

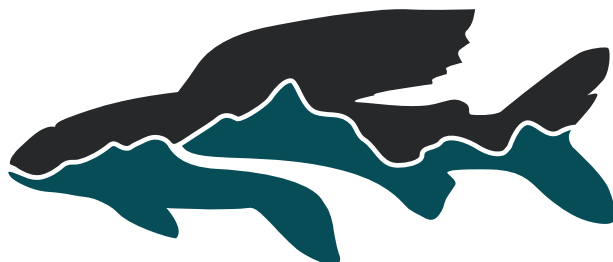
Free Flows

A Quarterly Publication

Fall 2013

This Issue

Watershed Sourcebook
Drift Boat Raffle Winner
Big Hole River Day Photos
Projects (fencing, cutthroat, access)
What Does That Mean?
Floodplain Study and Aerial Video
Species Spotlight
River Hazard Signs



BIG HOLE RIVER
FOUNDATION

2014 Events

May 3, 2014 - Kid's Day
on the Big Hole

April TBD - Fly Gear Swap

July 19, 2014 - Big Hole
River Day

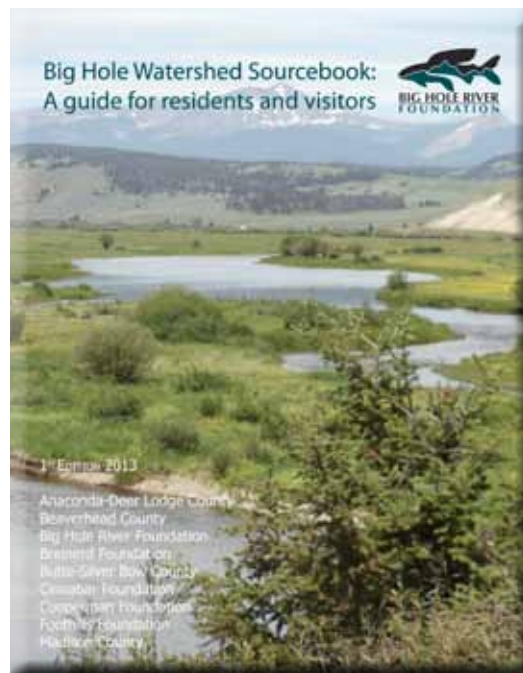
The Big Hole River Foundation's mission is to conserve, enhance and protect the free-flowing character of the Big Hole River, its unique culture, fish and wildlife.

Big Hole Watershed Sourcebook Now Available

The Big Hole Watershed Sourcebook: A guide for residents and visitors has been distributed throughout the watershed to the county planning offices, chambers of commerce, libraries, fly shops and real estate offices. The PDF version is now on-line at www.bhrf.org on our Publications page.

The sourcebook was produced by the Big Hole River Foundation as a reference guide that includes county required permitting, regulations, management and planning programs in the watershed. The guide also contains information on water quality and quantity, wetlands and riparian areas, waste management and noxious weeds as well as sections on wildlife, recreation, wildlife-friendly fences and communities along the river.

The production and printing of the sourcebook was funded by Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, Beaverhead County, Brainerd Foundation, Butte-Silver Bow County, Cinnabar Foundation, Cooperman Foundation, Foothills Foundation, and Madison County.



Board of Directors

Officers

Tom Welsch - President
Wade Fellin - Secretary
Hans Humbert - Vice President
Joe McBride - Treasurer

Members

Chuck Bulen
Ray Weaver
Sheila Youngblood

Staff

Executive Director
Michael A. Bias, PhD
1.406.925.2276
mikebias@3rivers.net

Operations Manager
Corky Logan
1.866.533.2473
bhrf@bhrf.org

Phone
1.866.533.BHRF (2473)
Mail
PO Box 3894
Butte, MT 59702

Internet
www.bhrf.org

EMail
Operations bhrf@bhrf.org
Pres. tomwelsch923@gmail.com
Exec. Dir. mikebias@3rivers.net

Facebook
Big Hole River Foundation

President's Message

Fall is here and it was a very productive summer.

Operations Manager, Corky Logan master minded the annual Big Hole River Day on the third Saturday in July, which, with significant Board assistance, was a huge success. Corky also got the Sourcebook through the printing process and distributed widely throughout the watershed. It has been well received. Executive Director, Mike Bias orchestrated a major donor 'thank you' float trip on the Friday before Big Hole River Day. Eight of our largest donors attended. The fishing was slow because the water was low and temperatures were not, but everyone enjoyed the day, and Mike funded it without reliance on donated dollars. The plan is to continue the float on a yearly basis with dollars earned from events such as the annual fly swap, clothing and book sales and other events. Mike recently obtained a substantial funding commitment from the George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited, headquartered in Butte, for the Moose Creek fencing project, and his efforts also resulted in additional monies for the project from the State Council of Trout Unlimited. You, and the Board, have every reason to be proud of your Foundation staff.

The Board is moving ahead with our strategic planning efforts. Corky, Mike, and I attended a one-day seminar in Missoula on long-range planning for non-profit organizations and we have scheduled a special board meeting to begin the plan-drafting process. We'll be looking at problems relating to the culture, the wildlife, and the fishery in the watershed that must, or should, be addressed over the next 5-10 years, including how best to determine what information is available to help identify those problems and how best to ameliorate them, and then how to fund the work to do that. Part of the effort to identify available information describing the watershed in times past will center on the 'heritage project' I described in my June President's Message. Certainly not at the end of our meeting, but ideally within 6-8 months thereafter, we'll be able to publish a work plan that lays out our priorities and a relatively detailed work plan for the next five years, at a minimum.

As always, we are interested in your thoughts on any topic about the River or our plans for the Foundation's work. Contact us with your comments and ideas at bhrf@bhrf.org. Become involved so we can move forward together.

Tom

Executive Director's Message

Hi All,

Wow, writing the fall newsletter already, what happened to summer? Frost already appeared on my boat and truck outside. Time to start trying for some of those monster browns of fall.

We had a productive and busy summer. Big Hole River Day was the most successful yet, netting over \$18,500. We reached capacity crowds for our little Melrose Firehouse facility. Corky, Operations Manager for the Foundation, worked non-stop to pull off the most successful event yet. Her husband, Jack, worked as much as Corky as a volunteer – Thank You Jack. The local Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Chapter put in many volunteer hours as well. Everyone worked so much, we burned them out. We definitely need to find more help for next year. We will be soliciting for volunteers early, so think about coming down and helping us out. Thanks for a great event!

This summer saw us dealing with low river flows and high water temperatures. We experienced one of the driest late summers since 2007. However, the latest version of the Drought Management Plan and conservation measures implemented by water users in the Big Hole averted an entire river closure. As summer progressed, newly-adopted hoot-owl angling measures were implemented, the upper river closed to angling, and the lower river closed to angling later in the summer. The good news was that the popular canyon section to Melrose remained open to angling and fortunately the river re-opened quickly by late summer. Let's be hopeful for a great snowpack this year.

Fall finds us as busy as the summer. By the time you read this, three major field projects will be finished. We completed our South Fork of the North Fork Divide Creek westslope fish passageway project in September. The parking area and boat launch improvements were completed at the Anaconda Sportsman's Access along the upper Big Hole. And, the Moose Creek Ranch Stewardship Fence Project will be completed in October. We also wrapped up another field sampling season for the ongoing Benthic Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Project in September.

As we head into fall, the Foundation board and staff will begin a strategic planning process. We were very fortunate these last couple of years to be more successful at our fund raising. With this success comes responsibility. We want to be more proactive in conservation across the Big Hole and responsible to our funders. Corky, Tom Welsch, and I began this process by attending a strategic planning workshop that will be followed by a board planning meeting. This will give us a good start on deciding how to navigate the Foundation into the future.

Earlier this summer, I received the entire trout tagging study data set from Jim Olsen at Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Fall and winter will see me at the laptop analyzing the tag return information and summarizing it into a report. Look for it during the spring. I am excited to begin the analysis and see the results. Also, because we completed another sampling year, next to the laptop will be the dissecting microscope and jars filled with macroinvertebrate samples from 2013. When I get tired of building survivorship and growth curves for trout tag data, I can sort and tally a few bug samples.

Lastly, as we head into fall, we will continue our fundraising efforts through proposal writing and continue to seek new and necessary projects that will "conserve, enhance and protect the free-flowing character of the Big Hole River, its unique culture, fish, and wildlife."

Thank you all!

Mike

Thank You

We are grateful for the following members and donors who have renewed or made recent contributions and gifts in support of our mission as of September 30, 2013

Every effort has been made to maintain accuracy. If we have made any errors, please call 866.533.2473 or email bhrf@bhrf.org.

Cash Donations

Doug & Betty Barba
Michael Cooperman
Foothills Foundation
Kenneth Gaines
William Good
Joe McBride
Bruce & Mary Ellen McPhee
Michael & Elaine Moore
James Patterson
Neal Rogers
The Cinnabar Foundation
Bud & Karen Van Stone
Steve Wickliffe

Pintler

Donald & Judy Janis
Loraine Kriegel
Jon Sesso & Barb Kornet

Maiden Rock

Carla Hansel
David Hansel
Parker Hansel
Peter Hansel
Turner Hansel
Jack & Corky Logan
Bill & Andrea Nelson
J.J. Pilgreen
Paul & Gretchen Rebarchak
Joseph & Anne Shands
William D. Stover

Free Flows

Andrew Durkin
Michael & Elaine Moore
Richard J. Parke
Finis St. John
Bill Watt
Sheila Youngblood

Big Hole River Day

Mike Bias Outfitting ~ Bozeman Reel Company
Holley & Laura Britt ~ Chuck Bulen
Jim Chatriand/Heckla House
Steven L. Clark ~ Marylou Colvin ~ Jerry Curtis
Craig & Wade Fellin/Big Hole Lodge
Mike Fisher/Caddis House ~ Frontier Anglers
Tom Harman Estate ~ Rick & Phyllis Harper
Harrington Bottling Company
Headframe Spirits ~ Jensen Jewelers ~ Ruth Little
Jack & Corky Logan ~ Mother Lode Theatre ~ Donald Pecor
Pioneer Mountain Cabins ~ Quarry Brewery
Riverstone Gallery ~ Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Peggy Ryan ~ Salvestrin Winery ~ Shark Tooth
Silverbow Hearth & Home
Sportsman Motel, Cabins & RV ~ Sunrise Fly Shop
Sweetgrass Rods ~ The Cottage ~ The Old Hotel
Tim Tollett ~ Paul Vang ~ Tom Welsch
Bob & Joanne Westine ~ Chloe Young

Drift Boat Raffle Winner

Congratulations to our Hyde drift boat raffle winner, Peggy Guccione. Peggy purchased one ticket during the festivities at Big Hole River Day in Melrose. Peggy is excited to have her new boat and she and her husband will be getting rowing instructions very soon. Peggy lives in Canyon Creek near Melrose in the summer and in Fayetteville, Arkansas in the winter but it sounds like the boat will be staying in Melrose. Again, congratulations Peggy and thank you for participating in our raffle. See you next year!



New Board Members Welcome

We currently have openings on our Board of Directors.

If you are passionate about conserving, enhancing and protecting the free-flowing character of the Big Hole River, its unique culture, fish and wildlife, please contact our office at (866)533-2473.

The Board of Directors generally meets once a month on the second Wednesday of the month at 6 PM.

Westslope Cutthroat Passageway Project Completed by Mike Bias

On September 13th Justin Devers of Devers Excavation and Aquatics of Dillon used his excavator to move the rock for the final one-foot step in our South Fork of the North Fork Divide Creek Westslope Cutthroat Passageway Project.

This project, under our Native Fisheries Conservation Program, is the Foundation's own westslope cutthroat restoration project on the South Fork of the North Fork Divide Creek. This project replaced a perched culvert with a natural fish passageway that flows into Southfork Reservoir. The project, a cooperative effort with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and the Butte-Silver Bow Water District, was funded in part by Ruby Springs Lodge and the Future Fisheries Program, with some last minute funding coming directly from FWP. It will conserve and enhance several miles of cutthroat stream in the Divide Creek drainage, an important stronghold for westslope cutthroat in the Big Hole watershed.



Jim Olsen, Fisheries Biologist for Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks guides a giant culvert into position while Justin Devers of Devers Excavation and Aquatics operates the excavator on our South Fork of the North Fork Divide Creek Westslope Cutthroat Passageway Project.

Anaconda Sportsman's Club Fishing Access Site Improvements Completed by Mike Bias

After completing the South Fork Divide Creek Westslope Cutthroat Project, Justin Devers, Devers Excavation and Aquatics, and his crew mobilized their equipment – excavators, loaders, and dump trucks – to the Anaconda Sportsman's Club Fishing Access Site on the upper Big Hole River. In September after a few long days, they completed boat ramp and parking lot improvements.

The Anaconda Sportsman's Club manages a Fishing Access Site on the upper Big Hole. They approached the Big Hole River Foundation early in 2013 with a request to help manage and improve their deteriorating boat launch facilities. Using funds exclusively from the Christopher Winter Memorial Fund, we agreed to help them maintain this important public access on the river. Improvements included grading and graveling the launch and parking area. Future improvements will consist of picnic tables, informational kiosk, and signs. The family of Christopher Winter will be placing a memorial plaque in honor of Chris at the site. The Big Hole Valley was a very special place to Chris and his family. Since 1988 they have spent their summers on their ranch near Wisdom. Chris was an avid fly fisherman. His time fishing the Big Hole offered a peaceful retreat, a sanctuary for renewal and, this is where he taught his daughters the art of fly fishing.



We again offer our condolences to the family of Christopher Winter and we thank all of the donors to his memorial fund for the opportunity to make improvements to this access site in his name.

Fall Projects

George Grant Trout Unlimited Comes Through in a Big Way on Moose Creek by Mike Bias

The George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited – namesake of our founder – came on board in a big way to help us fund the Moose Creek Ranch Stewardship Fence Project. Fence construction on the Moose Creek Ranch will cost \$14,600. Funding commitments totaling \$6,000 were secured from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife Program and Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Future Fisheries Program. In the spring, the Foundation accepted the responsibility to solely fund the remaining \$8,600, while continuing to seek additional funding sources before construction started in fall.

Moose Creek Ranch straddles Moose Creek less than a mile from its confluence with the Big Hole River. It enters from the east and is located midway between Divide and Melrose. The proposed mile or so of four-strand, wildlife-friendly fence will tie into existing fence along the creek. Moose Creek is a critical tributary to the Big Hole River for water flow and temperature, and we will be helping the rancher manage grazing along nearly a mile of it.

Tom Welsch, president of our board, reached out to the George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited (GGTU) following

our August Board meeting. GGTU asked that we present the Moose Creek Ranch Project to their board at their next meeting in early September. I presented the project and by the next day, Richard Day president of the GGTU board contacted me with the good news that they were prepared to commit \$2,500 towards the project.

Upon hearing of GGTU's commitment, I contacted Montana TU, the state organization of TU seeking additional funds for Moose Creek. Montana TU staff was familiar with the Moose Creek Ranch project and they asked that GGTU submit to their Executive Committee a funding request under their 'chapter minigrant program'. GGTU followed through and now Montana TU is also a \$2,500 contributor to the Moose Creek Ranch Stewardship Fence Project – resulting in a total commitment of \$5,000.

We are excited to have the George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Montana TU as partners on the Moose Creek Ranch Stewardship Fence Project. The partnership on this project testifies to the importance of tributaries such as Moose Creek to the conservation of the Big Hole River.



What Does That Mean?

Perched Culverts

A vast system of logging roads has been established over the last fifty years. There are numerous existing culverts installed as water crossings in small headwater streams. One issue biologists are concerned about is perched culverts, in which the outflow end of the culvert extends above the normal water level of the natural stream, creating a waterfall that may present a barrier for fish trying to move upstream. This perched condition problem may be due to inadequate initial installation or because of large rocks or ledge that prevented seating the culverts deeper.

Fisheries biologists are concerned about obstacles to fish passage created by water crossings on logging roads. Bridges, open-bottomed arches, or embedded culverts are preferred methods to maintain or restore natural stream bottoms, facilitating easy passage for spawning fish and smaller juveniles working their way up in headwater streams.



Big Hole Floodplain Study and Aerial Video of River



A floodplain mapping study was recently completed for 116 miles of the Big Hole River. The public hearings for adopting the floodplain maps have been completed and the comments and technical aspects of the mapping effort are in final review. The state will be following the legal adoption process this fall. Once, the maps are recognized by the state, the local jurisdictions will update their floodplain regulations to meet state and national standards (and possibly beyond) and recognize the new mapping information.

As part of the study, Kestrel Aerial Services, Inc. in Bozeman, MT produced an aerial video of the entire length of the river for the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC). You can view the video by going to our website at www.bhrf.org and clicking on the news link on the home page which will take you to the video on DNRC website or by visiting the DNRC website directly at http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/big_hole.asp

Species Spotlight ~ Flammulated Owl (*Psiloscopus flammeolus*)



The Flammulated Owl is a small, nocturnal owl approximately 6 inches long with a 14 inch wingspan. The females are larger than the males, ranging from 62-65 grams as opposed to males ranging from 50-52 grams. The owl gets the name flammulated from the flame like markings on its face. It breeds from southern British Columbia and the western United States to central Mexico.

Unlike many owls, they are migratory, leaving Canada and the United States in the fall. In the winter, they are found in northern Central America, from southern Mexico to Guatemala and El Salvador. Flammulated Owls leave their breeding grounds in August to head to their wintering areas and then return to their breeding grounds in late April and early May.

The Flammulated Owl is similar in appearance to the Western Screech-Owl but is only about one-quarter the mass, lacks large ear tufts (but has small ear tufts that are barely visible), has dark eyes and a different voice. The call is a series of relatively deep single or double hoots.

They feed almost entirely on insects, but will very occasionally eat small mammals such as shrews and other small rodents. The insects they eat mostly consist of small moths and butterflies. They also like to eat crickets and beetles.

These owls will only create nests in tree cavities and nowhere else. Females usually select cavities that used to be woodpecker or northern flicker nests. The Flammulated Owl tends to have one clutch of 2-4 eggs annually. The young are able to forage for their own prey after about 25-32 days.

During the nesting period, the female owls rely on the males to forage for them. Nesting habitat in the western U.S. and Canada is usually mature, open ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests.

Flammulated owls are present in western Montana's Bitterroot Valley but are occasionally seen in the Big Hole. No specific management activities for Flammulated Owls are currently occurring in Montana, however, management for old-growth ponderosa pine habitats is ongoing by a number of land management agencies. Management for the maintenance of this habitat type will be beneficial for Flammulated Owls in Montana.



Help save paper and printing costs by going green

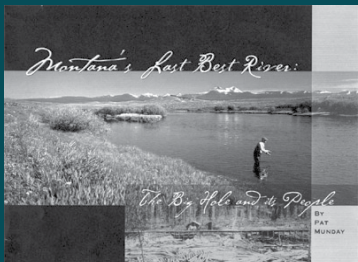
If you would prefer to receive this newsletter in digital PDF format only, please drop us an email at bhrf@bhrf.org with the subject line
GO GREEN

And don't forget to sign up for our periodic on-line version of
Free Flows at www.bhrf.org

BHRF Merchandise

Books - The Big Hole River Foundation has books, fishing shirts and hats for sale. To order, please visit our website at www.bhrf.org or call us toll free at 866.533.BHRF or email us at bhrf@bhrf.org and we will return your call.

Montana's Last Best River: The Big Hole and it's People by Pat Munday.
George Grant signed edition \$59.95
Dave Whitlock print edition \$49.95
+ S&H



Books by George Grant
Grant's Riffle
Montana Trout Flies
The Art of Weaving Hair Hackles
\$20 each plus S&H
Ten Book Series - see website \$200

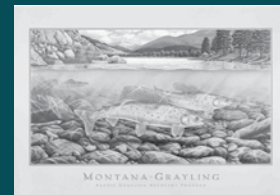


Columbia Fishing
Shirts
Long Sleeve
in many sizes
and colors
\$50 + S&H

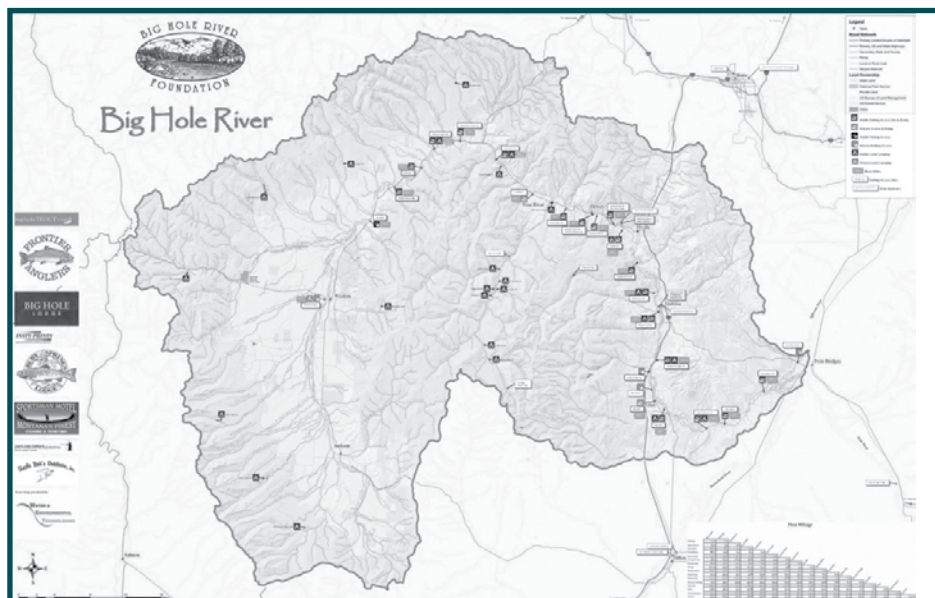


Hats
Sage with
logo
\$20 + S&H

Montana artist, Monte Dolack's
"Montana Grayling" posters
These beautiful posters of
Arctic grayling are worthy of
fine framing
\$25 each plus S&H




Big Hole River Maps
available in local
shops
or order on-line at
www.bhrf.org for
\$9.95 + S&H



Our Newsletter and Corporate Sponsors - Thank you!

Jane Birkhead, CPCU
Executive Vice President
Hukill Hazlett
Harrington Agency, Inc. 4601
Malsbary Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243



INSTY-PRINTS®
BUSINESS PRINTING & DIGITAL SERVICES
of BUTTE

First Montana Bank
Putting Montanans First

Sportswear & Design
Dillon, Montana
facebook.com/sportswearAndDesign

HYDE
Drift Boats



BOZEMAN REEL



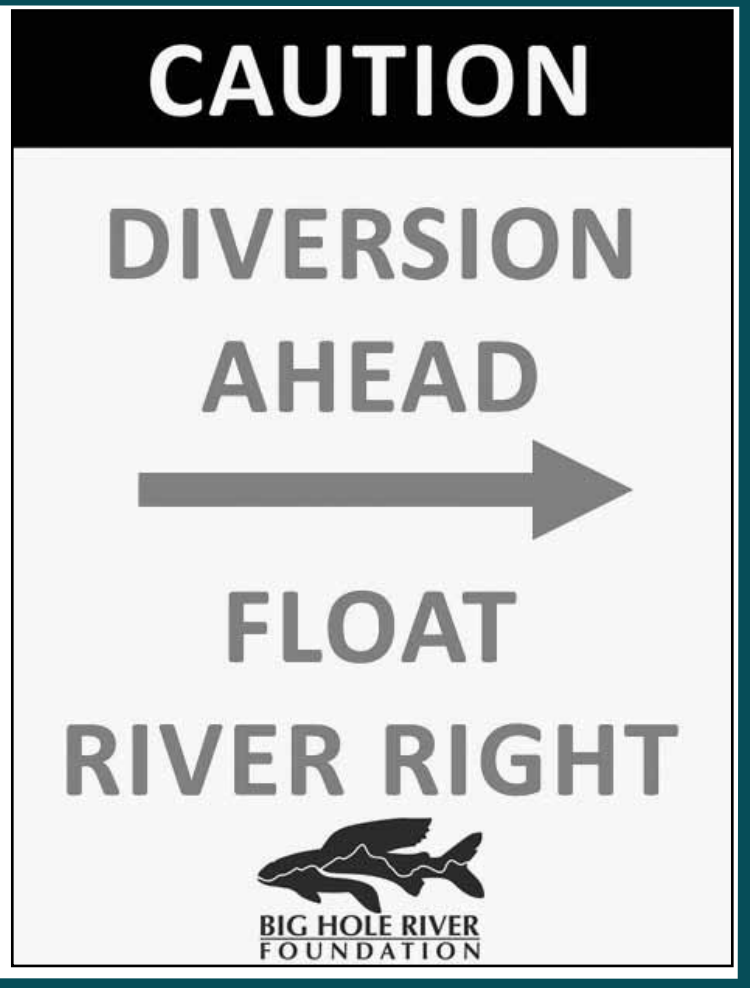
Big Hole River
HEADWATERS
Fly Shop
Melrose, MT



Sweetgrass Rods

River Hazards

The Big Hole River Foundation will begin to produce and install signs warning floaters of potential river hazards to help make the river a bit safer for the floating public. The first set of signs will replace the signs erected by Fish, Wildlife & Parks at the Pendergast Diversion that deteriorated over time. The Pendergast Diversion is a large diversion at the bottom of the canyon section above Melrose that can easily be floated into unknowingly. We know of at least two boats that went down the diversion without realizing it was an entrance to a headgate this summer. Although above the headgate there is a spillway or bypass channel, it can be hazardous to float during low flow periods.



Planning a fishing trip to the Big Hole?

Let the Big Hole River Foundation be your travel agent.

In conjunction with three of the finest lodges outfitting on the Big Hole River, the Big Hole River Foundation put together three amazing fly-fishing vacation packages available to you for your generous contribution to the Big Hole River Foundation. For a \$5,000 contribution you will receive a 4 night/3 day guided fishing package for two at Healing Waters Lodge and a lifetime membership to BHRF. For a \$7,000 contribution you will receive a 4 night/3 day guided fishing package for two at Ruby Springs Lodge and a lifetime membership to BHRF. And, for an \$8,000 contribution you will receive a 6 night/5 day guided fishing package for two at Craig Fellin's Big Hole Lodge and a lifetime membership to BHRF. The trip to Big Hole Lodge also includes tips, flies, wine and beer.

Guided fishing packages are subject to available openings at the respective lodges. Help support the important programs and projects of the Big Hole River Foundation, while doing what you planned on doing anyway – fishing the Big Hole River. For more information contact Mike Bias at mikebias@3rivers.net or (406) 925-2276.



U.S. Postage
PAID
Non-Profit
Butte, MT 59702
Permit No. 50

I wish to support the mission of the Big Hole River Foundation by becoming a member or making a tax deductible donation.

Please consider a fully tax deductible life membership gift to the Big Hole River Foundation

Please enroll me at the following level:

- ☐ Free Flows (\$25)
- ☐ Maiden Rock (\$50)
- ☐ Wise River (\$75)
- ☐ Pintler (\$100)
- ☐ Grayling (\$250)
- ☐ Life Member (\$500)
- ☐ Memorial Donation (include information)
- ☐ Cash Donation
- ☐ Merchandise Donation

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone:
Email Address:
Enclose check or credit card # & Expiration Date:

To order by phone please call us at 1.866.533.2473. To order on-line, please visit us at www.bhrf.org or mail this form to BHRF, P.O. Box 3894, Butte, MT 59702.