

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MT for DECEMBER 2022



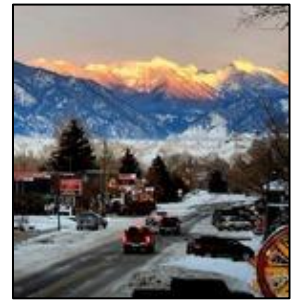
Trout live in nice neighborhoods



➤ MADISON VALLEY DECEMBER “HAPPENINGS” → What’s happened in Ennis, the



Basecamp of the Madison Valley? → Well, it’s still happening! → There was perfect weather for the Ennis “Spirit of Christmas” Stroll. → And Virginia City, Sheridan and Twin Bridges all held their **Christmas Strolls**. → The Elling House in VC hosted their annual **Splendid Feast**, as well as concerts, artist receptions and performances → The **Madison Valley Ranch** in Jeffers hosted more of their incredible **Wine Dinners**. → **Hunting season** ended with a record-high number of elk harvested in our valley, due to the heavy snow & cold, early in rifle season. → The VC Elks Lodge held a **Poker**



Tournament. → Candlelight tours were hosted at **Lewis & Clark Caverns**. → And, *you can still go fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, “disc” golfing, bowling, do yoga and exercise classes, play Mah Jongg, or eat, drink, stroll through Ennis, take in a movie, and go shopping! Just do it all!*

➤ **MADISON VALLEY JANUARY “HAPPENINGS”** → The **Madison Valley Ranch** in Jeffers will be hosting more of their **Wine Dinners** on the 20th and 21st. Reservations at (800) 891-6158, info@madisonvalleyranch.com. → The Elling House will be offering the first **Chautauqua** of the winter on the 21st. (406) 843-5507, infor@ellinghouse.org. There will be more **Game Nights** on Fridays at 6 PM and **Brunch & Bingo** on Sundays, at the Elks Lodge in Virginia City. Call (406) 660-1559 for details. → All entrances to **Yellowstone Park** are closed, temporarily, due to heavy flooding, rockslides, and extremely hazardous conditions. <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/parkroads.htm> for more info.

➤ **MADISON VALLEY FUTURE “HAPPENINGS”** → Mark your calendars and secure your seats for future **Wine Dinners at the Madison Valley Ranch** in Jeffers on February 10 & 11 and March 24 & 25. → The **Jack Creek Preserve** will be again offering their **Winter Outdoor Skills Camp** to 14 - 18-year-olds, March 24-26. More information at: <http://www.jackcreekpreserve.org/winter-outdoor-skills-camps>. → The Elling House in VC will be holding **Chautauquas** on Feb. 18, March 18 & April 15th. → This year will be the **160th anniversary of Virginia City** and they will be celebrating all year!

➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → The 2022 Montana state capital **Christmas Tree** was harvested from the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Christmas tree permits for Nat. Forest land are available at local Ranger districts or on-line at Recreation.gov, for only \$5.00. Plan for next year! → The first **Amazon facility** is coming to Montana! It will be located in Missoula. → Silver **Star Hot Springs** received a Rural Development Business loan to develop a year-round Glamping Resort. The springs are the second hottest in the state at 162°, and Silver Star is the 3rd oldest town in Montana! A special place to visit! → An 11-

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year-old effort to manage crowding on one of Montana's most popular fisheries, stalled out without resolution yesterday when the Fish & Wildlife Commission decided not to advance regulatory changes on the **Madison River**. In lieu of pursuing a commission-directed rulemaking process, the commission is putting the issue on the Environmental Quality Council's plate, a move that would effectively delay any regulatory changes by **several years**. More information at: https://montanafreepress.org/2022/12/21/commission-madison-river-planing-stalled/?gclid=Cj0KCOiAnsqdBhCGARIsAAyjYjR5QNe8OcwvVEHWMbfh_yd5XYKQhtcoc0IUTOK94SvOg82yGEAaOWgaAkEXEALw_wcB.



➤ **FISHING REPORT** → *From Big John*. January is the month of new beginnings. The calendar flips over, people make resolutions they never keep, we are building sunlight every day, and Montana is locked in her winter dance. The pace of Ennis is slower this time of year. Lots of parking spaces on Main Street and lots of coffee drinking in the store. The funny thing about January 1st resolutions is that hardly anyone keeps them. Sure, we all want to make more money, lose weight, use social media less, and all the other things people want to change. But I believe every day is a Monday, Day 1. Each day is a new start, and a chance to make a better me; a chance to live up to the promises we made to those who came before us and made all these opportunities possible. Want a better you? Work at it every day, all year long, and the resolution monkey will get off your back. So much for “*life coaching*” from a fishing guide! You can pay good money for stuff like this, or just come by the fly shop and drink coffee. You will hear all sorts of amazing stuff. Now, on to the regular programing...

The river, near town, is “**gorged**” from the lake up to 8 Mile. This limits opportunities near town. But if you're looking for that first fish of the year, it is possible. Think anywhere above Varney bridge for free-flowing and fishable water. Deep nymphing with tiny and shiny stuff in the midge or stone fly family is your best bet. Remember, at this time of year, add some weight. Like a fishing guide sitting on a stool at the Gravel Bar, the fish will not move very far, even for a bite to eat. You need to serve it up, like a burger and fries. If you're looking to get a dry fly fish, that is possible as well. Some midge hatches show up on warm afternoons. Look for risers in the slowest backwater, behind rocks. This is like catching lightning in a bottle, this time of year, but don't give up. Like the lottery, you need to play to win. Lots of good stuff on the horizon, in the next few months, and fishing will really get going.

Everyone deserves a new line to start the fishing year, so, stop in the store and get a new one spooled up and save some cash. More money saved for that tax bill coming in a few months. New inventory is starting to roll in, so stop by and take a look. We are currently sitting with a darn good snowpack, but we could always use more. The spigot that was a fire hose for the last month or so turned off and we need to turn it back on. Remember, more snow means more dry fly days this summer! Dry fly days make fishermen, guides, and fly shop owners very happy. Hope you all have a great new year, and we look forward to a great fishing year, here in the Cultural Epicenter of Trout. Good Fishing and God Bless, America, 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.

If people concentrated on the REALLY important things in life, there would be a shortage of fishing poles!

Check out other fishing reports at:

- ✚ Madison River Fishing Company at: <https://www.mrfc.com/>
- ✚ 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>.

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➤ **WEATHER** → Regardless of what the weather is doing outside, Winter Solstice, on December 21st, marks the official start of winter! So, we had a very wintry Fall! Shakespeare said, “*Winter tames man, woman, and beast.*” We must be well tamed by now! We got it all – blizzards, gently falling snow, drifting, ground blizzards, ice, wind, then melting snow, and sunshine! There were even appearances of “*snow bows*” and “*sundogs*”! We enjoyed a very white Christmas!




The daytime high in December was **45°**, the daytime low was **-5°**! The nighttime high was **32°** with a nighttime low of **-17°**. The snowpack in the Madison River Basin is at 132% and the river has **gorged!**

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS. WINTER in MONTANA.** According to Olivia Mitchell, in the **Outside Bozeman**, <https://bozemanmagazine.com>, the best way to feel at home is **to embrace where you live and live each day to the fullest**. Well, that can be a challenge here, because the winters in Montana can be grueling and long. But here are the top ten ways to not only make the most of this coming winter but, quite possibly, learn to love it! It is a quiet, reflective time of year and very beautiful.

1. **Embrace The Snow** - The winter blues can sneak up on you quickly during our long, cold and dark winters. Yet, if you learn to love the snow and how to enjoy it, you will survive! We need the moisture.
2. **Get a Snow Blower or Hire Someone to Remove Your Snow** - Snow removal can be overwhelming if it's just you and a shovel. Don't make things harder than they need to be - either buy a snowblower, put a blade on the front of your truck, or hire someone to remove your snow. This will give you back much needed time and will eliminate extra stress and exertion in the mornings.
3. **Learn a Winter Sport** - If you moved to Montana because you love the easy access to beautiful hiking & bike trails, rivers and lakes, you're in luck! You can try all sorts of winter sports, such as skiing and snowboarding (the obvious ones), but you are not limited to just those two. Try snowmobiling, backcountry skiing and snowboarding, snowshoeing, ice fishing, hunting, ice climbing, or “disc” golf!
4. **Join a Book Club or Volunteer** - If you're not the outdoorsy type, there are still many hobbies you can take up, and ways to get connected, such as joining a book club or a volunteer organization. Winter is the best time to dive into a good book or to help others.
5. **Get Snow Tires!** - This may seem like a no-brainer with the amount of snow we get, but it's really important. Snow tires will give you extra security while driving no matter what type of car you drive, but they are especially important for front wheel drive cars. And make sure you carry the necessary winter items in your car, in case of emergencies.
6. **Invest in Good Quality Winter Clothing** - Good quality winter clothing makes all the difference. If you have the proper attire on, 10 degrees doesn't feel so bad. You don't necessarily need to break the bank to get these quality pieces, either. Check out second-hand shops for all kinds of used gear, including winter clothing.
7. **Get Some Sunlight** - Vitamin D deficiency is real during Montana's winters. Your mom was right when she told you to get outside and get some Vitamin D. Being deficient in this vitamin can lead to a slew of issues including mood swings, bone problems, and more. The best way to get good quality vitamin D in the winter is to spend 30 minutes outdoors daily. But if the sun isn't poking out of the clouds, just grab yourself a good ole' sun lamp.
8. **Have a Pantry Full of Seasonal Foods You Enjoy** - Whether it's coffee drinks, hot soups and stews, or baked goods, food can really help us enjoy the season. But watch those calories!
9. **Jigsaw Puzzles, Games and More** - Winter means more time indoors. Being indoors for longer durations means it's time to bust out the 1000-piece jigsaws. Puzzles and games are enjoyable for the whole family and are a great way to have fun while working your brain! And dust off the exercise equipment. A treadmill is a good way to stay fit, when you need to stay inside.

10. Keep Up with Community Events - Area happenings don't stop when the snow starts falling. There are a variety of events that take place all winter long. Subscribe to the local newspaper, find on-line, area groups on FB and area Chambers of Commerce websites. Not everyone heads south for the winter, so, you will not be alone (unless you choose to hibernate!) *Check out this newsletter for our events!*

➤ **HOME FOR YOUR SOUL. FEATURED PROPERTY OF THE MONTH. 21.9 ACRES, BORDERING B.L.M. LAND!** Walk to the **Madison River** for world-class fishing, from this great lot. Build your "Montana dream" fishing cabin with spectacular views and wide-open spaces. There is fiber optic cable to the lot and power available 4 lots away. This is a premier property approximately 15 miles south of Ennis and 1.5 hours to the Bozeman airport or Yellowstone National Park. **Sphinx Mountain Sub., Lot 74.**  Cameron, MT 59720. **\$225,000.** MLS#371671. GoogleEarth coordinates: 45.146762°, -111.692644°.

➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE NEWS.** WASHINGTON (December 28, 2022) – Pending home sales slid for the sixth consecutive month in November, according to the National Association of REALTORS®. All four U.S. regions recorded month-over-month decreases, and **all four regions saw year-over-year declines in transactions.**

"Pending home sales recorded the second-lowest monthly reading in 20 years as interest rates, which climbed at one of the fastest paces on record this year, drastically cut into the number of contract signings to buy a home," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. *"Falling home sales and construction have hurt broader economic activity."*

The **Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI)*** — a forward-looking indicator of home sales based on contract signings — fell 4.0% to 73.9 in November. Year-over-year, pending transactions dropped by 37.8%. An index of 100 is equal to the level of contract activity in 2001.

"The residential investment component of GDP has fallen for six straight quarters," Yun added. *"There are approximately two months of lag time between mortgage rates and home sales. With mortgage rates falling throughout December, home-buying activity should inevitably rebound in the coming months and help economic growth."*

Pending Home Sales Regional Breakdown. The Northeast PHSI slipped 7.9% from last month to 63.3, a drop of 34.9% from November 2021. The Midwest index decreased 6.6% to 77.8 in November, a fall of 31.6% from one year ago. The South PHSI retracted 2.3% to 88.5 in November, fading 38.5% from the prior year. The West index dropped by 0.9% in November to 55.1, retreating 45.7% from November 2021. "The Midwest region — with relatively affordable home prices — has held up better, while the **unaffordable West region suffered the largest decline in activity,**" Yun said.

The National Association of Realtors® is America's largest trade association, representing more than 1.5 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS:** I am surprisingly busy, for this time of year, in this market! But there are fewer listings and pendings, and the list price to sale price ratio is dropping. Many properties are going **off** the market. But we expect renewed activity by spring! **Big Sky Country** Multiple Listing statistics for the Madison Valley area (*including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Nevada City, Harrison, Pony*), for the month of DECEMBER were as follows:

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- **HOMES:** 27 homes listed (\$325,000 to \$15,000,000); 6↓ pending sales (\$399,000 to \$1,250,000); and 84 homes sold in 2022 (\$137,000 to \$2,662,500), totaling \$62,418,700 at **98.5%**↓ of list prices. (34 listings terminated or expired in last 180 days)
- **LAND:** 71↓ vacant lots listed (\$42,000 to \$4,500,000); 5↓ pending sales (\$15,000 to \$875,000); and 131 lots have sold in 2022 (\$30,000 to \$4,500,000), totaling \$35,231,600 at **97.5%**↓ of list prices. (47 listings terminated or expired in last 180 days)
- **RANCHES:** The same 2 ranches listed (\$2,250,000 to \$6,999,999); 0 pending sales, and 0 ranches sold in 2022.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 11↓ properties listed (\$134,900 to \$3,000,000); 0 pending sales and 5 commercial properties sold in 2022 (\$199,000 to \$2,200,000); totaling \$3,744,000, at **96.8%** of list prices. (7 listings terminated or expired in last 180 days)

“The best investment on Earth is earth.” Louis J. Glickman, real estate mogul/philanthropist
Also, according to Jordan Davis & Luke Bryan, in their hit song, “Buy Dirt!”

➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA... *Did you know... The Madison River “gorges”?*** Yes, it sure does! And it is a main source of conversation around Ennis during especially cold weather. Old timers have great stories of cows getting stuck out on ice flows in the middle of the river and the year the gorge took out the old Varney Bridge. I have been fascinated by this phenomenon ever since we moved to Ennis in 1993. It is awesome to witness and hard to understand. I interviewed some of the natives and hydrologists as well, trying to find out the cause. In the winter of 2010, Greg Lemon, Editor of The Madisonian, our local newspaper, wrote an article that pretty much describes what causes the **Gorge**.

“It happens nearly every year. When the temperatures drop near zero and the wind howls mercilessly, the Madison River begins to freeze up. Around Ennis, when the Madison River gorge becomes a big topic of conversation, ‘Have you seen the river?’ someone will ask. ‘Yeah. She’s froze up down by the lake,’ will be the reply. ‘Betcha she gorges in by the end of the week.’ If you search the Internet for Madison River gorging, amongst the stories of big trout gulping salmon flies, you’re apt to find a variety of pictures and stories about ice choking the river around Ennis and pushing water out into nearby fields, overflow sloughs and pastures.

Along with the anticipation come the rumors and legends about the uniqueness of the Madison River ice jams. Some will say it’s the only river in North America to gorge this way. Some say it freezes from the bottom up because the wind blows so hard. But the fact is many rivers around southwest Montana freeze in a similar fashion, said William Locke, professor of environmental science at Montana State University in Bozeman. ‘It’s actually pretty common,’ Locke said. Take for instance the Gallatin River, he said. The most common form of flooding on the lower Gallatin is the result of ice jamming.



However, the speed the ice on the Madison River and the depth the ice reaches is impressive, said Pat Clancy, a fisheries biologist in Ennis. Every year Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks close the Ennis and Valley Garden Fishing Access sites because of the ice gorging.

In a 1921 article in ‘Proceedings of the Society of Civil Engineers,’ written by J.C. Stevens about the ice-jamming phenomenon on the Madison River. ‘It has been stated by local authority that the Madison is the

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only river in Montana which overflows from ice gorges during cold weather. This statement is not true. The Ruby, Boulder, and many small streams behave exactly in the same manner as the Madison in this respect,' writes Stevens.

Some of the characteristics that contribute to the flooding and ice gorging are the shallowness of the river, the low riverbanks and the relatively steady flow of the water, Stevens wrote. The ice gorge itself comes from a mix of frazil and anchor ice; he wrote. Frazil ice is formed on turbulent rivers when the weather is cold enough to freeze surface water. It looks like shards or chunks of ice in the river. It's also sometimes called slush ice or needle ice. Anchor ice is formed around rocks and cobbles in shallow water and is a result of 'a rapid radiation of earth heat from the riverbed into space,' writes Stevens. It forms most rapidly on dark-colored stones, during clear and cold nights.

Larry Love, who is an Ennis native and on the board of the Madison Valley History Association, believes this anchor ice is really what distinguishes the Madison River from others. "

But it is still a mystery to me. When I look at the gorged river, I don't think about all those different kinds of ice and slush, I just see the amazing beauty of nature and thank God I live in the middle of so much of it.

SEE YOU IN MONTANA!

A wise Old Timer from the area once told me,
"Don't try to change the Madison Valley... let the Valley change you!"



Toni Bowen, Broker Associate and Accredited Buyer Broker representative, with over 30 years of real estate experience, covering residential, commercial, vacant land, recreational & ranch properties in the Madison Valley.



Don Bowen, a *Realtor Emeritus*, with 57 years as a licensed Broker, placed his real estate license on "inactive" status in 2021, and is now a consultant/assistant to Toni. A new chapter for the Bowen Team.



Finley, our office greeter

Visit us in our office on the Boardwalk,
at the Lone Elk Mall, on Main Street, downtown Ennis.



Recent Testimonial: *"Toni was wonderful! Highly recommended. She was very quick to show us properties, send over agreements, etc. We can't recommend Toni enough. We are so grateful for her expertise."* Emily and Austin

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

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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!

Facebook: [Ask Ennis](#); [This is Really Ennis](#); [Ennis Montana Thoughts & Rants](#); [Ennis Online Yard Sale](#)
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

<http://www.jackcreekpreserve.org/> - foundation that provides outdoor education and experiences.

https://madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org/homedirectory_home4_madisonv_/Home.html - MV History
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://www.visitmt.com/> - Official website Montana Vacations, Recreation, Accommodations and Travel

<https://madisonjefferson.msuetension.org/> - water test kits, soil sampling, plant & insect id, etc.

<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.

<https://www.mtmemory.org/>. Montana Memory Project – find all about the history of Montana!

<https://montanafreepress.org/>. MT news from an independent, **nonprofit** source – information & analysis.

SKIING:

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

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

HORSEBACK RIDING:

<https://www.RideWolfpack.com> – trail riding guides for the Madison Valley

RANCHING:

<https://www.facebook.com/madisonvalleyranchlandsgroup/>- keeping 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

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