



YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

In times when conservation efforts are increasingly stretched thin, your membership to the Bighorn River Alliance is more than a show of support—it's a direct investment in the future of the Bighorn River.

Members are the foundation of everything we do. From restoring side channels and increasing fish habitat to tracking spawning trout and maintaining responsible access points, it's your backing that allows us to act swiftly and effectively. It's your belief in this river that sustains our science-based monitoring, fuels community events which allow us increase river opportunities to tribal youth and strengthens our voice in agency meetings and legislative halls.

We are proud to be a small organization with a large impact. But that impact is only possible because of the collective strength of our membership. Every data point collected, every grant awarded, and every conservation win starts with your decision to join and stay involved.

In the face of political polarization and shifting federal priorities, our members give the Bighorn River

something increasingly rare—consistency. Because of you, we are here year-round, committed solely to the Bighorn and the people who depend on it.

If you're already a member, thank you. If you're not yet, now is the time to step into this circle of river stewards through renewing your 2025 membership. Together, we keep the Bighorn resilient, wild, and thriving for the generations that follow. - Anne Marie

RENEW
YOUR BHRA
MEMBERSHIP
TODAY!



Board Member Bob Dickens with his grandson.



BIGHORN RIVER ALLIANCE

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Thank you to the sponsors of the
2025 Summer Membership Raffle!

**SAGE
SIMMS.
YETI**

**Renew 2025
Membership to enter
the Member Raffle!**

Mail included renewal form, visit us
online, stop by our new office, or call
406-534-2915 to enter.

OUR WORK

RIVER CONDITIONS & ANGLING OUTLOOK

The Bighorn River will experience below average river releases this summer in response to an early and non-impactful run-off period that resulted in below average inflows and unfilled upstream reservoirs. While updated July forecasts are yet to be released, river releases for the July – August period will likely be between 1,800 and 2,100 cfs, unless hydrologic conditions improve.

It's difficult to predict how low river flows will affect fishing and river conditions this summer, but we can make general assumptions when looking back on FishLog data from the last low-water year experienced in 2021. While 2021 was a more extreme drought year (in that river flows remained below 2,000 cfs for 173 days) it was similar in that all water was delivered from the reservoir into the river through the turbine penstock intake, equating to season-long cold-water releases.

When looking back on this data, guides noted that June 2021 fishing conditions were tough, with increased algae observed. Much like this June, they also noted delayed hatches and cold water. In July 2021, guides noted that algae had started to clear up, but the number of pelicans had increased. Fishing was recorded as good with primary nymphs, hoppers and streamers. At the end of July, into August 2021, water temperatures started to warm up and hatches increased. Pelican numbers were noted as decreased in August, but angler pressure was recorded as increased. While it is impossible to determine what *exactly* will happen on the river in 2025, the important and exciting point is that BHRA has a platform of which assumptions, based on data collected from previous years, can be derived and compared. One fact we can share, is that the 2025 season will be known for its big trout. FishLog data collected to date in 2025 show that 90% of rainbows caught have been 15" or larger, with nearly 12% over 20" and 72% of brown trout caught have been 15" or larger, with nearly 4% over 20."

RESTORING SAFE PASSAGE TO MALLARD'S FAS: LOCAL COLLABORATION IN ACTION

A non-functional culvert and sinkhole were repaired on a road leading to the Mallard's FAS, thanks to joint efforts of the Alliance and local farmers. BHRA observed one of the main roads leading to the boat launch was closed due to a blown out culvert, which created a large sinkhole blocking a portion of the intersection. With no clear direction on what agency was responsible for the road, BHRA worked with local farmers Steve and Scott Uffelman to replace the exposed culvert, and repair the road, reducing serious hazards to both agricultural operations and anglers using the site. BHRA will meet with county commissioners to identify who is responsible for the road, so routine upkeep and special issues, like this washout, are promptly attended to in the future.



Sinkhole: before above and after below



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TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

Please participate in the 2025 BHRA survey before it closes at the end of July! Through this 10-15-minute survey, we hope to learn about your Bighorn fishing experience & hear your concerns to help direct BHRA's long-term planning efforts.

THE 2025 FISHLOG TEAM

FishLog is an innovative mobile app that transforms real-time guide observations into valuable data points to support BHRA's understanding of catch rates, species distribution, and river conditions on the Bighorn. For the 2025 season, four dedicated Bighorn River guides have volunteered to use the app—converting on-the-water experience into actionable science.



Carter Klatt



Jim Arthur



John Sindland



Mike Kelly



First Cast participant D'neja Wegner & Bighorn Guide Ethan Green

LOCAL GUIDES GIVE BACK TO TRIBAL YOUTH

Local Crow youth were introduced to fly-fishing the Bighorn River thanks to professional guides who stepped up to donate a day of guided fishing to BHRA's pilot fishing program called "First Cast." Nine participants, ages 10 to 19, were paired with 6 guides for a 6.25-mile float down the river where they learned the

fundamentals of casting, catching and releasing trout using rods, reels and flies generously donated by program sponsors. Deemed "the best day ever," by ten-year old Heith Bear Claw, BHRA hopes to work with guides to make First Cast an annual tradition of which more tribal youth can learn about the sport, under direction from the best. BHRA extends deep thanks to Bighorn guides **Gabe Bland, Jeremy Gilbertson, Ethan Green, Carter Klatt, Sam Mavrakis, and John Sindland** for making the day possible and to Patagonia, Simms, Redington, Far Bank, Montana Fly Co. and the Bighorn Club for product donations and access permissions.

REVISITING MALLARD'S CHANNEL

Just when we thought we were ready to switch from the excavation phase of side-channel reactivation to the monitoring phase, we had to circle back to the Mallard's Channel to perform additional excavation work. During the early winter of 2024, BHRA observed low connectivity with the main channel, suggesting something unexpected had occurred during the fall 2024 reactivation effort. Detailed data collected in December identified the cause. High water in 2023 had deposited sediment in the area of the excavation and altered the elevation of original survey pins – leading the excavation team to not excavate deep enough at the channels entrance. Committed to the successful restoration of 9 side channels, BHRA and its contractors revisited the channel earlier this spring to get the job done right. Over a two-day period, an additional 640

cubic yards of material was removed from the channel and repurposed along its banks increasing the capture of water from 3 cfs, to 25 cfs during river flows of 2,500 cfs. Finally, Mallard's, our furthest downstream restored channel, is flowing.



BIGHORN RIVER DISPLAYED AT BILLINGS AIRPORT

The Billings International Airport welcomed an artistic tribute to the Bighorn River in the form of a 30-foot-long V-carving of the river's corridor. The V-carving, which was created by Dan and Karla Mazel of Stonefly Studio, outlines the river's path from Afterbay Dam to below Mallards Landing, and includes local nomenclature that has, over the years, defined specific fishing areas. BHRA director, Anne Marie Emery, provided a description of the Bighorn, which is posted above the piece, and worked with the Mazels to include the paths of the 9 restored side-channels so "anglers that fly into Billings on their way to the Bighorn can see

the ways their support has helped restore the river." The installation can be viewed at Concourse A and miniature versions of the piece, or requests for custom carvings of other waters can be purchased by contacting Stonefly Studio at 406-656-6326 or by visiting www.stoneflystudio.com.



STEVE BOGDEN WINS THE ADIPOSE FLOW DRIFT BOAT!

Congratulations to BHRA member Steve Bogden from Minot, ND. Thank you to everyone who participated in raising 30K for Bighorn Conservation efforts! Amplified thanks to Adipose Boatworks, their continued support makes this raffle possible!

THE GOLDEN BONERS TAKE HOME THE CARP TROPHY



It is with great pride that we announce the 2025 Bighorn Carp Tournament winners, Brendan & Abby Chenoweth from Colorado! This father-daughter team has competed consecutive years in the challenging fly-fishing only, non-motorized tournament and this year their persistence paid off!

Fifteen teams competed for the title at Bighorn Lake on Friday, June 20th. Each team fighting bravely through a sudden wind storm on the lake, resulting in huge waves and a few anglers needing to be rescued. After it was all said and done the contest was taken with the catch of a single carp. Thank you to all of our fabulous tournament sponsors!

BILLIONS OF YEARS IN THE MAKING...
fishing under the summer solstice sun... in **TERRIFYING UNKNOWN** worlds!

BIGHORN 2025 CARP TOURNAMENT

Ok-A-Beh Marina | Ft. Smith, MT
6-20-25 | 10 am to 4 pm | \$60 per team
After Party | Bighorn Angler | 5pm-8pm
Featuring Live Music by Lindsay Lawlis
La Cocinita Mexican Food
\$20 for Dinner & Music

