

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for MAY 2020



Trout live in nice neighborhoods



➤ **MADISON VALLEY MAY “HAPPENINGS”** → Our strange new world continued through May, with most all events, meetings, public & social events cancelled. → But Veterans were still honored on Memorial Day at several cemeteries through the area. → Montana was partially open during Phase I with restaurant, bars, breweries, distilleries, and casinos allowed to open, with protocols. Restaurants were doing a booming take-out business before they were allowed to open for dining in. → The 14-day quarantine was in effect for people coming into Montana from out of state - meaning no going out for anything! Fishing or hunting on public lands was banned, but no quarantine for seasonal workers. Many strange rules. → Madison County has only 8 cases and has had 1 death. Our neighboring Gallatin County however has experienced the highest numbers in the state. → The Nearly New Shoppe has been closed throughout, as they try to decide how to protect their older volunteers. → Recycling at the Dump is back as of June 1. → The river is muddy with runoff, and high, fast water can be dangerous, so take care. → The Bottle Barn is now owned by Chris DiMichele (Deemo's) and managed by his daughter Nikki, with new hours, CC accepted, and special orders encouraged! → The Antler Designs building is under new ownership and renovation. → River Dogs and Artists on Main have closed permanently, with their spaces available.

➤ **MADISON VALLEY JUNE “HAPPENINGS”** → While some Ennis area events including “Tap Into Ennis” (*an opportunity to taste offerings from Montana breweries and distilleries*) have been postponed until further notice, the annual **4th of July parade and rodeo** on July 3 & 4, are still moving forward. But NO Pancake Breakfast at the Fire Station! → The 2020 Noxious Weed Fundraiser has been cancelled for this year but confirmed for next year at the Hollowtop Ranch in Pony. → Throughout our area and all over Montana, major events that we all look forward to every year are being cancelled or postponed. We will still look forward to tourism, although it may be a little later and on a smaller scale than we are used to. For those of you who are already living in one of Montana’s remarkable communities, it may be a great chance to go experience what is available out your own back door!

➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → As of May 31st, there are 515 confirmed Covid-19 cases, with 448 recovered and 17 deaths, statewide. Governor Bullock has called for Phase II, as of June 1 with the 14-day quarantine requirement lifted, as Montana continues to have the lowest number of positive Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations, per capita. → Go to <https://www.mtpr.org/post/montana-entering-phase-2-covid-19-reopening-plan> for details on the current regulations. → As you might expect, alcohol sales rise in Montana, amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. The MT Dept. of Revenue says hard alcohol sales in March spiked to levels usually just seen during the holidays. State liquor sales rose about 20 percent in March, and did NOT include beer, wine, cider, or sales made by breweries or distilleries. April sales, however, returned to normal levels. No explanation for that change.



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➤ **FISHING REPORT** → **The Madison River Fishing Report. By John Way.** June is the month when it all starts to happen on the Madison River. The big bugs of summer appear and with it the full summer season will kick off. While most Americans are experiencing lock-down fatigue and wanting to connect with something other than a computer screen, the natural timeline in Montana is always the same. The warming temps of June bring runoff, garden planting and smiles on the faces of all who survived another Montana winter.

The river will stay high and muddy for a few weeks. Somewhere around the 15th the river flow will start to decrease. It is then that the water temps and sunlight mix into the perfect cocktail to trigger the salmon fly hatch. Large prehistoric-looking stone flies emerge from the icy depths. Their exoskeleton splits and the perfect winged insect flies away to mate and die. The cycle of life. During all stages of this natural wonder, the fish take notice. When this will happen is anyone's guess. Typically, around the 20th of the month we have good dry fly fishing on salmon flies. Whenever it happens, you need to be ready!



With the isolation of the past few months and the unrest in many cities across this nation right now, most of us feel drawn to the natural world. Here in Montana, our Big Views and Elbow Room are never ending. We are lucky to have this natural constant in our lives. Fewer number of folks will be traveling this year to Montana. But it is our goal to help make that experience better for the folks who do come. We all need healing right now and there is no better place to heal than out in the natural world. Whatever your scars, the waters, sun, and wind help mend them.

If you are looking to fish the salmon fly hatch this month, stop by the store and we will get you dialed in. We have the bugs for every aspect of the hatch as well as the famed CRITTER FLY. A drowned salmon fly that has been our secret for the past decade and is now for sale! Come by and get the critter, support local business, and get out on the water. Happy Fishing and God Bless, *FishEnnis*, from John Way, Owner of **The Tackle Shop**, <http://www.thetackleshop.com>) Ennis, Montana, the **CULTURAL EPICENTER OF TROUT**. (406) 682-4263, or cell: (406) 370-5206.

Check out other fishing reports at:

- ✚ Madison River Fishing Company at: <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.
- ✚ Dan Delekta at <http://beartoothflyfishing.com/flyfishingreports/uppermadisonriver.htm>.
- ✚ The Madison Valley Ranch at <http://www.madisonvalleyranch.com/blog/>
- ✚ Joe Dilschneider's Montana Trout Stalkers at <http://www.montanatrout.com/>
- ✚ Yellowstone Fly Fishing at <http://www.yellowstoneflyfishing.com/madisonreport.htm>.

➤ **WEATHER** → We enjoyed most of the May weather and getting out of our homes! It was a transition month, from spring to summer. On May 31st, the daytime high got up to 80° and the nighttime high was 58°! But earlier in the month, the daytime low was 46° and the nighttime low was 28°! We went from long johns to shorts!

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **BUYING AND SELLING DURING THE PANDEMIC.** According to the National Association of Realtors®, technology and good-old-fashioned creativity are helping agents, buyers and sellers abide by the COVID-19 health and safety practices while getting deals done. Some buyers are touring houses virtually. Others visit in person while remaining at least 6 feet from their agent.

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Sellers are hosting open houses on Facebook Live. Appraisers are doing drive-by valuations. Buyers are watching inspections via video call. Masked and gloved notaries are getting signatures on doorsteps or by video. Here's what buying and selling during the pandemic looks like:

- Safe-Showing Guidelines - The National Association of Realtors recommends only one buyer enter a home at a time, with 6 feet between each guest. NAR also recommends agents have potential buyers wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they come in the door. They should also remove their shoes. No children should be present at showings, either.
- Down payment Help - Many organizations offering down payment assistance to first-time home buyers have temporarily suspended the programs or changed the rules. You can check the status of programs in your area at the <https://downpaymentresource.com/>.
- Desktop, Drive-by Appraisals - Appraisers are essential workers in many areas, so home valuations are continuing. But often remotely. New temporary rules from the Federal Housing Finance Authority allow drive-by and desktop appraisals for loans backed by the federal government. In a desktop appraisal, the appraiser comes up with a home estimate based on tax records and MLS information, without an in-person visit. For a drive-by, the appraiser only looks at the home's exterior, in combination with a desktop appraisal. Each agency has its own guidelines. Some private lenders still require in-person appraisals, which are allowed even in areas with shutdown orders. Appraisers must adhere to the CDC guidelines.
- Inspections via Live Video - Inspectors are now often working alone, no buyers in tow, and using hand sanitizer and alcohol wipes. The Nat. Assoc of Certified Home Inspectors advises inspectors to videotape their inspection so clients can watch it at home later, or to use FaceTime or other live video chat apps to take their clients along on the inspection, virtually.
- Mortgage Rates and Locks - With mortgage rates fluctuating quickly and closing times taking longer than usual, some lenders are extending mortgage rate lock periods. You can grab a good rate and hang on to it even if your lender takes longer than usual to process your loan! Depends on the lender and the loan. Mortgage rates are volatile due to several factors, but great rates are still possible.
- Employment Verification - An important step in getting a mortgage is proving the borrower has a job. In pre-coronavirus days, lenders called the borrower's employer for a verbal verification. The Federal Housing Finance Authority has relaxed the rules for loans backed by the federal government because so many businesses are closed. They now accept an email, recent paystub, or bank statement.
- Final Walk-Throughs - These can be done via video with clients or with distancing and masks. When buyers take possession, they should DISINFECT!
- Remote Notarization - Depending on where you live, some states allow remote notarizations using electronic documents using video apps like Zoom or FaceTime. Notaries will watch you sign either a paper document or an electronic signature, via camera. Masked and gloved notaries even meet buyers in parking lots and pass documents through car windows.
- Closings Get Creative - Many title companies are offering drive-thru closing services. It is all about being really flexible now.

➤ **FIND A HOME FOR YOUR SOUL... Featured Property of the Month ... Perfect place for your Montana Dream Cabin! 20 acres** with exclusive access to the Madison River, close to National Forest and Cliff & Wade Lakes, this property is in the heart of a sportsman's paradise. Just a half hour to Yellowstone Park and less than an hour from Ennis, it is a great place to get away from it all. Lot has power, phone, and fiber optic cable. Just needs well, septic and your dream cabin. Good location near the main gate to this popular subdivision near \$3 Bridge. Madison River Ranch, Madison Trail, Lot 50, Cameron. **\$85,000**, MLS #211768.



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➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE NEWS** → WASHINGTON (May 28, 2020) – Brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, pending home sales decreased in April, making two straight months of declines, according to the National Association of Realtors®. Every major region experienced a drop in month-over-month contract activity and a decline in year-over-year pending home sales transactions. The Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI), a forward-looking indicator of home sales based on contract signings, fell 21.8% to 69.0 in April. Year-over-year, contract signings shrank 33.8%. An index of 100 is equal to the level of contract activity in 2001.

“With nearly all states under stay-at-home orders in April, it is no surprise to see the markedly reduced activity in signing contracts for home purchases,” said Lawrence Yun, NAR’s chief economist. **The latest pending home sales numbers reveal the greatest decline since NAR begin tracking such transactions in January 2001.** However, Yun expects that April will be the lowest point for pending contracts, and the month of May, consequently, will be the lowest point for closed sales.

“While coronavirus mitigation efforts have disrupted contract signings, the real estate industry is ‘hot’ in affordable price points with the wide prevalence of bidding wars for the limited inventory,” he said. *“In the coming months, buying activity will rise as states reopen and more consumers feel comfortable about homebuying in the midst of the social distancing measures.”*

A sign that buyers’ comfortability may be growing is seen in NAR’s most recent Flash Survey, as 34% of Realtors® reported successfully completing nearly all aspects of transactions while adhering to social distancing procedures.

“Given the surprising resiliency of the housing market in the midst of the pandemic, the outlook for the remainder of the year has been upgraded for both home sales and prices, with home sales to decline by only 11% in 2020 with the median home price projected to increase by 4%,” Yun said. *“In the prior forecast, sales were expected to fall by 15% and there was no increase in home price.”*

Although each of the four indices is down on a month-over-month basis, an encouraging development is that the rates of declines are lower in the Midwest, South and West, compared to the drops seen in March 2020. The Northeast PHSI sank 48.2% to 42.6 in April, 52.6% lower than a year ago. In the Midwest, the index dropped 15.9% to 72.0 last month, down 26.0% from April 2019. Pending home sales in the South fell 15.4% to an index of 87.6 in April, a 29.6% decrease from April 2019. The index in the West slipped 20.0% in April 2020 to 57.1, down 37.2% from a year ago.

The National Association of Realtors®, "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing 1.3 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS** → May was really busy! We think someone must have opened the gates! People want to move to Montana, or at least own property here so they can dream about it! **Big Sky Country** Multiple Listing statistics for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony), for the month of **MAY 2020**, were as follows:

- **HOMES:** 52↓ homes listed (\$149,900 to \$2,990,000); 20↑ pending sales (\$199,900 to \$995,000); and 22 homes have sold in 2020 (\$130,000 to \$1,325,000), totaling \$2,290,000 at 91.1%↓ of list prices.
- **LAND:** 208↑ vacant lots listed (\$9,500 to \$1,950,000; with 13↑ pending sales (\$9,500 to \$625,000); and 31 lots have sold in 2020 (\$35,000 to \$505,000), totaling \$3,009,300 at 92.7↑ of list prices.

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- **RANCHES:** 7 ranches listed (\$599,000 to \$15,900,000); 0 pending sales, and 1 ranch has sold in 2020 (\$4,000,000), at 89% of list price.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 17↑ listed (\$56,000 to \$950,000); 0 pending sales; and 1 commercial property has sold in 2020 (\$100,000), at 91% of list price.

"The best investment on Earth is earth." Louis J. Glickman, real estate mogul/philanthropist

➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA...***Did you know... that Dinosaur fossils aren't minerals??* As a result of an on-going legal battle, the 2019 legislature unanimously passed a bill stating dinosaur fossils are not considered minerals under Montana law, unless the contract separating the surface and mineral rights reserves fossils as part of the mineral rights! The dinosaurs unearthed on an eastern Montana ranch include a tyrannosaurus rex, a triceratops skull and a pair of dinosaurs that appeared to have been locked in battle when they died. The T. rex was sold for millions of dollars. The owners of the ranch have surface rights and one-third of the mineral rights, while the sons of the previous owner of the ranch own two-third of the mineral rights. The Montana Supreme Court, in a 4-3 ruling, said dinosaur fossils are part of the surface rights. So, if you discover any dinosaur fossils on your property in Montana, consider them yours!



***SEE YOU IN MONTANA! (soon!)
Social Distancing Champions, since 1889!
Be not afraid. STAY SAFE, SANE AND SOBER!***

Our ERA Landmark Arrow Real Estate Team



Toni and Don Bowen, Broker Associates and Accredited Buyer Broker representatives, with over 75 years of real estate experience, between them – covering residential, commercial, vacant land, recreational & ranch properties in the Madison Valley.
And our office puppy, Finley!



Thank you in advance for your personal referrals. They are the lifeblood of our business and the greatest compliment you can give us.

*Debbie Reilly-Richardson
Office Administrator*



***WE'RE NOT JUST HERE TO MAKE A LIVING
---WE'RE HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!***

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USEFUL WEBSITES TO REMEMBER → ENNIS AND THE MADISON VALLEY:

<http://www.ennismontana.org/> - for community and local government information

<http://www.ennischamber.com/> - The Ennis Chamber of Commerce website

<http://www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org> – The Madison Valley History Association website

<http://www.mvmedcenter.org> – for information about the Madison Valley Medical Center

<http://www.mvvetsmemorial.org> – The Madison Valley Veterans Memorial website

<http://ennisarts.org/> - The Ennis Arts Association website for all artists!

<http://www.backroadtoyellowstone.com> – information for travelers about the route through our valley

MADISON COUNTY:

<https://madisoncountymt.gov/525/Emergency-Information> - for Madison County emergency news

<http://www.madison.mt.gov/> - Madison County Government website

<http://virginiacity.com> – Virginia City Chamber of Commerce

NEWS:

<http://www.madisoniannews.com/> - the latest news from the Madisonian newspaper for Madison Co.

<http://bozemandailychronicle.com/> - news from the big city of Bozeman, an hour northeast of Ennis

<http://www.mtstandard.com/> - news from historic Butte, an hour & ½ northwest of Ennis

MONTANA:

www.fwp.mt.gov/ - Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks website – for hunting and fishing regulations

<http://fwp.mt.gov/education/bow/> - “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” – a must for female newcomers!

<http://www.visitmt.com/> - Official website Montana Vacations, Recreation, Accommodations and Travel

<http://www.montanapictures.net> – for people homesick for Montana – a great visual connection

http://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis_list.shtml - State Highway Web Cams

<http://montanakids.com/> - State website for all things KIDS in Montana

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/index.htm> - Yellowstone National Park – for all things Yellowstone Park

<https://www.facebook.com/Ennisrealestate?ref=hl> – Facebook page for ERA Landmark Arrow R. E.

SKIING:

<http://bigskyresort.com/> – Check out latest snow conditions & things to do at Big Sky

<http://www.lmranch.com/winter/> - Lone Mountain Ranch in Big Sky for cross country trails

http://www.westyellowstonenet.com/skiing/cross_country_skiing.php - Skiing Yellowstone Park Trails

HORSEBACK RIDING:

www.wolfpackoutfitters.com – trail riding guides for the Madison Valley

<http://www.sphinxmountainoutfitting.com> – trail riding and outfitting guides in the Madison Valley

RANCHING:

<http://www.madisonvalleyranchlands.org/> - working to keep the ranching way of life alive

FISHING:

<http://www.madisonriverfoundation.org> - The Madison River Foundation

<http://www.montanatu.org/> - Montana Trout Unlimited

GOLFING:

<http://www.madisonmeadowsgolfcourse.com> – Madison Meadows Golf Course in Ennis

REAL ESTATE:

www.arrowreal.com – A wealth of resource information, local listings, and a portal to the Big Sky MLS

www.eralandmark.com – Our Main Office website, covering Bozeman, Livingston, Big Sky & Ennis

<http://www.realtor.com/> - The world’s #1 Real Estate website. The source for all properties on MLS

www.houselogic.com – Helpful information from the National Association of Realtors

www.homesandland.com – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates

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