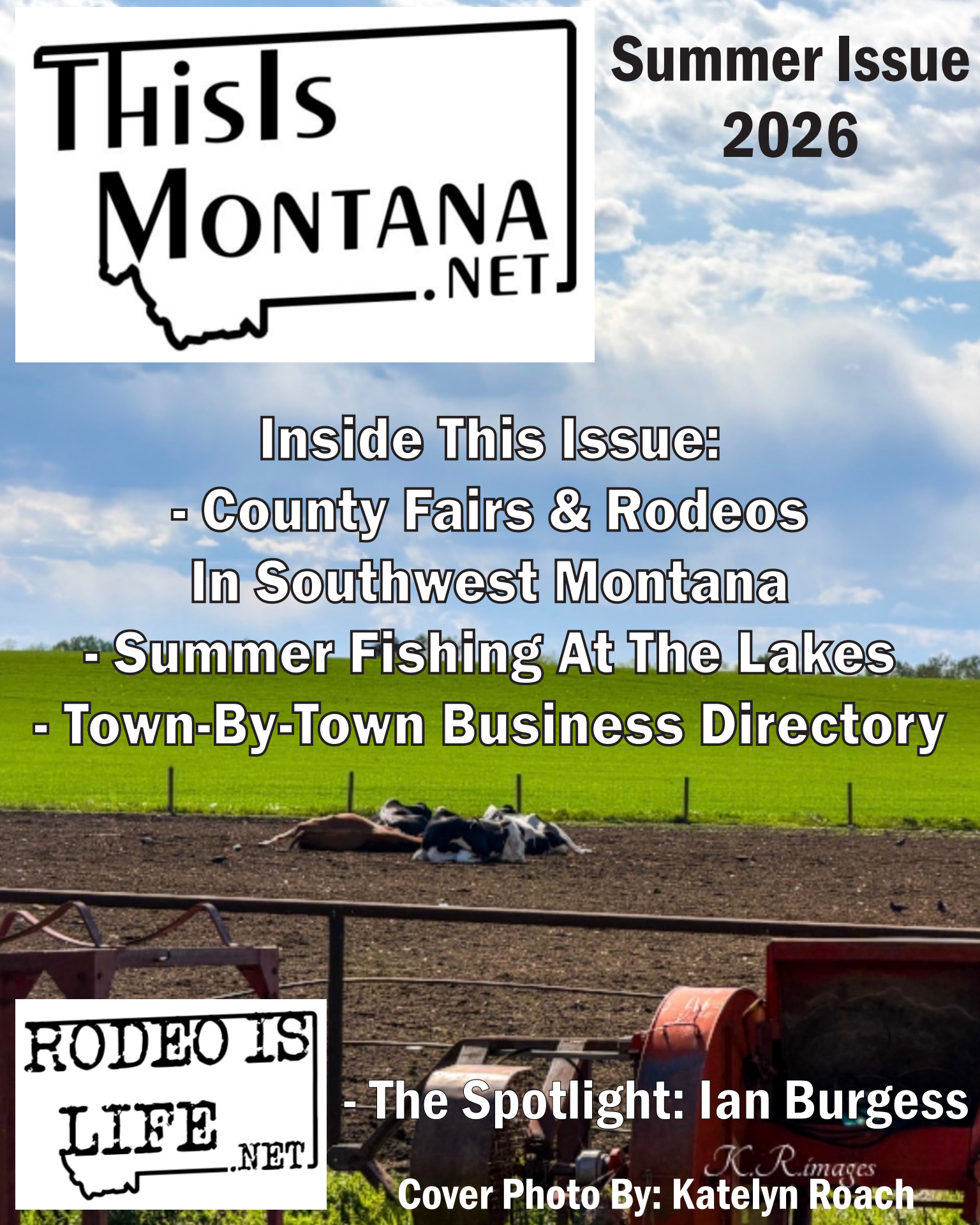




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**Summer Issue
2026**

Inside This Issue:

- County Fairs & Rodeos
In Southwest Montana**
- Summer Fishing At The Lakes**
- Town-By-Town Business Directory**

**RODEO IS
LIFE
.NET**

- The Spotlight: Ian Burgess

K. R. Images
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SOUTHWEST MONTANA

For Summer Fishing Head To The Lakes!

Marta Varela

Southwest Montana is highly regarded as a top-notch fishing destination, with summer lakes leading the way, from large, fish-filled reservoirs to high-alpine back country lakes. Some anglers opt for well-known, easily accessible destinations, while others might seek out a few hidden gems with less fishing pressure. Southwest Montana has them both.

Several factors contribute to these top-notch fishing conditions. One is the water. High-elevation mountain lakes and large reservoirs maintain cold, oxygen-rich aquatic environments that keep trout active through summer. Another, the diversity of species, including rainbow, cutthroat, brook and brown trout, as well as kokanee salmon, all these along with good chances to catch trophy-size fish, especially in large reservoirs.

Trout need insects and abundant hatches of active aquatic insects, including tricos in late summer, drive intense fish feeding behavior on the surface providing opportunities for exciting, visible and accessible shore fishing. Another factor is consistent stocking programs to create healthy fish populations. Many lakes, such as Georgetown Lake, are managed for consistent trout stocking (often over 100,000 fish annually in certain large lakes), creating productive, reliable fisheries, ideal for both fly and bait anglers.



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Specific summer bait and lure techniques can increase success. Flashers, lures, and spoons are very effective for attracting lake trout and rainbows, as are scents such as garlic, anise and shrimp. Inlet fishing, where creeks add nutrients and oxygen can be productive, especially with salmon eggs or spinners. Shore fishing success increases with salmon eggs, worms and scented baits for rainbow trout cruising the edges.

Fly fishing summer techniques include dry fly fishing during hatches, using flies with imitative patterns; stillwater techniques using sinking lines to fish chironomid pupae, leeches, and damsel nymph patterns, and terrestrials, when summer brings out terrestrial insects (hoppers, ants), creating excellent dry-fly fishing action.

Fishing regulations vary for each lake destination so always check current Montana FWP for specific daily limits.

If you're looking for well-known, easy access lakes, there are many options in Southwest Montana. Between Livingston and Anaconda, three stand out. Georgetown Lake is a major 3,000-acre lake known for excellent kokanee salmon, and rainbow and brook fishing, with a well-known damsel fly hatch in early July. Boat, bait and fly fishing are allowed. Hyalite Reservoir - cont'd

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is known for good accessible trout fishing. It has excellent early morning and evening fishing for cutthroat, brook trout, and Arctic grayling, from boat or shore. Harrison Lake is a popular stillwater fishing spot for good trout fishing with easy access for boats and float tubes.

North to Helena, anglers can expect excellent fly fishing in hatch-heavy, calm early mornings and bait fishing in deeper, cooler water. Holter Reservoir (Gates of the Mountains) is known for high quality fishing for both fly and spin anglers in a scenic setting. There's good access for boats and anglers looking for cooler, deeper water with opportunities for rainbow and brown trout, kokanee salmon, and smallmouth bass. The nearby "Land of Giants" (between Hauser Dam and Upper Holter) provides, via boat, trophy trout (18 to 20+ inches) using nymphs and streamers. Trolling with spoons, spinners, or bait (nightcrawlers/leeches) is also very productive.

Canyon Ferry Lake is a large reservoir with excellent walleye, rainbow trout, and yellow perch fishing. It's highly productive during summer mornings and evenings, especially in deeper water, or at the inlet of the Missouri River. Trolling with spoons, spinners, or bait (nightcrawlers/leeches) is very productive. Hauser Lake is famous for rainbow trout and provides good opportunities for walleye fishing. Anglers can also find brown trout, and carp (summer flats fishing). As temperatures rise, fish in the early morning or focus on the cooler water immediately below Hauser Dam. June and July offer the best dry fly action, including pale morning duns (PMD) and caddis; nymphing is most consistent in summer, targeting trout along weed lines, while dry fly action is best in early morning, especially with trico spinners in July and August.

South toward Dillon, Browns Lake and Clark Canyon Reservoir are well-suited for bait (worms, marshmallows, Powerbait). When fly fishing, focus on nymphs (chironomids) in the mornings and evenings, and try terrestrial patterns (hoppers, beetles) when the wind picks up. Brownes Lake, a high-elevation lake, is a state fishing access site tucked into the national forest, a very popular lake for its high-quality rainbow trout, frequently stocked by Montana FWP. Brownes' is excellent for trolling and shore fishing with bait or flies. Clark Canyon Reservoir is a top-tier destination for rainbow trout and trophy-sized brown trout, popular with fly anglers using stillwater techniques for large



Photo Courtesy of Rhett Gerlach

rainbow (18 to 24 inches), brown trout and bait anglers. The lake is good for boaters and bank fishing.

Around West Yellowstone, Hebgen Lake is considered one of North America's best stillwater dry-fly lakes for large cruisers, especially in shallow bays. Trophy rainbow and brown trout cruise on the surface feeding on hovering mayflies. It's particularly famous for "gulper" fishing in July and August, with trout ranging from 14 to 18 inches, often greater than 20. Key areas are the Madison Arm and west shore flats, with mornings being best. Wade Lake and Cliff Lake are well-known for clear water, large trout, scenic boating, and varied, deep-water techniques. Located in Beaverhead National Forest, they're known for massive brown and rainbow trout, including historic records. Good for both fly fishing and, due to regulations, offer more opportunities for trolling/spin-casting in boats or canoes. The south end near the Wade Lake Resort is popular, and the lake is known for having - cont'd



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a fair amount of bank access on the east, south, and west sides, which are relatively shallow. Anglers can utilize boats or float tubes to target trout, often using nymphs, leeches, and dry flies in a clear, deep lake setting.

Three lakes offer angling opportunities near Gardiner. Trout Lake is popular and easily accessible. A hike-in lake known for large cutthroat trout, shore fishing is successful, especially in open pockets away from weeds. While the area is known for fly fishing, using spinning rods with bubble rigs and flies (like Zug Bugs) is effective in the open pockets. Emerald Lake, in the Gallatin National Forest, up Portal Creek, is excellent for both fly and bait fishing with large numbers of hungry Arctic grayling and Yellowstone cutthroat trout. It's easily accessed, shallow and best fished early morning or evening to avoid high winds. Greenough Lake is easily accessed and well-known for fly and bait fishing, especially rainbow trout, stocked multiple times a year, providing consistent action. Greenough is productive for all skill levels, including families. Bait fishing is highly effective. Using small hooks with garlic-scented fire bait or salmon eggs under a bobber works well, as the lake is shallow (under 10 feet). Fly fishing is also productive for catching stocked trout, generally accessible from the bank.

Well-known, easily accessed lakes equal heavy fishing pressure and crowds. For anglers looking for solitude-inducing experiences, there are excellent summer hidden gem fishing lakes, especially for sight-fishing big trout and appreciating solitude. Southwest Montana has you covered. Between Livingston and Anaconda, Lost Creek State Park provides scenic fishing below limestone cliffs with accessible shore fishing for rainbow and cutthroat trout, suitable for traditional gear, including bait fishing. Two private lakes, requiring booking and a fee, fit the hidden gem label. Burns Lake, a spring-fed reservoir boasts excellent summer fly fishing for rainbow, brown, and brook trout, often exceeding 20 inches. Its peak season spans May through September, with high-fertility waters creating strong Callibaetis hatches and consistent opportunities for rising or cruising trout. Contact through Montana Angler, 406-522-9854. Sitz Lake, part of Sitz Ranch, offers stillwater summer fly fishing for large 18 to 24 inch rainbow, brown and brook trout, on an 80+ acre, deep reservoir with excellent top-water and sub-surface action,

particularly with damselfly, Callibaetis, and midge patterns. Contact Sitz Angus Ranch Office, 406-685-3360.

North to Helena, Park Lake is a favorite local "secret" for high-altitude fishing, well-known for its Arctic grayling and westslopes cutthroat trout. While often windy, it offers some of the best fly fishing in the area, though bait fishing is also productive. Spring Meadow Lake State Park, while not exactly "hidden," is an urban lake on the edge of Helena, regularly stocked with rainbow trout, bass, and sunfish. It features an ADA-accessible - cont'd



Photo Courtesy of Rhett Gerlich



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fishing dock and is ideal for a quick afternoon session. Bait setups for lakes like Park or Spring Meadow are standard setups that include a bottom rig with nightcrawlers or a bobber rig with leeches.

Lake Helena is an excellent, convenient, and highly productive spot for both bait and fly fishing. Known for its shallow, warm, and nutrient-rich waters, it hosts walleye, yellow perch, rainbow trout, northern pike and carp. Bait fishing is productive, especially with jigs and spinners for walleye and trout; fly fishing with streamers and leeches. Shore fishing and boating are both popular.

South to Dillon, Reservoir Lake is an 11-acre lake perfect for a quiet day. It features a primitive boat ramp for electric motors and is surrounded by scenic hiking trails. Lake Agnes is often overlooked by those heading to more popular spots. Here you find a high-mountain destination typically accessed via trail, offering a secluded experience for trout.

At roughly 8,700', Elk Lake is a high-elevation summer fly fishing experience for Yellowstone cutthroat, rainbow, and brook trout in a remote setting. It's known for having minimal fishing pressure, with peak, effective dry fly fishing available due to, for instance, heavy damselfly hatches from mid-June through July. 5

Around West Yellowstone, Joffe Lake, offers

easy access, great for early summer evenings and well liked for both fly and bait fishing. Best fished with leeches, soft hackles, or chironomids on sinking lines, it's a quick, easy trip to catch rainbow trout. Earthquake Lake provides productive summer fishing, especially around inlet areas, for a variety of trout and is suitable for both fly and spin fishing with bait and lures.

Two hidden gems near Gardiner entice with trout options, including Yellowstone cutthroat, rainbow, and brook trout. Knox Lake is a secluded, high-country spot located in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, accessible via a trailhead in nearby Jardine. It primarily offers the chance to catch brook trout, with an average size of 7.4 inches. The mostly open shoreline offers easy access for casting. Dailey Lake, a large lake in Paradise Valley, is a hidden gem for catching trout and provides a quieter experience than nearby rivers. It's a popular "local" spot that allows bait fishing and is regularly stocked with rainbow trout and walleye.



Photo Courtesy of Rhett Gerlach

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In Southwest Montana Summer and County Fairs Are A Match

Marta Varela

In Southwest Montana, summer and county fairs go hand in hand, anticipated every year. What's not to like about an event that combines carnival rides, food vendors, exhibits, games, and a rodeo or two? They offer an opportunity to showcase local livestock, crops, projects, baked goods, jams and jellies, have them judged and maybe win a ribbon – blue, red or white.

Fairs are an important hallmark of summer and the enjoyment is felt across generations, as relevant today as in their origin in the 1800's. They signal a time for community hubs to celebrate the Montana way of life – rural heritage, agriculture and livestock. As well they showcase youths' months of hard work and shine a light on 4-H/FFA competitions in livestock and projects that strengthen responsibility, competition and leadership skills. And, as important, they provide important economic support for local vendors, and herald community spirit.

Head to one, two, or visit them all. County fairs are an important staple of a Montana summer – family-friendly entertainment for all.

County fair time begins at the Gallatin County Fairgrounds in Bozeman from Wednesday, July 15 to Sunday, July 19. The 2026 Big Sky Country State Fair, formerly known as the Gallatin County Fair, hails itself as the region's premier summer event that celebrates the mix of agricultural heritage and entertainment; five days of non-stop activities, a mix of traditional animal shows and high-energy entertainment.

The Carnival and food choices run throughout the fair, with carnival rides on the midway, and Food Row thriving with many choices, including fan fair favorites: Funnel of Love, Dippin' Dots and Piece of Crepe.

Highlights include 4-H/FFA Youth Events with livestock exhibits where youth showcase projects from rabbits and poultry to beef and swine. The concert series with on-stage entertainment covers three nights: Wednesday features Chase Rice with Preston Cooper and Neon Union; Thursday Morgan Wade with American Authors and for a finale on Friday, Stone Temple Pilots with Local H.

For rodeo fans, the Bozeman Ranch Rodeo Roundup, featuring professional bull riding, demolition derbies and mud bogs will be held



Photos Courtesy of the Whitehall Ledger

Saturday. Sunday, Heroes Day will serve to honor local service members and Sensory Morning for a quieter experience. 901 N Black Ave., 406-582-3270, 406statefair.com.

Park County Fairgrounds in Livingston is the site for the Park County Ag Fair, from Saturday July 18 to Saturday, July 25. With the mission of cultivating agricultural leaders through 4-H and FFA, this is a traditional fair experience with a focus on 4-H, FFA, livestock, agricultural heritage and community, and includes a carnival, rodeo, demolition derby, as well as unique events like pig mud wrestling.

The Buckin' Rodeo, gets the fun rolling Friday evening, July 17, just before the main fair events. During the fair itself look forward to agricultural heritage celebrations, agricultural displays and community projects, including livestock shows and 4-H and FFA animal projects. There will be a community market sale and, of course, carnival attractions. Grandstand entertainment will herald featured performances by The Spur Line and Sleepless Elite. And to top the fun, there will be royalty: 2026 Fair Queen Mya Peroutka and 2026 Fair Princess Penelope Paiement. - cont'd

46 View Vista Drive, livingston-chamber.com/park-county-mt-ag-fair-july-24-29.

The 66 th Annual Lewis & Clark County Fair/The Last Chance Stampede & Fair takes place Tuesday, July 21 to Saturday, July 25 at Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds in Helena. Get ready for five days of fun, food and festivities, a Montana tradition for the entire family. There's an extra day of fun and music this year, with free fairgrounds gate admission.

Key events include three nights of PRCA rodeo performances with contestants from across the nation. C5 Rodeo returns to Cool Alley Arena with world class bucking stock and an award-winning sound production team. Wayne Brooks, the "Voice of Rodeo" will call the action, and rodeo clown/barrelman Matt Merritt and World Class Equestrian trick rider Madison MacDonald-Thomas



Photos Courtesy of Piece of Crepe

will entertain with daring trick riding.

The annual 4-H Fair is always a popular attraction, with exhibits and activities, a 4-H Livestock Sale Saturday, 9 AM and an - cont'



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Indoor Project Auction at 3 PM. Browse-worthy commercial booths and displays will feature everything from face painting and artisan wares to farm equipment and RVs. And don't forget food: the fair hosts over 20 food and beverage concessionaires. From ice cream to steak sandwiches, there's something for everyone.

Also on hand will be the Dreamland Carnival, exciting free entertainment, the Open Class Indoor Fair and nightly concerts at Cool Alley Arena, including rock band Daughtry opening the fair Tuesday night, and country superstar Travis Tritt and his band live on stage Wednesday. And to end the festivities on Saturday, the Last Chance Stampede parade through downtown Helena, a family favorite. 98 West Custer Ave.

lccfairgrounds.com/last-chance-stampede.

Branded in tradition, the Madison County Fair And Rodeo takes place Wednesday, August 5 to Sunday, August 9, at the Madison County Fairgrounds in Twin Bridges. It's the "Best Week of the Summer" and celebrates traditional "Fair life" with agricultural exhibits, intense rodeo action and community gatherings. The NRA Rodeo will be held over two nights, August 6 and 7, along with a ranch rodeo.

Agricultural exhibits will include livestock shows and auctions that highlight local youth and 4-H programs. Add to that, traditional Fair Fun - carnival, demolition derby, horseshoe tournaments, a large variety of food vendors, a motorcycle stunt show and live music of local entertainment. And to top it all off, a Grand Parade, a major Twin Bridges traditional, often featuring local ranching themes. No gate charge. 2 Fairgrounds Loop, madisoncountymt.gov/205/Fairgrounds.

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Townsend Fairgrounds will host the Broadwater County Fair And Rodeo Thursday, August 6 to Sunday, August 9, with its motto: 250 Years of Freedom – Still Riding Strong. The National Rodeo Association Rodeo will be held in conjunction with the Broadwater County Fair. As with most of Montana, the fair is a central part of "fair life" in Broadwater County, a mix of agricultural competitions, community-focused fair and professional rodeo action.

The rodeo portion features a kids rodeo on Thursday, the NRA professional rodeo on Friday and Saturday, and an In County Adult Rodeo/Townsend local rodeo Sunday. The Friday rodeo will be designated a Purple Night rodeo to support domestic violence awareness through the Man Up Crusade. There will be 4H and FFA exhibits showcasing livestock shows and indoor 4-H projects, as well as food vendors and arts and crafts.

Entertainment includes a kick-off concert, local bands live music with traditional country music artists and local performers throughout the weekend and to accompany the rodeo, and children's - cont'd

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entertainment. And to conclude the festivities, a traditional Sunday parade. 189 US Hwy 12 E., www.townsendfairgrounds.com.

Next in the line-up is the 86 th Annual Tri-County Fair, held Wednesday, August 12 to Sunday, August 16 at the Deer Lodge Fairgrounds. With this year's theme, "Homegrown and Homemade", there will be fun for all ages. For Western Competition, there will be an NRA Rodeo, a Ranch Rodeo, Team Roping, and a Demolition Derby. Youth and agriculture will be showcased with 4-H and FFA projects and a 4-H/FFA

Rounding out the fair line-up, and right in time for Labor Day, is the Beaverhead County Fair, from Wednesday, September 2 to Sunday, September 6 at Beaverhead County Fairgrounds in Dillon, coinciding with Labor Day festivities that run through September 7. It's "Montana's Biggest Weekend", a traditional Labor Day weekend experience. This Fair is known as one of the major local events in Southwest Montana, offering a classic community fair experience combining traditional agricultural competition, including FFA and 4-H shows, with exciting, high-energy entertainment. Popular events includes PCRA rodeos, carnival, 4-H/FFA livestock shows, vendors, and an outdoor concert, celebrating local agricultural life.

The weekend centerpiece are two PRCA Rodeos with professional rounds on Saturday and finals on Sunday. As well as a Ranch Rodeo. The 4-H/FFA component stresses strong emphasis on youth livestock shows, expos and auctions, along with youth rodeos, team sorting, and community exhibits.

The weekend will highlight various vendors, food stalls and carnival rides with live music and entertainment and a big name outdoor country western concert, usually Sunday night. And the grand finale of the holiday weekend? The Dillon Jaycees Labor Day Parade Monday, September 7. 710 S Argenta St, beaverheadcountymt.gov/county-fair/.



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Southwest Montana Summer Rodeos Fill Summer Days

Marta Varela

Rodeo is a summer staple, an integral part of Southwest Montana culture, giving tribute to the region's ranching heritage. Almost everywhere you go, there's a rodeo, from small community gatherings and youth rodeos to high-purse professional events. They all draw crowds and entertain spectators of all ages.

So, pick a city and mark your calendars. Summer rodeo is here.

AUGUSTA

The Augusta American Legion Rodeo – Friday-Sunday, June 26-28

Augusta's Annual Pro Rodeo is a classic PRCA-sanctioned event, including all the weekend festivities. Come on out with family and friends for a great small-town rodeo in Montana, including barrels, bull riding, steer roping, team roping and tie down roping. Augusta Rodeo Grounds, Augusta Main Street, centralmontana.com/events/augusta-american-legion-rodeo.

BIG SKY

Big Sky's Biggest Week

Big Sky Community Rodeo – Friday, July 10

This rodeo features some of Montana State University's best up-and-coming athletes performing bareback riding, steer wrestling, team roping, saddle bronc riding, tie-down roping, breakaway roping, barrel racing and bull riding, with the additional special feature of 406 Rodeo miniature bucking stock ridden by junior roughstock kids, as well as professional PBR and Western sports announcer Matt West announcing. Ticket holders can enjoy food and drink options at the venue including food trucks and bar service. Big Sky Events Arena, 450 Aspen Leaf Dr.

www.bigskypbr.com/event/big-sky-community-rodeo.

Big Sky PBR & Rodeo – Thursday-Saturday, July 16-18



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BOULDER

Jefferson County Fair and Rodeo – Thursday-Sunday, Aug. 20-23

In-county rodeo events include goat tying, team penning, ladies breakaway, steer riding, ribbon roping, ladies barrel racing, cow riding, ladies cow riding, team branding, and team roping 2-head progressive. Event promises family-friendly fun, including exhibits, and live music. 25-51 N Whitetail Rd, jeffersonmtfairrodeo.org.

BOZEMAN

All rodeos take place at the Gallatin County - cont'd



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Valley View Rodeo: Summer-long

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valleyviewrodeo.com.

Bozeman Stampede – Thursday-Sunday, August 6-9.

This non-profit PRCA rodeo supports local youth organizations and typically features professional rodeo events like bull riding, steer wrestling, and barrel racing.
bozemanstampede.com.

Big Sky County State Fair Ranch Rodeo – Saturday, July 18

A long standing tradition – up to 100 years - this true rancher's rodeo includes events that mirror ranching life. Up to 7 ranch rodeo teams, up to 5 people per team, compete to win top money, with wild cow milking, sorting, branding, doctoring and trailer loading. As all teams compete at once, it's a wild and entertaining event.
406statefair.com/ranch-rodeo.

DEER LODGE

Tri-County Fair Rodeo – Wednesday-Sunday, August 12-16

86 th Annual Tri-County Fair features NRA rodeos, a ranch rodeo, team roping, a demolition derby and entertainment , with a theme of "Homegrown and Homemade". 529 Main St, www.powellcountymt.gov/tri-county-fair-board/page/tri-county-fair.

DILLON

Montana's Biggest Weekend Rodeo -Friday-Monday, September 4-7

Hosted by the Dillon Jaycees, event features top-tier PRCA rodeo action with traditional rodeo events: bull riding, bronc busting, steer wrestling, barrel racing, breakaway, team roping, and attracts top rodeo athletes from across the country. Rodeo Concert Sunday. Beaverhead County Fairgrounds, 707 S Argenta St. www.dillonjaycees.com/courses/montana's-biggest-weekend.

ENNIS

Ennis NRA Rodeo/Annual 4 th of July Rodeo – Friday-Saturday, July 3-4

Enjoy two days of traditional Montana celebration with high-stakes NRA sanctioned rodeo action in rough stock and timed events, a downtown parade and top-level cowboy skills. Ennis Rodeo Grounds, Main St., www.ennischamber.com/4th-of-july-rodeo-parade.

GARDINER

Gardiner NRA Rodeo –Friday-Saturday, June 19-20

Local fun rodeo action for the whole family featuring standard rodeo events. Jim Duffy Arena, 100 US Hwy 89 S, bozone.com/event/2026-gardiner-rodeo/.

HELENA



Photo Courtesy of ThisIsMontana.net

Last Chance Stampede & Fair – Tuesday-Saturday, July 21-25.

Award-winning stock contractor Kesler Championship Rodeo features many award-winning broncs and bulls that perform over three nights. Montana Circuit Cowboys and Cowgirls and top PRCA contestants from all over the United States will compete in seven PRCA sanctioned events. Wayne Brooks, the "Voice of Rodeo," returns as the Last Chance Stampede's rodeo announcer. Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds, 98 West Custer Ave. lccfairgrounds.com/last-chance-stampede.

LIVINGSTON

Livingston Roundup Rodeo – Wednesday-Saturday, July 1-4

Livingston Roundup Rodeo dates back to 1923, has a long, colorful history and continues today with some of the finest rodeo action that the West has to offer, and some of the best rough stock in the country. Paek County Fairgrounds, 46 View Vista Dr. livingstonroundup.com.

THREE FORKS

Three Forks Rodeo – Friday-Saturday, July 17-18

All the classic rodeo events. Friday night is Family Night at the rodeo; kids get in free with a donation to Headwaters Area Food Bank. Be there early, even with a ticket, as they sell 100 tickets over what there are seats for. Three Forks Rodeo Arena 95691 MT-2, www.threeforksrodeo.com/annual-nra-rodeo.

TOWNSEND

Broadwater County Fair & Rodeo – Thursday-Sunday, August 6-9

Kids rodeo, NRA professional rodeo and a Townsend local rodeo. Jam-packed with classic rodeo events - bull riding, cowgirl's barrel racing, cowgirl's breakaway roping, junior barrel racing, junior bull riding, saddle bronc riding, steer wrestling, team roping and tie down roping. Broadwater Fairgrounds, 189 US Highway 12E, www.townsendfairgrounds.com. - cont'd



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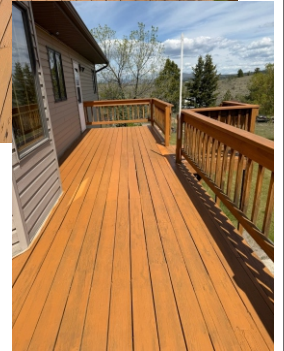


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Southwest Montana Summer Rodeos Fill Summer Days (cont'd)

TWIN BRIDGES

2026 Madison County Fair & Rodeo -

Wednesday-Thursday, August 5-6

Two days of NRA rodeo action, a ranch rodeo, open youth rodeo. Madison County Fairgrounds, 2 Fairgrounds Loop,

madisoncountymt.gov/210/Madison-County-Fair-Rodeo.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

West Yellowstone Rodeo - June 12 to August 15,

Wednesday – Saturday

Rodeos take place typically 5 to 6 nights per week.

Bareback bronc riding, barrel racing, bull riding, team roping, breakaway roping, saddle bronc riding, team roping, breakaway roping. Suitable for families, and the calf scramble where kids get to compete. 175 Oldroyd Rd., westyellowstonerodeo.com/about.

WHITEHALL

Bulls, Bronc, & Barrels - Saturday, June 27

Event focuses on high-energy roughstock and timed racing events, part of the town's larger Frontier Days celebration.

Whitehall Pro Rodeo (PRCA) - Friday and Saturday, July 24-25

Professional-level competition featuring traditional events such as bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, bull riding, tie-down roping, team roping, and steer wrestling.

Both events: Whitehall Rodeo Grounds, 198 Viella St., www.facebook.com/p/Whitehall-Rodeo-Events -61567760439594/.



Photos Courtesy of Ian Burgess

The Spotlight: Ian Burgess

.Marta Varela

This issue's Summer Spotlight is Ian Burgess, a 20 year old Pro Biker from Bozeman. You might remember him from our Winter issue where Ian was a biathlete for 10 years. Ian has shifted his sport from biathlete to Pro Biker, and in this issue we will highlight both gravel and mountain bike racing.

Southwest Montana is an excellent destination for gravel and mountain biking and the racing calendar is full between late spring and early fall, pointing the spotlight on rugged mountain passes, vast valleys and high-desert terrain.

Gravel bikes have grown tremendously in popularity due, in part, to a boundless network of miles of unpaved backroads connecting towns, teamed with amazing mountain landscapes. It's a worthy sport away from busy roadways giving riders an accessible, peaceful, fun way to explore remote areas. Gravel bikes are very versatile, giving speed on roadways, while their wider durable tires can handle rough roads.

Gravel bike racing involves putting in long-distance endurance miles on sweeping gravel roads. Southwest Montana offers a mix of local, grassroots rides and high-profile gravel races that showcase the state's rugged terrain. Whether your goal is a competitive finish or a scenic, unsupported challenge, Southwest Montana is a worthy destination.

This landscape also suits mountain biking, making Southwest Montana ideal with it's far reaching public lands, challenging mountain terrain with huge vertical gains and active trail culture supported by the community. Towns like Butte and Bozeman have backcountry pristine singletrack right outside town and the area has a worthy schedule of racing events.

Mountain bike racing involves navigating technical alpine trails and sustained vertical climbs that mimic the intensive cardio demands of cross-country skiing. Southwest Montana offers a premier lineup of mountain bike races ranging from grueling 100-mile endurance challenges to the local youth XC series. Top racing events in the region include: The Butte 100, Big Sky Biggie, and The Hoot at Crosscut.

Two gravel bike races stand out. The **Belgian Waffle Ride** (BWR), also known as the "Hell of the Bronze", takes place **Friday-Saturday, June 19-20** in **Bozeman**. This high-elevation gravel race is the grand finale of the Quad-Tripel Crown of Gravel

Series with three course distances for different skill levels – the Waffle/Long 120 miles; Wafer/Medium 70 miles and Wanna/Short 30 miles. On Friday, June 19, enjoy the Unroad Expo and a community festival featuring local breweries, food trucks, and live music. Saturday, June 20 is race day and features challenging mountain climbs, rolling ranchland, river corridors, and the signature post-race Belgian waffles and cold ale.

The **Golden Gravel Grinder** will be held on **Saturday, September 26 in Virginia City**, as part of the Virginia City Bike Fest, which points a spotlight on Madison County’s rugged dirt and gravel terrain. There will be three distinct routes: the 85 Miler/The Lollipop; 40 Miler/The Stick and 13 Miler/The Short Stick, a low pressure option for casual riders. After the races enjoy a community celebration in the park with a taco bar, local cold beer and live music. Family activities include a kids’ bike party.

Several mountain bike races will be held throughout the summer. The **Gallatin Valley Trail Series (GVTS) #1, 2, 3, 4**, are held on **Thursday nights** in the **Bozeman** area: Race 1: June 25, Highland Glen; Race 2: July 2, Crosscut Mountain Sports Center; Race 3: July 9, Crosscut Mountain Sports Center; Race 4: July 16, Crosscut Mountain Sports Center. Every event features concurrent Ride + Run sub-events tailored for both mountain bikers (XC style) and trail runners, all with the focus on building community, offering a fun environment for friendly competition, and elevating the local multi-sport network.

Saturday, July 18 is the date for the **Butte 100**, one of the most difficult bike races in the country, labeled as the “Toughest motorized or non-



Photos Courtesy of Ian Burgess

motorized mountain bike race in the country.” This high-endurance event: a 100-mile, 50-mile and Sorini 25, runs along breathtaking trails on top of the Continental Divide and through the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, with the Ultimate 100-mile ultra-distance race utilizing a double “South Loop” layout.

The Hoot at Crosscut takes place Saturday, **July 25**, at Crosscut Mountain Sports Center in Bridger Canyon near **Bozeman**, a community mountain bike race for all ages and skill levels with 5, 10 and 20-mile options and a 1-mile kid event. It’s a mix of climbs, descents, flow trails and technical sections. The 2026 course features new routes and Forest Service trails for the longest distance.

Saturday, August 22 marks the date for the **Big Sky Biggie**, an annual cross-country event. It features 15, 30 and 50-mile distances using extensive trails around **Big Sky**. The 50-Mile Course is ~48 miles of terrain with over 7,500 feet of elevation gain; the 30-Mile Course ~31 miles of trail with roughly 4,500 feet of elevation gain and the 15-Mile Course ~14 miles utilizing local town trails, serving as an ideal route for beginners and juniors. All three race lengths offer categories for regular geared bikes, singlespeeds, and para-cyclists. Friday, August 21 there’s a Free Kids “Race” and on Saturday a post-race party with food trucks and vendors celebrates the event.



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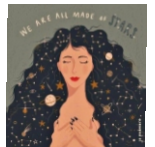


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