



# Camp Bullwheel 2019 Annual Report





# 2019

## By The Numbers

**10**  
PEOPLE WITH  
SPINAL CORD  
INJURIES SERVED

**1,250**  
MEALS COOKED  
(and dishes hand washed!)

**13**  
VOLUNTEERS

## In Addition

**52 guests total**  
(family and  
participants)

**4 Paraplegics**

**5 Quadriplegics**

**562 Person Days**

**34**  
FRIENDS &  
FAMILY

**43**  
VETERAN DAYS ON  
THE RIVER

**734**  
MILES OF RIVER  
FLOATED

**6,700**  
SHUTTLE MILES  
DRIVEN

**\$32,013**  
DONATIONS RECEIVED  
(NOT INCLUDING IN-KIND)

# Montana State Collaboration



**Expanding Possibilities** -In addition to our float and fishing trips, we have partnered with Montana State's engineering department to develop a cohort of projects to improve the lives of those with spinal cord injuries. Among the projects we have partially funded include:



**Fishinator Improvements**



**"Sip and Puff" Powered  
Disk Golf slinger**



**Adaptive Recreational  
Equipment Enhancements**



### ***The very moment Chris Clasby***

experienced a highway truck accident at age 18, his life changed instantly. Awakening two months later as a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down, his rodeo days were over as was his ability to pursue his love of the outdoors, or so he thought.

Today, thirty years after that fateful accident, Chris has enjoyed exponentially more opportunities than he could have imagined. He accomplishes more in a day and has more involvements than about anyone. From traveling internationally to involvement with several non-profits, he keeps a lot of balls in the air, including his invaluable directorship at a fishing camp for individuals with disabilities, namely Camp Bullwheel.

Aptly named for the massive relic that graces the property, Camp Bullwheel hosts sportsmen and sportswomen with disabilities and their chosen companions to a week of all things Montana with float fishing the famous Madison River at the forefront. Located a mere quarter mile from Varney Bridge just south of Ennis, Montana, the old homestead has been abuzz with activity over the last couple years. The smiles and tears of joy are infectious. The support of others while on the river and in the community are deep, heartfelt, and genuine.

It all began as a dream, a vision, a hope, when the concept entered Frank Bell's psyche in the summer of 2017. Having owned the old homestead he'd bought from the original owners three decades



earlier, the now sad old place was slowly sinking into disrepair. Dreading yet another 'fix up' as Bell had faced every half dozen years or so, suddenly a lightbulb came on. An old friend he'd worked with years earlier was in Colorado providing individuals with disabilities with a shot at fishing on the Colorado River. Maybe Peter would bring his adaptive fishing efforts to Ennis, where he and Frank had worked together many years prior? The wild card was selling the idea to Peter, who was quite entrenched in Colorado.

"It'll be a couple years before I could do something like that," Peter informed Bell.

"Just come on up and take a gander in September," Bell suggested.

Peter agreed to a trip north, and in no time Bell arranged a working lunch in Ennis, inviting an assortment of old and new acquaintances that might be helpful in this effort. Kismet was alive and well as ideas and encouragement darted around the gathering of eleven. An attorney friend volunteered to help with the 501(c)(3) paperwork and her husband, a contractor, offered his expertise as well. Peter's

enthusiasm and knowledge infected the room with optimism and, when the meeting adjourned, the seed was planted.

After that fruitful gathering, Bell and Pauwels drove ten miles south of Ennis to inspect the property which Peter hadn't seen in decades. Suddenly he was ten years old all over again, ideas exploding and excitement aglow. Right then and there Bell and Pauwels jointly agreed to begin the renovation on April 1, 2018.

Peter Pauwels was born an angel, as selfless and pure as Gandhi. As early as his siblings could remember Peter was adapting boats for the less fortunate to participate in water activities on the Great South Bay of Long Island. He and Bell separately found their way to Colorado in their early twenties. Peter was easily the handiest man Bell had ever met, and they jointly renovated old buildings in Denver; Peter was simply a brilliant and resourceful guru, a Scot acquiescing to a Dutchman. Beyond the renovations they and friends attacked Denver with glee; right right time and right place. Life was good.

But Peter was considered much bigger than any of the others, always with a place deep in his heart for those without such good fortune. When the gang would celebrate the sale or purchase of a property at our favorite haunt, the Riviera, Peter always showed up with someone in crutches or in a wheelchair, making certain they celebrated along with the rest – inclusive always his mantra. When anyone needed help figuring out a peculiarity of construction, Peter had the sensible solution and would jump into it without making anyone feel inadequate. Come payday in many cases Peter would spend his wage taking his friends to dinner or sometimes buying a new boat, his other obsession that was never satiated, even to this day. “How many boats,” I ask from time to time? A long pause as he counts...



*Guests enjoying the offerings of the Madison in our new drift boat fleet*

Camp Bullwheel and its melding of these three men, Frank, Peter, and Chris with the invaluable help of the Camp Bullwheel and Ennis communities has resulted in two successful seasons of hosting a houseful of guests each week throughout summer. On the river our adaptive fleet of watercraft allow participants with disabilities to catch fish using adaptive gear. Of particular interest is the state-of-the-art hands-free ‘sip n puff’ apparatus Peter has perfected over twenty-five years at Craig hospital in Denver, volunteering and involving his friends. From cooking to rowing, shuttling to building lures, and website design and photography to social media, this great success is propelled by many – as they say, “it takes a community...”

The massive hand-hewn Bullwheel in Camp’s front yard symbolizes strength,

power, empowerment, and longevity. It was constructed in 1923 by the ‘Galloping Swede’, a man named J. Hugo Aronson. He later became the governor of Montana from 1952-1960. Every week throughout summer, they leave Camp empowered at having accomplished something unthinkable only days before.

With a third season in view, Peter has remodeled Camp’s old interior kitchen first with full plans to construct an outdoor kitchen next. Then, oh yes, also plans to build the boathouse to provide not only shelter our fleet, but a rehab engineering shop to create, build, maintain, and repair our fabricated adaptive gear. Everything is based on and related to fishing and

fabrication is yet another of Peter’s obsessions to Camp’s benefit. Upstairs from the shop will be residential quarters for Peter. Current plans are to be off-grid with passive solar heating and the wind a possible power source. Our hero will have a fine place to hang his hat, oh so close to his loves.

The long-term dream is a state-of-the-art facility that can accommodate 3-4 groups at a time along with permanent staff and the most up to date amenities for our guests with disabilities and their companions.

It all begins with a dream!

**~Frank Bell, Executive Director**

# CORE VALUES

*Like a solid foundation built in stone, our core values create an unwavering guide which we carry out our day to day operations to achieve our organizational goals as we look to 2020 and beyond.*



## Immersion in Unspoiled Nature

Unspoiled nature is why we're all here. Is there anything better than spending a day floating down a river with a beautiful trout on the line under big blue Montana skies? Reconnecting gives us all a sense of place.

---



## Teamwork

With days that start at 7 AM prepping breakfast, shuttles to be driven, floats on the river that last for between 3-4 hours, and houses that need to be cleaned for the next guests teamwork is key to a successful week.

---

## Innovation

Camp BullWheel's founders invented the world's first sip-and-puff fishing device, and in doing so they've given world class river access to many individuals with spinal cord disabilities.

---



## Professionalism

Providing a free service to guests and their families doesn't mean we cut corners. Running each trip with our best foot forward ensures a safe and enjoyable vacation for everyone involved.



# Grants Received



**Christopher Reeves Grant** - In early 2019, we were the recipient of a grant from the Christopher Reeve's foundation that fully funded a second, 18' double pontoon boat! This beautiful blue boat allowed us to double our capacity of guests on the river!

*Marshall & Mary Brondum Special Assistance Foundation*

**Brondum Foundation** - We received a second grant for the purchase of an aluminum drift boat. Adding a drift boat to our fleet allowed us to take individuals with lower spinal cord injuries on bodies of water in a traditional fly fishing manner.

**We received additional support from:**

- The Meyerson Family Foundation
- The Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan
- The Mark Neithercut Fund
- Fidelity Investment Fund



# Volunteer Spotlight

Mike Curd - Camp Cook  
Chaplain, US Army, Retired

“Cookie Don’t Clean” is his motto, cooking a mean spread is his game. Mike (in the red apron bottom right) has relentlessly showed up to do the impossible - cook breakfast and dinner, sometimes up to 5 days per week, for our guests and their companions. If a shuttle needs to be driven, Mike is there to pick up the slack.

Jerry Horn - Building and Groundskeeping

Dave Hall - Email updates

Tyler Stosich and Ty Wheeler - Website Updates

To our numerous rowers, thank you card writers, and behind the scene folks that keep the information flowing and guests aligned,

**A hearty THANK YOU for all that you do!**



# Longterm Vision

## Providing a Sense of Place in “the last best place”

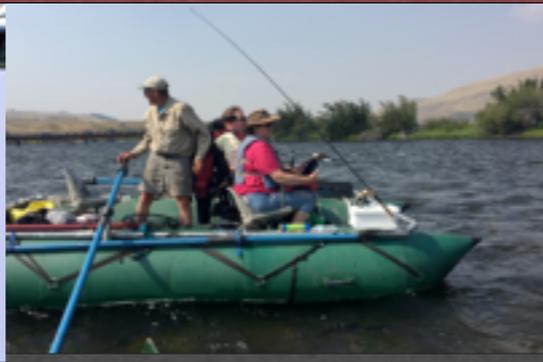
This past year we underwent a significant amount of restoration, renovation, and planning to get the old homestead ready to accept our first guests in June. Our mantra of providing quality outdoor experiences for people with disabilities and their chosen companions remains the paramount goal of Camp BullWheel. Having safe and ADA compliant accommodations is an integral part in the BullWheel experience. Our little homestead is cozy, but as we look to the future we are working on plans to construct a larger facility with more amenities and easier access.

*(right)* Volunteers extraordinaire Peter Pauwels, Chuck Feldman and Tom Riggs pose with an architectural rendering of a possible future facility.

*(Below, left to right)* View of Camp BullWheel with the famed Varney Bridge and the Madison River in the background, sunset views from the camp sign, and the iconic Bull Wheel with an evening glow.



Be a Part of the Action! Camp BullWheel's Giving Levels ensure your donations go 100% to the facilities and programs of giving experiences to those who deserve them the most.



Founders Club	Fishinator Level	Varney Level	Lure Level
<p>Those who put forth to secure the longterm future of the Camp Bullwheel mission.</p>	<p><b>\$2,000+</b></p> <p><i>Sponsor one week of fishing for a Guest and their companion(s)</i></p>	<p><b>\$500+</b></p> <p><i>Equivalent of buying a rod with an adaptive motorized reel for participants</i></p>	<p><b>\$100+</b></p> <p><i>Buy a box of flies and lures for guests at the ranch</i></p>
<p><i>Name put on "Big Green" as a Founding Sponsor</i></p>	<p><i>Receive a Camp BullWheel Shirt in the mail plus a hat (\$58 value plus shipping) Sponsorship included in year end summary</i></p>	<p><i>Receive a Camp BullWheel Shirt in the mail plus a hat (\$58 value plus shipping)</i></p>	<p><i>Receive a Camp BullWheel Hat in the mail (\$20 value plus shipping)</i></p>



501 (c)(3) Nonprofit  
 736 Varney Rd  
 Ennis, MT 59729  
[www.campbullwheel.org](http://www.campbullwheel.org)

Phone: (406) 682-7075