



**Kirk Crews, MD**  
401 Main St,  
Stevensville, MT 59870



**DECIDEDLY DIFFERENT**  
**More Time. Excellent Care. Better Health.**

At StoryBrook Medicine, Dr. Kirk Crews is focused on you - your health, your story, and your goals.

**Benefits of Personalized Care include:**

- Appointments the same or next business day
- Unhurried appointments that begin on time
- Dr. Crews' undivided attention
- A wellness plan customized to your personal health goals

406.777.7251 | [SignatureMD.com/Crews](http://SignatureMD.com/Crews)

**Now**  
**Accepting**  
**New Patients**

missoulian.com

# Missoulian

Saturday, January 20, 2024

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

missoulian.com • \$4

IMAGINE NATION

# BREWERY TAPS INTO NON-ALCOHOLIC IPA



ANTONIO IBARRA OLIVARES, MISSOULIAN

Imagine Nation Brewing Company Co-Owner Tim Graham stares at the brewery's newest line of brews – the Lupujus Zero, a New England-style non-alcoholic IPA. The brewery says it is the first non-alcoholic IPA to be brewed in Montana.

## ‘Lupujus Zero’ IPA follows rise in alcohol-free offerings at breweries, bars

**JOSHUA MURDOCK**  
joshua.murdock@lee.net

Imagine Nation Brewing is betting that less is more.

Brewers there say they put everything they could into their new brew – everything, that is, except alcohol. It's a move the brewers and owner hope will better serve people who don't consume alcohol, who are just taking a break or who simply aim to consume a bit less.

And, they believe, their latest beer is the first non-alcoholic one to be brewed in Montana. It's already proven to be popular – on Wednesday it was the second-most poured beer at the brewery.

Dubbed Lupujus Zero, the beer has a meager alcohol content of 0.5% by volume – low enough to be considered non-alcoholic – while most other craft

beers weigh in around 5–7% and some range upward of 10% or more. But beyond its lack of alcohol, Lupujus Zero is otherwise a standard bright and refreshing New England-style IPA with a hoppy aroma and juicy flavor.

So far, it's available only at the brewery. It hit taps there on Aug. 16 and became available to-go in aluminum can growlers (“crowlers”) earlier this month. A 32-ounce crowler goes for \$10.

The retail availability was just in time for “Dry January,” when many people refrain from consuming alcohol. And it coincides with the broader rise of non-alcoholic craft beers and so-called mocktails. Tim Graham, co-owner of Imagine Nation, said he hopes the beer

Please see **BREWERY**, Page A2

# Elevated avalanche risk with new snow

**JOSHUA MURDOCK**  
joshua.murdock@lee.net

Avalanche danger remained elevated across western Montana Friday, two days after a midweek storm dropped significant amounts of new snow onto a mostly old and unstable snowpack that lingered from earlier this winter.

The West Central Montana Avalanche Center on Friday issued a daily forecast of considerable avalanche danger – the middle of five levels – across its forecast area, from Lost Trail Pass on the south to the southern Mission and Swan mountains north of Seeley on the north.

The primary problems, the organization stated, were weak layers within older snow that could fail to support the slab of new snow above them, and unstable, dense slabs of windblown snow on terrain downwind from ridges and mountaintops. The two problems were especially worrisome in places where early-season snow failed to melt and instead became weaker over time.

“Large and potentially destructive human-triggered avalanches are possible at middle and upper elevations today,” Forecaster Arden Feldman wrote

Please see **AVALANCHE**, Page A4

## BITTERROOT ECOSYSTEM

# Grizzly bears expected to fully return within decade

**ALEX MITCHELL**  
alex.mitchell@missoulian.com

One way or another, grizzly bears are expected to begin fully returning to the Bitterroot Ecosystem within the next decade.

An advocacy group's report released this month estimates natural grizzly emigration from northern Montana to the Bitterroot will result in a breeding population forming in the next several years. Simultaneously, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it is once again evaluating restoration options for grizzly bear populations in the Bitterroot 31 years after the area was

Please see **GRIZZLIES**, Page A4

**GET THE FULL BENEFITS OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!**

Activate your digital account to get updated stories, videos, and hundreds of additional puzzles and comics. Visit [missoulian.com/activate](http://missoulian.com/activate) and download our app for the E-edition and breaking news on the go!

**Weather**  
Cloudy  
**High 39 • Low 31**  
**FORECAST • A12**

**Inside**

Classified	B8	Opinion	A6
Comics/Puzzles	D2-D6	Markets	A5
Outdoors	A9-A10	Obituaries	A7-A8



\$4 • S • Volume 149, Issue 20 • A Lee Enterprises Newspaper • Copyright 2024

Follow us online: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MissoulianNewspaper) [X](https://www.x.com/missoulian) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/missoulian)

## New To Market

### 77 Partridge Lane, Hall | Offered at \$890,000

Welcome to your Montana dream retreat – a masterpiece of modern luxury nestled on 15 acres in Hall, Montana. This exquisite 4-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom home, built in 2018, is full of rustic charm. Step inside to discover the allure of hardwood, leading you through a seamless design adorned with consistent finishes, including Quartz countertops. Three out of the four bedrooms boast their own private bathrooms, elevating the living experience. With an attached shop, this residence is not just a home; it's a sanctuary of convenience to house all your toys.



**ENGEL & VÖLKERS**



Danni Moore  
Real Estate Broker  
406-396-2442

©2023 Engel & Völkers. All rights reserved. Each brokerage independently owned and operated. Engel & Völkers and its independent License Partners are Equal Opportunity Employers and fully support the principles of the Fair Housing Act.

# Grizzlies

From A1

identified as a recovery zone.

The Bitterroot Ecosystem is one of six recovery zones in the contiguous U.S. for grizzly bears. While individual grizzlies have been increasingly documented there in recent years, no established population — defined as having two or more breeding females or one female with two consecutive litters — exists.

Through January to March 18, FWS is seeking public comment on an environmental impact statement (EIS) to better assess impacts and approaches like artificial reintroduction. The statement will address management approaches for bear-human conflicts, consider grizzly bear connectivity between recovery zones and analyze restoration plans (including a no-action possibility).

Grizzly bears were placed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 1975 after hunting and loss of habitat brought them to near extinction. Today, they occupy roughly 6% of their original range, according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

In Montana, grizzly bear populations are present in three ecosystems including the Cabinet-Yaak in the state's northwestern corner, the Northern Continental Divide surrounding Glacier National Park and the Greater Yellowstone Area surrounding Yellowstone National Park.

The independent report published this month by Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force

and WildEarth Guardians estimates the grizzly population from the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem will move roughly 6 miles into the Bitterroot Ecosystem within five years. After 15 years, grizzly bears will move 18 to 25 miles into the forest to occupy more of the area.

The Bitterroot Ecosystem was part of the grizzly bears' historical range prior to extirpation from the area. The area was identified as a recovery zone in 1993 for being a habitat large enough and of sufficient quality to support a recovered grizzly population.

"Grizzly bear recovery requires large blocks of relatively undisturbed land and remote areas away from human disturbance," background for the environmental impact statement states. "Due to its large wilderness areas, the BE offers favorable conditions to restore a healthy population of grizzly bears and to improve the long-term survival and recovery of grizzly bears in the lower-48 states."

The report recommends against moving grizzly bears by trucks or other human-assisted means to the Bitterroot Ecosystem, as re-occupation of the area appears already under way with observed sightings.

"Natural immigration is a viable strategy which must be considered and fully analyzed in the upcoming EIS," the report states. "We believe that the law and the science direct that the Bitterroot Ecosystem grizzly bear recovery strategy be based on natural immigration facilitated by protected habitat connectivity areas and with the full protection of the Endangered Species Act."

The report recommends several passage structures to be constructed across I-90 and U.S. Highway 93 transportation corridors including the northern Bitterroot Valley, the Six Mile/Nine Mile, and the Bonner-Clinton Areas to better stimulate immigration to the area.

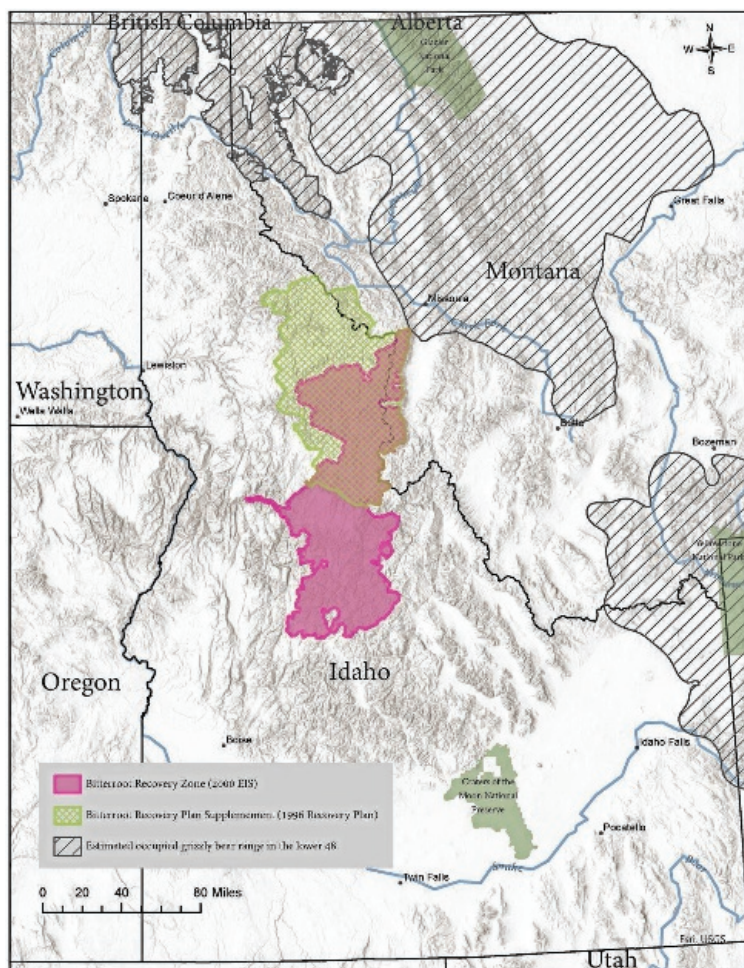
This isn't the first time a plan for grizzly bear reintroduction has been considered.

In 2000, FWS released a plan to reintroduce grizzly bears with management guided by recommendations from a citizen management committee. Grizzly bears were planned to be reintroduced as a nonessential, experimental population, which would remove certain legal protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act.

The year after, FWS issued a proposal to instead take no action on reestablishing a grizzly population as planned. That proposal was never finalized. Nonetheless, action was never taken on reintroducing grizzlies to the Bitterroot or in forming the citizen management committee.

In 2021, the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and Native Ecosystems Council sued, alleging FWS failed to comply in a timely manner with their 2000 plans. And in March 2023, a federal district court judge ruled in favor of the environmental groups, finding the agency unnecessarily delayed actions in implementing the plan and ordered it to supplement the environmental impact statement or to issue new rules.

As a result of increasing grizzly bear observations in the area and new science over the past couple



PROVIDED IMAGE

Map of the Bitterroot recovery zone. Through January to March 18, the USFWS is seeking public comment on the environmental impact statement (EIS) to better assess impacts and approaches like artificial reintroduction. The statement will address management approaches for bear-human conflicts, consider grizzly bear connectivity between recovery zones and analyze restoration plans including a no-action possibility.

decades, FWS chose to work on a new EIS to take a fresh look at a strategy for supporting grizzly bear restoration in the Bitterroot

ecosystem. The EIS and related decision documents are planned to be finalized by November 2026.

# Avalanche

From A1

in Friday's forecast. "You could trigger avalanches from flat or gentle terrain adjacent to steeper slopes. Look for red flags like cracking, collapsing, whump-fing, or recent avalanches. If you encounter these, stick to slopes under 30 degrees in slope angle without steep terrain above."

The Friday forecast came as part of the avalanche center's new and expanded forecasting schedule. The organization previously issued daily forecasts three times a week, on Tuesday, Thursday

and Saturday. That increased by one day this winter and shifted to four consecutive days with higher backcountry usage: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. As always, the avalanche center may add additional forecast days during storm cycles or other periods of high avalanche danger.

The Missoula-based avalanche center is different from most others in that it exists as a standalone nonprofit rather than an office within the U.S. Forest Service — although it does receive financial support and equipment from national forests in the area.

"Our long-term goal is to provide the community with daily

avalanche forecasts, seven days per week," the center stated in a Jan. 10 announcement of the new forecast schedule. "However, that will require more resources, such as additional forecasters. This schedule change is a step in the right direction until we can acquire those resources."

Farther north, the Flathead Avalanche Center, which covers the northern Swans, Hungry Horse Reservoir area, Whitefish Range and a portion of Glacier National Park, also warned of considerable danger on Friday. But the primary problems there were wind slabs and dry-loose slides of new unconsolidated snow — plus a per-

sistent weak layer lurking beneath it all.

Avalanches are possible on any slope 30 degrees or steeper, and can be triggered remotely and without warning from above, below or adjacent to a slope that steep. Avalanches are most likely to begin on slopes between 35 and 45 degrees.

Avalanche problems associated with wintertime snowpack generally involve dense layers of snow with weak layers of crusts or sugary snow crystals between the slabs. The weak layers, often of angular, faceted crystals that don't hold together, can act like dominoes: If a trigger such as a

backcountry traveler impacts the layer, the resultant collapsing of the weak layer can propagate outward from the trigger point. That propagation allows for a slide to be triggered from above, below or to the side of a slope 30 degrees or steeper.

And once the weak layer collapses, it acts more like marbles, sending all of the snow above it crashing downhill in an avalanche. "With new snow and tolerable temperatures, the hype is high to get out of the house and into the mountains," Flathead Forecaster Rob Millsbaugh wrote. "Take a conservative mindset as you return to the slopes."

## RUDY'S BIG SALE

### SALE ENDS JAN. 28!

Oh Happy Day!

ALL VALENTINE'S CARDS & CANDY 25% OFF

RECORD HEAVEN  
All Vinyl  
NEW & USED  
on SALE!

**WORLD HEADQUARTERS**  
 ALL CLOTHING 25% OFF  
 ALL JEWELRY 25% OFF  
 ALL CARDS 25% OFF  
 ALL TOYS & GIFTS 25% OFF  
 ALL MUSIC ON SALE!  
 ALL INCENSE & BODY PRODUCTS 25% OFF!  
 ALL STICKERS & POSTERS 25% OFF

**Rockin Rudy's**  
ROCKINRUDYS.COM

**World Headquarters**  
237 BLAINE • 542-0077  
MON-SAT 9-9 • SUN 11-6

**Rockin Rudy's Attic**  
Memorabilia, Music, Sports, Posters, etc.  
COMING SOON!

**Record Heaven**  
845 RONAN • 542-1104  
MON-SAT 10-6 • SUN 11-5

A New Home At The Old Address

... Where The Difference Is Design!

America's Dream Windows

BUY 3, GET 1

HALF OFF\*

Expires 1/31/24

America's Dream Siding

50% OFF\*

INSTALLATION

Expires 1/31/24

Let us make your  
Dream Home a reality!

WHY K-DESIGNERS?

- 45 Years Experience with 1,000s of Happy Customers
- Precision Craftsmanship
- Energy Efficient Product to Make You More Comfortable in Your Home
- Every Product We Install Includes a Lifetime Warranty

CALL FOR YOUR FREE QUOTE TODAY!

Ask your representative about easy payment plans on approved credit

406-235-3674

\*Buy 3 windows at regular price and get 1 additional window of equal or lesser value half off. Minimum purchase of 4 windows required. 50% off siding installation discount requires minimum purchase of 1,000 sq. ft. of siding. See representative for details. Offers expire 1/31/24.