

SPORTS & OUTDOORS

Friday, May 28, 2021

Report scores to Shelby Reardon, sports editor, at 970-871-4253 or sreardon@SteamboatPilot.com

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Spoke Talk

Bringing back trail positivity

I think we can all agree that summer has come on fast this year. The county roads and singletracks are abuzz, some already shrouded in clouds of moon dust as riders pass through.

When I see other trail users on Emerald Mountain, there are ear-to-ear smiles, an exchange of hellos, the occasional fist-bump when you cross paths with a friend. This is generally a really positive place to be, out in the woods. It's time to recognize the great things our growing trail network does for locals and visitors.

Our trail system has seen dramatic changes over the past decade. It has grown physically in terms of mileage and acreage, been enjoyed by an increasing number of locals and visitors, and welcomed a diversifying usership. It's not uncommon to hear friends complain, "There are too many people on these trails now," or "This was better before the secret got out."

This is an impact of more people enjoying these beautiful open spaces and natural areas in Routt County (and if you don't agree that more people having access to the outdoors is a good thing, we need to have a different conversation). In order to maintain the quality of experience out there, we need to continue to improve and expand our trail system.

I've been sitting in on a lot of Steamboat Springs City Council and 2A Trails Committee meetings these days, and I have to tell you, it's time to bring some positivity back. I'm hearing a lack of education on the part of city officials, some of whom purport that we are "sitting on wasted money" or that "we'll never be able to spend all the money by the time it sunsets." We are now eight years into a 10-year tax allocation to grow and improve the trail system, and a lot has been accomplished with some backbreaking work.

We can't forget where we've come from, especially as we look to the next projected phase on Rabbit Ears. Take a look back: Morning Gloria, Spring Roll, Wild Rose, Soda Mountain, Flash of Gold, NPR, Buffalo Billy's; the Ridge Trailhead structure and parking; several Yampa River Core Trail plus downtown crossings and connectors. These trails and amenities were funded through the 2A lodging tax and have dramatically improved the local trail network for all users, getting people out in the woods on foot, bike and horseback, and allowing them to do that on a more diverse trail network with more options for access and egress.

MARTIN, 22

SAILORS ALL AROUND



SHELBY REARDON/STAFF

Steamboat Springs High School senior Alan Duty threw a complete game Thursday against Aspen. It very well could have been his last evening of high school baseball. On Thursday, three Steamboat sport teams hosted home events. At 3 p.m., the baseball team started a doubleheader against Aspen. The team honored seniors Alan Duty and Austin Ibarra between games. The Sailors lost the first game 11-8. At 4 p.m., the girls lacrosse team hosted Roaring Fork, a team that served the Sailors a 16-1 loss earlier in the season. The teams played at Steamboat Middle School. Over on Gardner Field, the game between Palisade and the Steamboat soccer team began. The teams met last week in a doozy of a game that ended in a 3-2 overtime victory in Steamboat's favor. See more photos from all three games on page 23.

Skiers sign with colleges

*7 Winter Sports Club
Alpine athletes to continue
competing at next level*

Shelby Reardon
Steamboat Pilot & Today

Coming off one of the most successful seasons for the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club Alpine ski team, seven athletes have signed to continue the sport in college.

Sequoia Anstine and Jaelie Hovey are both headed to Bates College, a small school in Maine.

Hovey has always wanted to ski in college, and Bates checks all her boxes.

"Going to (Steamboat Mountain School) makes any school seem big, so I didn't have my eye on a giant school," she said. "I always wanted to go to a smaller, liberal arts school. I can play soccer there, which I'm probably going to do. The smaller community, it's easier to make relationships with people and connect with people when it's smaller. As a ski team, it's not as intense, so it's easier to balance everything."

Hovey is also an excellent soccer player, but skiing holds a special place in her heart. She found it hard to explain exactly what she loved about the sport but was sure others would have the same trouble.



FILE PHOTO

Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club skier Jaelie Hovey earned sixth and 11th at the Colorado Ski Cup giant slalom races at Steamboat Resort on Jan. 22. Hovey will continue her skiing career at Bates College along with teammate Sequoia Anstine.

"It's a brutal sport, but it's also the best feeling in the world to go out and get some fresh air and lay some arcs," she said. "I just like the feeling of carving, and laying it over is so much better than what you get from any other sport, in my opinion."

SSWSC Alpine Competitive Program

Director Tyler Shepherd is confident the pair will do well at the collegiate level based on what he saw from them over the past year.

"Their work ethic is tremendous,"

SKIERS, 22



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SPORTS

SKIERS

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Shepherd said. "They both have great attitudes. They came to training and conditioning with great attitudes all the time and wanting to get better and stronger. They were very coachable. ... They genuinely make changes in their skiing to try and improve, and they were willing to fail."

Additionally, Dominic Raimville will attend University of New Hampshire, Cam Smith will ski at Boston College, Jay Poulter is going to Middlebury College, and Cooper Puckett and Jordan Simon are headed to Dartmouth College.

"For the past five to six years, we've had one of the stronger ski teams in the Rocky region," said Mike Bansmer, SSWSC's former

head FIS coach. "They're motivated and driven. They kind of came together as a pretty tight knit team over the past couple years. They push each other in the gym; they're good teammates and like to compete with each other and beat each other, but help each other along in the process. I think that's one of the biggest reasons they'll find success."

Puckett and Poulter are in a unique position since they not only were offered spots on NCAA ski teams but were nominated to the national team, opportunities that conflict with one another.

"I'm so grateful for both opportunities," Puckett said. "I'm just so thankful for everyone who's helped me make both opportunities available."

Puckett said he's pretty much decided to attend



FILE PHOTO

Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club skier Jordan Simon tucks around gate in a giant slalom race of the Spring Series at Steamboat Resort. Simon is heading to Dartmouth.

Dartmouth in the fall but not ski for the college and instead, ski with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Alpine Development Team. He will train with the development team and its coaches through the winter and summer, then

reassess and potentially join the Dartmouth team the following year.

Poulter, who came to the SSWSC from Vermont, will face a similar decision: Middlebury team or development team.

MARTIN

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City officials who publicly proclaim, "No one supports the 2A trail project anymore," do so in the face of over 71% of local voters who approved this funding allocation for trail development. These are spaces in the local outdoors where

people are having incredible experiences. They're bonding with family members. Pushing their skill level. Enjoying a moment to themselves. Connecting with the natural environment. Becoming stewards. These are also the trails that provide one of the many reasons why so many people want to come here

and experience Steamboat.

Summer is a fantastic time of year. People tend to agree when I suggest we hold our next meeting out on the trail (it increases the creative conversational flow). We have plenty of opportunities for you to contribute to this growing network of trails by volunteering, joining us

as a member, donating a used bike to the Bike Match program and more. I hope to run into all of you in the woods this summer, and we can fist-bump and remember why we're all out here to begin with.

Laraine Martin is executive director of Routt County Riders.

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