soaring Public Land Visitation in Montana”

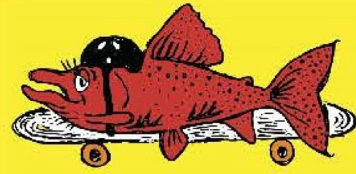
Melissa Weddell is the Director of the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR). Her projects focus on research that educates the public and assists with the responsible development of rural recreation and tourism destinations that benefit users and boost local economic commerce. Through her research, she understands the unique local concerns in developing natural areas, encouraging recreation, and attracting tourism while working collaboratively to provide inclusive recreation that improves the quality of life.

Megan Schultz is a Project Manager and Research Associate for the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR). Her projects focus on nonresident visitation, resident recreation, and travel behaviors as well as attitudes, state parks visitation, and working with communities across Montana.

Karin Hilding—“Whitefish Bike and Pedestrian Path Tour”

Karin Hilding has worked for the City of Whitefish in the Public Works Department for 26 years as an Engineering and Sustainability Project Manager. She has been involved in design and construction of all the shared use path and pedestrian bridge projects in Whitefish. Being an avid walker and cyclist and raising a family in Whitefish she is very familiar with impediments to active transportation in town. She was a founding member of Climate Smart Glacier Country and worked with a volunteer committee to help create the 2018 Whitefish Climate Action Plan. She has also been involved in writing Safe Routes to School and multi-modal transportation grant applications for the city.

Tuesday Presenter Bios



Mike Koopal, Tayler Templin, and Jayden Duckworth—“Protecting Montana’s Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species”

Mike Koopal is the founder and executive director of the Whitefish Lake Institute. Mike serves as the governor appointed member of the Water Pollution Control Advisory Committee. He also chairs the Flathead Basin Commission On-site Wastewater Treatment Committee and Technical Committee. His past service includes governor appointments to the Flathead Basin Commission and Upper Columbia Conservation Commission. In addition, he served on the Montana Watershed Coordination Council board of directors and the Whitefish Climate Action Plan. Mike was co-coordinator of the second and third editions of the Montana Lake Book. He is a past recipient of the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society’s Individual Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution to the protection and enhancement of fisheries resources in Montana.

Tayler Templin is the Northwest Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Supervisor and has been working with the AIS Bureau for three years. She has previous experience working with The Nature Conservancy and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in 2019 from the University of Montana in Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management. Tayler is passionate about preserving Montana’s resources and educating the public regarding Montana’s waters and keeping them clean for generations to enjoy. In her free time, you can find her spend-ing time outdoors fishing, hiking, eating sour candy, and spending time with friends and family.

Jayden Duckworth is the Aquatic Invasive Species Scientist for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks in Kalispell. Jayden has been with the AIS Bureau for over a decade and has served in several roles throughout his career. He currently manages the AIS early detection laboratory in Kalispell and manages the northwest early detection aquatic sam-pling that covers the western portion of Montana.

Josh Wagoner—“Weeds to Watch For”

Josh Wagoner is the Early Detection, Rapid Response Coordinator for the Montana Department of Agriculture, a position created just over a year ago to help land managers across the state jointly address the highest priority weeds threatening Montana. Prior to joining MDA, Josh worked in Parks and Recreation for 15 plus years with state, county, and municipal agencies, including Montana State Parks from 2013 to 2021, specializing in noxious management.

Tuesday Presenter Bios



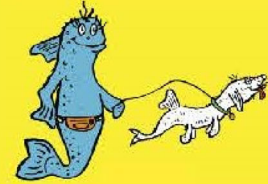
Regan Peschel—"The WAG Park: The Story of the Public/Private Partnership that Created the Whitefish Dog Park"

Regan Peschel is a third-year current member of the board of directors of the Hugh Rogers Wag Park in Whitefish. A fourth generation Montanan, Regan was born and raised in Whitefish and has a long appreciation and passion for all things Whitefish including the City's Parks and Recreation and all they have to offer. On the WAG board she has been an integral part of fundraising and improvements to the dog park. Outside of the dog park she is currently a fundraising consultant for Donorschoose.org, an education nonprofit based in NYC, and is in the process of launching a local farm to table food business in Whitefish. She spends her spare time exploring the outdoors with her dogs on the Whitefish Trail, skiing, golfing, cooking and volunteering at the North Valley Food Bank and CASA for Kids Flathead Valley as a CASA advocate.

Cara Jones—"Story Circles: Engaging the LGBTQ+ Community in Montana Trails, Recreation, and Parks"

Cara E. Jones, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Women's & Gender Studies at California State University, Sacramento. She teaches and researches issues in women's health, disability studies, and LGBTQ+ studies. In addition, Cara is also trained in the Internal Family System (IFS) model of psychotherapy and runs a private coaching business helping clients learn from the IFS model to gain Self-leadership.

Wednesday Presenter Bios



Tad Wehunt, Bill Cubbage, Josh Knight—“Big Mountain Scenic Tour”

Tad Wehunt serves as the Flathead National Forest Partnership Coordinator. He has been in the Flathead for the last 25 years working in a variety of roles within recreation management including trails, outfitter and guide permit administration, wilderness management, developed and dispersed recreation, and ski area permit administration.

Bill Cubbage is a 35-year ski industry veteran, who began teaching skiing part time while in college. After 30 years in ski/ride schools around ski country, he moved into operations. Bill currently serves as the Director of Mountain Operations for Whitefish Mountain Resort.

Josh Knight is the Events and Recreation Manager at WMR and has been working with trails for 25 years as a builder, a patroller, a planner and a guide. He has spearheaded the creation of 10 miles of trail in the Bike Park and has been heavily involved in the Taylor Hellroaring Project which is slated to break ground this summer.

Teresa Wenum is the Conservation Education Specialist with Flathead National Forest. During her 25 years in this role, she's most enjoyed partnership work, teaming up with groups and individuals from different organizations and agencies to accomplish common goals. Managing the Forest Service Summit Nature Center at Whitefish Mountain Resort is a favorite of many community-based projects. She takes great pleasure in learning and exploring, right along-side educators, youth and visitors, helping all stay connected to the outdoors, our local environment and community.

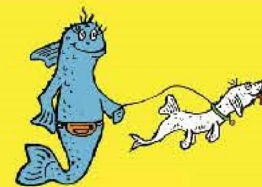
Jodie Adams, Kim Reser, and Andrea Johnson—“Tennis and Pickleball: Best Practices for Facility and Program Development

Jodie Adams - Missouri State University Emeritus Faculty, Retired Director of Springfield-Greene County Park Board, NRPA Ambassadors, NRPA Past President, MRPA Past President, PTR & PPR Certified Teaching Professional, and Co-Founder of Brio2 Solutions, LLC

Kim Reser —Manages City/County Recreation Facilities, Programs, Special Events & Division Business Systems, Gold Medal Award Recipient & CAPRA Accredited Agency, USTA National Advocacy Committee & PTR/PPR Certified Teaching Professional, NRPA Past National Committees & Past Member, MPRA Board of Directors, NRPA Director's School Graduate

Andrea Johnson is the Executive Director of USTA Montana, a nonprofit association composed of a board of directors and volunteers all working to promote and develop the growth of tennis throughout the state of Montana.

Wednesday Presenter Bios



Cara Jones—"How to Hold Your Center Under Stress: Self-Leadership for Parks and Recreation Professionals"

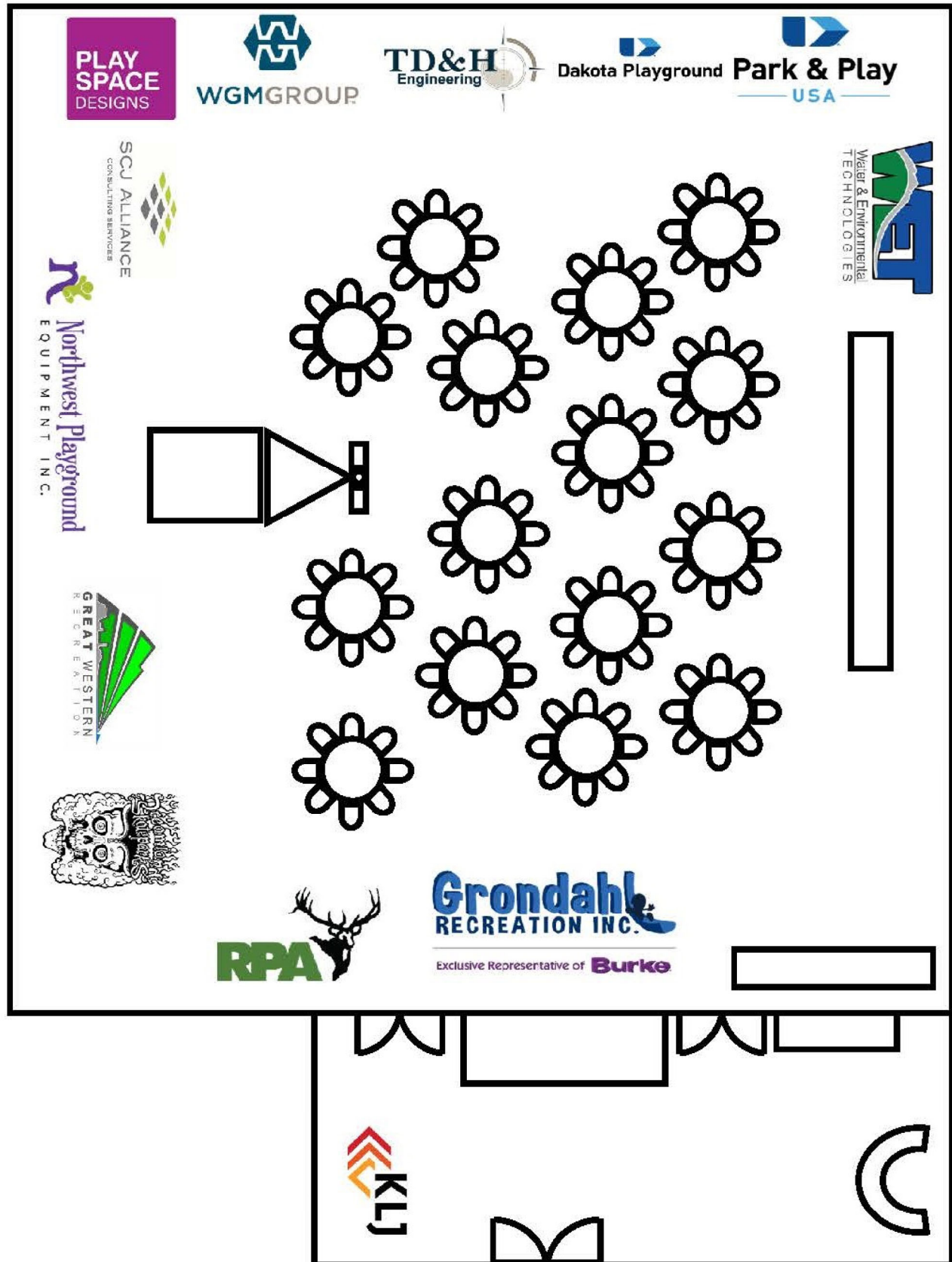
Cara E. Jones, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Women's & Gender Studies at California State University, Sacramento. She teaches and researches issues in women's health, disability studies, and LGBTQ+ studies. In addition, Cara is also trained in the Internal Family System (IFS) model of psychotherapy and runs a private coaching business helping clients learn from the IFS model to gain Self-leadership.

Julie Tickle and Jason Stoffer—"Outdoors for ALL Fish"

Julie grew up near balmy Buffalo, New York as a four-season fresh air kid. She was a two-sport and All-American athlete in college, earning a B.S. in Psychology and M.S. in Sports Administration. Her career in adaptive sports began in 2007 in Colorado, where she worked for the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee. In that role she coordinated camps and events at the Olympic Training Center, and traveled the country promoting adaptive sports participation at various military bases for those recovering from combat related injuries. Highlights of her tenure included supporting the 2010 Winter Paralympics in Vancouver, the 2011 Para-PanAmerican Games in Guadalajara, and the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. Her free time was spent exploring the Rockies where she fell in love with mountain life. Fast forward to 2017, Julie joined DREAM Adaptive Recreation in a program facing role and was promoted to Executive Director in 2018. The daughter of two teachers, one in special education, Julie was taught at an early age the importance of inclusion and in ensuring people with disabilities are represented in all aspects of the community.

Jason Stoffer is an advocate for outdoor accessibility and for spinal cord injury (SCI) functional recovery research. Jason lives with an L1 Complete SCI he sustained in a motor vehicle accident. He and his wife, and three children live in Eureka, MT. Prior to his accident, Jason was an avid outdoorsman. Living in Alaska and Montana, he was a long distance hiker, mountaineer and hunter. His love of the outdoors also led him to a life of public service as a mountain search and rescue technician, wildland firefighter, wilderness EMT and Federal law enforcement officer. Jason's life is not defined by his disability. He still pursues outdoor adventures with his friends and family. He recently completed the extended Canadian portion of the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route with his friend Quinn Brett. They were the first adaptive athletes to accomplish this 620 mile wilderness trail using handcycles. Jason also unofficially bested a paraplegic world record with his continuous open water swim of 5.6 miles. And, he's put his old climbing gear back to use rigging systems to build his family's home. Jason continues to ride, ski, raft, kayak, hunt and swim while advocating for a better quality of life for his community.

Exhibitor Map



Exhibitor Directory



Exclusive Representative of **Burke**

Specializes in playground and park equipment.

Representatives: Larry Grondahl & Luke Tautges

<https://www.grondahlrecreation.com/>



Specializes in park and playground equipment.

Representatives: Chris Brummett & Eric Arneson

<https://nwplayground.com/>



Specializes in the design and construction of concrete skate parks.

Representative: Danyel Scott

<https://www.dreamlandskateparks.com/home>



Specializes in turnkey solutions for playgrounds, shades, shelters, and bleachers.

Representative: Taggart Castleton

<https://www.gwpark.com/>



Specializes in civil engineering and planning services for Parks and Recreation solutions.

Representatives: Gary Johnson & Ryan Blumer

<https://www.kljeng.com/>



Specializes in creating outdoor spaces where kids and adults can refresh their minds and bodies.

Representatives: Morgan and Rebecca Selph

<https://www.goplayspace.com/>



Specializes in full service civil engineering and surveying.

Representatives: Brandon Theis & Austin Pauly

<https://rpa-hln.com/>



Specializing in landscape architecture.

Representatives: Mark Garff & Chris Overdorf

<https://www.scjalliance.com/>



Specializes in commercial playground, splash pad & shade equipment design & installation.

Representative: Jason Harris

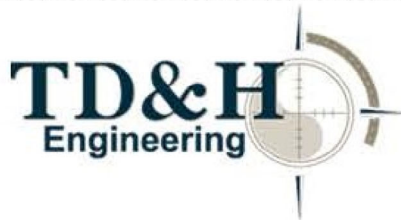
<https://www.dakotaplayground.com/>



Specializes in site furnishing, sports equipment, and shelters.

Representative: Ryan Nelson

<https://parkandplayusa.com/>



Specializes in civil and structural engineering and landscape architecture.

Representative: Jana Cooper

<https://tdhengineering.com/>



Specializes in comprehensive engineering, planning and design.

Representatives: Shelly Michalski & Robin Spear

<https://www.wgmgroup.com/>



Specializes in full-service geoscience, environmental, and engineering consultation.

Representative: Megan Terry

<https://waterenvtech.com/>

2023 ANNUAL
MTRPA CONFERENCE

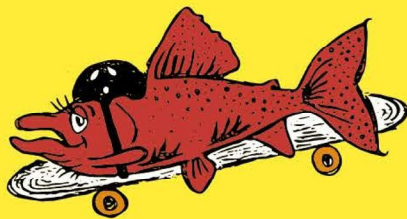
GO FISH!



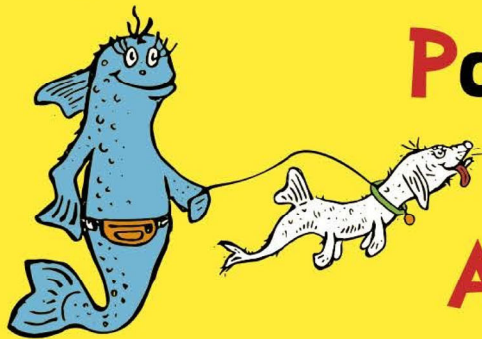
Montana Fish



Trail Fish



Rec Fish



Park Fish

All Fish

in WHITEFISH, MT

