Who Is That in Our Backyard?
By Chris Clasby with Summit IL

The simple answer to that question... We all are! Thanks to several Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT) projects underway and the organization’s focus on open-space and public access, we can all enjoy more of what Western Montana offers. Summer is a great time to pursue opportunities like these, and two particular projects minutes from Missoula will soon provide inclusive public access. The Dean Stone Mountain project on the south side of Missoula and the Rock Creek Confluence project east of Missoula are under development through public and private partnerships with FVLT at the helm. Summit Independent Living is excited to be a partner on these projects.

The Rock Creek project first came to the attention of Summit staff last July. FVLT had worked with a local Boy Scout who earned his Eagle Badge by coordinating a parking lot and accessible trail last summer. FVLT was open to Summit’s involvement, and the partnership began. Plans are underway to have the trail fully accessible with interpretive signs and possibly a braille trail component for blind/low vision interpretation. There is also an accessible parking place in the parking lot, picnic table, and will be a fully ADA accessible vault toilet nearby. Other future plans include work with Montana FWP to create limited block management hunting opportunities.

In 2012 the Rock Creek project began when FVLT acquired the land on which a subdivision was proposed but denied. Ownership changed and ultimately went to the land trust with financial help from a broad group of public and private partners. Since then, efforts have been underway to restore the area and create access. In 2013, FVLT acquired an additional 2.5 miles of adjacent Clark Fork River frontage which provides direct access to the Rock Creek/Clark Fork confluence.

Another FVLT project even closer to Missoula is the Dean Stone Mountain project in Missoula’s South Hills. This several thousand acre project is underway with plans for contiguous public access from Pattee Canyon to Miller Creek Road. The project will provide public access for multiple uses. Phase I is currently underway which includes the

Brenden Dalin and Chris Clasby enjoy the view of the Missoula Valley from Barmeyer Trail at its grand opening.

Barmeyer Trail and South Hills Spur trails. Access is provided from near the gravel pit up Pattee Canyon and leads users into the upper South Hills above Mansion Heights near the end of Whitaker Drive.

Phase II will include further development of 2500 acres across that mountain’s southeastern flank which was acquired from The Nature Conservancy and is checkerboarded among land owned by Montana DNRC. Phase III includes possible additional adjacent land acquisitions to create better easements to this public space. Discussions are underway with multiple private landowners.

On Sunday, June 3 FVLT celebrated a public grand opening of trails at the Barmeyer Trail and South Hills Spur. People were welcome to hike the trail or take a fully accessible shuttle bus to a meeting place above the South Hills overlooking the Missoula Valley. Hundreds of interested people and potential beneficiaries of the efforts meandered the hillside, walked the trail, and enjoyed cold drinks provided by FVLT.

Summit staff members are pleased to participate in activities with FVLT and find it refreshing to work with a group which is so open-minded and willing to work on inclusive access initially rather than addressing issues later. Cooperative and collaborative opportunities like these can work to permanently secure, enhance, and expand recreational opportunities for all community members.

For more information about these and other FVLT projects, please go to: http://www.fvlt.org/all
COUNTY UPDATES

Ravalli County

This spring, the Hamilton Women On the Move (WOM) were invited to play the game of Bocce. The event provided an opportunity for attendees to experience classic games and social engagement while enjoying great weather for the first time this year. WOM now meets twice monthly (1st Wednesday and 3rd Wednesday of each month).

Recent state budget cuts and the resulting loss of mental health case management have left consumers with fewer activities in which to participate. Some of those same individuals have connected with Summit to participate in programs happening at the Refuge.

One of Summit’s Hamilton transition students worked on his senior project in collaboration with Summit. The student hosted a successful game night at The Refuge which was attended by about 20 students. The coordinating student’s afterschool Program Coordinator, Matt Hamilton, plans to collaborate with Summit in the near future due to the success of this project.

Mary, Kwanele (Ravalli County), and Travis (Missoula) met with Donny Ramer of Hamilton’s City Public Works mid-spring regarding potential changes and amendments to parking ordinances. Summit’s proposal is to apply ADA guidelines to the city parking ordinances to create better accessibility and regulations enforcement. Donny will apply the regulations and guidelines to help local entities adopt those regulations when striping and/or restriping parking lots.

Flathead County

Hello! Summit Independent Living in Kalispell is ready for summer!!

The Summit office in Kalispell is planning the first annual Summit IL Picnic in August at Lawrence Park. It is a potluck and we have activities planned. Please call our office at (406)257-0048 Ext 2 for more details and to join our mail list! We send notifications about upcoming events and activities to everyone on the list.

We are happy to welcome our new IL Specialist, Robert Olson, to Summit in Kalispell. He will mostly be working with youth and facilitating classes. Robert is a former VR Counselor and has a great deal of experience assisting others with setting and pursuing goals.

IMPORTANT reminder: Please be sure to always call ahead to schedule an appointment at our office rather than just dropping in. It’s becoming increasingly difficult to assist all walk-ins because we are so busy, but calling ahead will save you a place in our schedules. Have a wonderful summer!

Lake & Sanders Counties

Summit’s Lake and Sanders County office in Ronan continues to be very busy assisting consumers with benefits and housing applications. The number of new referrals from existing consumers and allied agencies continues to grow as more people become aware of the services we provide.

Our Thursday WRAP participant group has been sharing what they have learned with friends and family members who are now interested, so we will be starting a new WRAP class on Thursday, July 12th 11am-1pm.

Our Arts & Activities group on Thursdays from 2-4pm is still going strong with people beading, painting, playing games, and watching movies.

We are developing a youth activities group that will meet at Summit’s Ronan office to play games and/or watch movies. We are reaching out to area communities to encourage young people to come check out the office to learn more. Allied agencies, consumers, families, and community members are encouraged to refer youth who may be interested in that activity or anyone interested in classes.

An open house with food and information about Summit services is planned for July 26. Consumers, families, caregivers, allied agencies, and community members are encouraged to come by the Ronan office during business hours that day.

A community picnic at the Ronan Park Pavilion is scheduled for Thursday August 9th from 11am-2pm. Consumers, families, caregivers, allied agencies, and community members are all encouraged to come and have food and fun!
Western Montana Adventure Opportunities

By Chris Clasby with Summit IL

Summertime often finds all of us trying to discover ways to get outdoors and recreate in whatever is our chosen activity. It seems like there have recently been increasing recreational opportunities in Western Montana and several projects are underway. Some of them are pretty accessible to individuals with disabilities as well as those without. Elsewhere in this newsletter we detailed a couple projects being developed close to Missoula, but there are a couple others within one day’s drive of Missoula. We’ll mostly cover outdoor opportunities in the spirit of summer sunshine.

When friends Peter Pauwels and Frank Bell were roommates in college in Colorado in the 1970s, they were unaware of a distant future opportunity. Likewise, nobody knew they would someday develop an adaptive fishing program for individuals with disabilities. Then life happens… Frank made his home mostly in Idaho but also acquired a rental house and property south of Ennis, MT on the Madison River. Peter remained around Denver working and fishing almost daily, which turned to providing adaptive fishing opportunities as volunteer for 30+ years at Craig and Children’s Hospitals. He united a network of volunteers for manpower and created programs to adapt fishing equipment including accessible rafts and offer floating and fishing experiences.

In 2017, Frank and Peter reconnected on Frank’s idea to use Peter’s equipment, experience, and network along with Frank’s Ennis property, connections, and vision. Camp Bullwheel (CB) was born, participants were recruited, volunteers were coordinated, and the lodging was made accessible. Summer, 2018 has a full schedule of disabled participants, chosen companions, and volunteers visiting CB from June through September to enjoy free adaptive fishing opportunities on the Madison River and Ennis Lake complete with lodging at CB and entertainment from the crew.

Also on the Madison as well as Beaverhead, Big Hole, and Jefferson Rivers is another adaptive fishing program called Access Unlimited. This project provides adaptive fishing opportunities using accessible drift boats, a network of guides and donors, and accessible lodging. The project is an idea developed first in 2014 by friends Jess Alberi, Steve Miller, and Adam Yinger. Interested participants can visit www.accessunltd.org to learn more and apply for a fishing trip, which includes transport to and from the Bozeman (BZN) airport (as needed), lodging and food, and equipment.

A little further westward people can find several access opportunities. Of course the Dean Stone Mountain and Rock Creek projects detailed elsewhere in this newsletter are becoming a reality. In addition, the BLM has acquired new property up the Blackfoot Corridor on which there may be future disability access for day outings including picnics, hiking, maybe camping, or just time afield out of town. A little further west near Paradise, Montana is Quinn’s Hot Springs Resort on the Clark Fork River. Its location is near a network of trail systems for outdoor recreation, and the facilities complete with swimming pool and hot tubs are welcoming following a day of activity. Finally, in East Central Idaho near Powell, ID is the more rustic, 100-mile, single-lane, Lolo Motorway for ATVs with hiking trails meandering alongside and away from the Motorway. Users won’t find gas stations, stores, developed water, or other services but will find breathtaking scenery, mountain lakes, and adventure. There is lodging near Powell at the Lochsa Lodge, but access may be limited. For more information see http://www.idahostateatv.org/publications/Driving_the_Lolo_Motorway.pdf.

Whatever your fancy, opportunities among our natural environment abound ranging from full disability access to anything but. A world of fun opportunities awaits. Make sure to ask many questions in your planning and know what you can expect before embarking on your next adventure.
Scott Fels entered the healthcare field as a caregiver in 1978 and continued in that capacity until earning his accounting degree in 1996. After graduation, he stayed in the healthcare industry as an accountant and medical billing specialist processing Medicare, Medicaid, and insurance claims. He naturally claims a sincere appreciation for the caregiving and support services which help so many individuals remain in their homes. Scott feels grateful to have this experiential background as a foundation for personal growth and as building blocks for his career goals. Scott says the one thing he cherishes most is the smile that comes with a ‘thank you’ for kindness offered to one who needs it. He is excited to be working as head bookkeeper at Summit and is grateful for the opportunity to work with great staff who appreciate his efforts and make his job meaningful. Outside of work Scott can be found photographing nature’s beauty in the morning or evening light. He also loves to cook blends of enticing flavors to please even the most selective palate.

Becca Kwon, SD-CFC/PAS Coordinator, Missoula

Becca Kwon is originally from Neenah, Wisconsin, but moved to Missoula in 2011 to earn a bachelor’s degree in social work (BSW). She has since acquired four years of experience working in the mental health and disability field. In the fall Becca plans to return to school to earn a master’s degree in social work (MSW) while still working. In her free time, Becca likes to experience nature, spend time with friends, and play soccer.

Robert Olson, Independent Living Specialist, Kalispell

Robert Olson is excited and honored to be an IL Specialist at Summit. As a former Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, he is passionate about disability advocacy and really hopes to increase it. Personally, Robert says disability is his life and his culture which he is proud of. He grew up with disabilities himself, and his family and most of his friends are people with disabilities. The role models Robert admires and musicians to whom he listens are also people with disabilities. Even though individuals with disabilities are “different” (a term he prefers over “disabled”), he feels those differences are just that – differences. He looks forward to learning more about Summit and meeting more consumers.
Every so often an article is published that epitomizes the very nature of the independent living movement. An article recently published in the Missoula Independent by Naomi Kimbell entitled *Institutionalization, eugenics, and the legacy of the Boulder River School* is one such article. In her article Naomi speaks of her past experiences with a family member who lived at what is now known as the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder, Montana. She uses those experiences to give readers a more personal perspective into the institutionalization of people with disabilities and what little rights and personal freedoms, if any, individuals subjected to institutionalized care had…or even have today. Naomi talks about the history of how individuals with disabilities were treated, including how many were subjected to forced sterilization, which brought about the independent living movement and her article serves as a stark reminder of why we must never give up the fight for full and equal treatment and opportunities for people with disabilities.

If there ever was an article that should be required reading for anyone in the disability rights movement, *Institutionalization, eugenics, and the legacy of the Boulder River School* by Naomi Kimbell is it. Check it out for yourself at:


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**Parking Upgrades in Downtown Missoula**

The Missoula Parking Commission believe that every minute counts. Whether you are coming Downtown to grab a quick and delicious lunch or for a few hours to shop and play, we know that every minute of your time is important. We strive to make the Downtown Parker’s experience as positive and convenient as possible from the minute you park until the minute you drive away.

With this goal in mind, we are delighted to announce the installation of upgraded gating equipment in our Central Park and Park Place Garages. Our new gating equipment will provide for a greener (less paper & idling), more user friendly and efficient experience for parkers. With the addition of the new gating equipment comes the removal of our Toll Booth in Central Park. While there will no longer be an attendant and booth at Central Park, we are offering optional access accommodations for those who request them. For further information on ADA hourly parking access options please contact our office at 406-552-6250.
Community Column

Summer Interrupted
This season can be especially hard when you manage a disability

By Shelby Humphreys

Three summers ago, my mental health tanked. I languished on the couch as sunlight tracked from high to low beam on gauzy curtains. It seemed everyone was throwing gear into their rigs and going on adventures. Meanwhile, I could barely manage my disability. If I would just sit up and take that first step. But, that idea felt too heavy, the effort too hard. I knew what I should do, but I couldn’t do it. Summer sucks when it shoves my limits in my face.

That summer on the couch scraped my already-thin margins. Next summer, however, a gift appeared in the form of a beat-up, purple kayak. I didn’t realize it at the time, but that kayak would ferry me across my stagnant gloom. My journey spanned five stages: wanting, preparing, experiencing, remembering, and dreaming. Each stage had its own challenges. But, as people who manage disabilities, we’re no strangers to challenge. So, let’s look at each stage through the story of my purple kayak.

Wanting. We all want. It’s not the wanting that’s hard; it’s being scared to want more which keeps us stuck. Want can go sour. Disappointment festers when our hopes are cut short by disability and life doesn’t go the way we thought it would. (When my high school guidance counselor asked which career I’d chosen, I didn’t say that I wanted to go into middle-management of Bi-Polar II and oversee endless ambitions with erratic tendencies.) If let downs go on too long, a wry sense of futility becomes our new normal.

To restore a healthy sense of want I must risk cracking open my heart’s desires again, even though I may not get what I want. Those desires will never go away, though (no matter how deep I’ve buried them). For example, since high school, I had harbored a deep desire to paddle a kayak down river, to move in time with the water and mingle with untamed nature. Twenty years ago, I took lessons. But, they ended in frustration. I never could complete the dunk and roll-up maneuver. Two decades later, when sit-on-top kayaks showed up, I wanted one. However, those years had been shaky, at best, and my unpredictable health sank me down for long periods. I couldn’t roll out of those, either.

Preparing. Preparation involves problem solving. Friends are great for this. Friends can find a way when we can’t. They can also help with practical preparations, like adaptive equipment or flexible scheduling. The best friends are the ones who hide out in plain sight and stick around until we’re ready to ask for help. Asking is hard, for sure. However, I’ve learned that people love sharing in my dreams. When they become part of the solution, they get to share in my success. Asking the right people for help can be a win-win for everyone.

My friend, Tom, was my win-win. Two summers ago, he called me up. “I rented a kayak, and I don’t have to return it ‘til tomorrow. Want to give it a try?” I hesitated. What if I had an episode on the river? All that could’ve happened, but it didn’t. With Tom’s encouragement, I had a great time. Even better, I had begun to see beyond my barriers.

Experiencing. No matter how complete my preparation, I need actual experience. And, they have to be new experiences. Our brains won’t pop out of negative neural ruts without new stimuli. I don’t see any way around this stage. However, that doesn’t mean there’s only one path. We each have our own way. When I sat atop that rented kayak, I needed to feel cold water sneaking into my seat. I needed to smell that summer perfume wafting off the river. That day, I possessed my moment, and I ended up possessing more of myself, too.

Remembering. We need new experiences, but we also need new memories. When memories flash up, we need to actively engage by feeling everything all over again. Each time we actively remember, we auto-edit any old ideas about what we can and cannot do. We gain confidence.

Dreaming. With all that new confidence, don’t be surprised when you ask, “If I can do that, then what else can I do?” Aha! Now you’ve reached the heart of hope. Each stage has been aiming for this very thought, when disability gives way to ability. Let’s be clear. We’re not undoing a disability. We’re adding more abilities to what we already have.

Now, I can kayak. I’ve even towed a few stalled tubers into shore. This summer, the only difference between me and everyone else having fun in the sun will be which river I choose to ride.
BASE stands for home base, like in hide and go seek. In life, you have to establish a BASE first, that’s where we come in.

**BASE EVENTS**

**Game Night (GN)**
- Thursdays weekly, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy (YODA)**
- 2nd & 4th Tues. monthly, 3:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**Base Art Group (BAG)**
- Fridays weekly, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

**Adaptive Yoga**
- Wednesdays 4:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**Fundraising Efforts**

Thank you to everyone that has donated so far. We have raised roughly $20,000 and we are continuing efforts to reach our goal of $50,000.

To donate go to:  
[www.BASEMissoula.org](http://www.BASEMissoula.org)

phone: 406-215-1080

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**CLASSIFIED ADS**

**Wheelchair Accessible Duplex**
For Rent - Brand new, 3 bedroom 2 bath, roll in shower, $1400/mo. Call Glenn 544-1361.

**Quickie Wheelchair**
$500 OBO. Call Janet (406) 721-3751

**Symmetry Stander**
Call Madison (406) 670-9388

**Braun Vangater Wheelchair Lift**
Almost new wheelchair lift with 600 LB capacity. $2000 OBO. Call or text Tyler 406-925-9846

**Summit Pinnacle Chair stair lift**
Gently used, works great. 2 remotes. Straight line - mount rope L. Pick up in Missoula. $1,300 OBO. Call Diane at 360-4061.

**Garaventa Super-Trac Portable Wheelchair Lift for stairs.** Purchased new for $12,000 and used only a few times. Will sell for $2,500 OBO. Contact Jacob Francom, Troy Public Schools, [jfrancom@troyk12.org](mailto:jfrancom@troyk12.org), (406) 295-4520.

**Acorn Stair lift**
For going up to 6 stairs while seated. $500 OBO. Call John at 546-7003.

To get listed contact Tyler Stosich at (406) 728-1630 or email [tstosich@summitilc.org](mailto:tstosich@summitilc.org).

Or, list and find items on the MonTECH exchange:  
[http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/](http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/)

To get involved or to share ideas of new BASE programs, please contact BASE Missoula, by emailing  
[jhoward@summitilc.org](mailto:jhoward@summitilc.org)  
or by visiting  
[www.basemissoula.org](http://www.basemissoula.org)
Opportunities to Participate in Research Projects!

The Home Usability Program:
• Help UM researchers learn about barriers experienced by people with disabilities.
• Answer survey questions about how you live in your home and community.
• Receive up to $110 over a 6-month period for completing surveys.

The Out and About Program:
• Meet with Summit staff members for goal setting skills training.
• Set 2 goals related to increasing community participation.
• Receive $30 for completing 3 surveys over a 6-month period.

ADA Community Picnic and Adaptive Recreation Clinic
July 10, 2018
McCormick Park

ADA Picnic
11:30am - 1:30pm
Adaptive Recreation Clinic
10:00am - 6:00pm

For more information call: 406-728-1630

You can always sign up to get this newsletter by email by contacting: missoula@summitilc.org