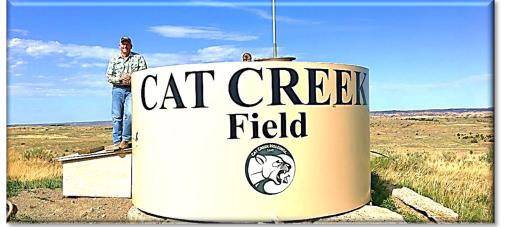
## ~Winnett Montana Community Newsletter~

Volume 1, Issue 4



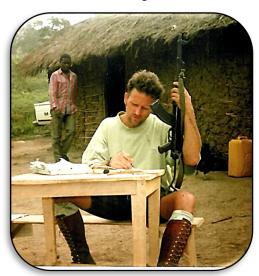
Mark See by a newly painted tank. Photo Credit: Leah Fisher

### "Cat Creek Oil Field – Looking Back, Moving Forward!" --Part One-- By Diane Ahlgren

The Cat Creek Oil Field has had a huge influence on Petroleum County, including the forming and naming of the county itself. History and future vision will be forthcoming in articles that will follow, but part one will look at the new owners, what is happening since they took over, and their current projects.

Cat Creek Holdings LLC is the operating entity that has taken over the Cat Creek field. Mark See came to Petroleum County from northwest of Helena as a part-time resident in 1997. From the first day he set foot in this country, he knew this place (and the folks hereabouts) were for him and that one day, if he kept at it and the stars lined-up, it would be home full-time. Mark passed through the Cat Creek oil field on his first trip to the old Fail place and that's where this oilfield story started. At that time, he joined with his in-laws. Ben and Claudia Thomas. at the old Fail, Hanson, Krinke ranch, (depending on your generation) on the Musselshell River but spent the rest of his time working elsewhere. Mark has

been involved in the oil industry for decades. In Africa, he did raw exploration in Uganda at a hazardous location in the jungle. In South Africa. Mark was involved with development projects in Oman and the UAE in the too hot for comfort Middle East. He also worked the Tar Sands in Alberta, along with oil exploration/development in Argentina, Ecuador, and Peru. He did extended stints in Texas. Oklahoma, Kansas, and Louisiana, and as time allowed, he was researching the Cat Creek



Mark See during his exploration in the jungle of Uganda near Rwanda border during a civil war

August 2021

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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Field back home. In 2008 Mark bought the ranch from the Thomas's and became a more frequent resident of Petroleum County. But since he still had his day-job, he grudgingly still had to travel and spend too much time away. His love of the area and his oil production background led to off-and-on negotiations for purchase of the Cat Creek Field from thenowner, Lloyd Carrell. This finally came to fruition in July, 2020.

And the changes at the old field began! Short-term goals include: new oil flow pipelines trenched in to replace old...

# **Community Spotlight** J. King: Young Rancher with a Vision

An Aboriginal Proverb says: "Look after the land, and it will look after you. Destroy the land, and it will destroy you." Almost anyone involved in agriculture would agree with this statement, but perhaps no one takes the truism more seriously than J. King and his parents Chris and Gari King. During a recent visit with J., it quickly became apparent that the Joe C. King & Sons Ranch near Winnett is committed to caring for the land it occupies, and it has been for many years.

"Look after the land, and it will look after you. Destroy the land, and it will destroy you." *Aboriginal Proverb* 

J's family ranch recently won the 2021 Environmental Stewardship Award from the Montana Stockgrowers. Since he is one of the younger members of the ag community in Petroleum County, his perspective is interesting, not only because he is an award recipient, but because of the importance of conservation and stewardship in his day-to-day life.

### A Lengthy Process

Many folks have expressed curiosity about just what it takes to win recognition like this from the Stockgrowers. J. said the process started nearly a year ago when the Stockgrowers' Director of Marketing and Communications, Keni Reese, contacted his dad, Chris. She said the ranch had been nominated for the Stewardship prize, and she wanted to get consent from the Kings to enter them into the competition. J. explained they weren't sure who nominated their ranch, but after

talking it over as a family, which includes J's parents, his sister Kylie, and her husband Mitch Thompson, they agreed to be participants.

J. said Chris fielded several phone calls from Ms. Reese, and she eventually came to the ranch for a tour. While in Petroleum County, she took pictures, looked at hay and grazing land, and asked the family members about their stewardship philosophy.

As award winners, the Kings will host what is called the Raising the Steaks Tour next summer at their ranch. This is an excursion sponsored by the Montana Stockgrowers that brings many different aq-adjacent people together. Visitors on the tour may include foodservice professionals, chefs, wildlife specialists, storytellers, conservationists, water users and others. The tour serves as a way to spread the word about modern stewardship efforts and bring some positive attention to the agricultural industry.

### A Family Heritage of Conservation

When asked how he learned so much about rangeland management, J. credits two sources: his family members, and workshops and materials provided by ag-related organizations. In the early 1970's, J.'s grandfather Joe King was one of the first area ranchers to advocate for the "rest and rotation" method of grazing. Prior to that time, cattle belonging to several ranches were turned out on large plots of common pastureland for the entire summer. This did not give grassland plants any time to recover from one grazing season to the next. Joe King worked...



J. King skiing the Nevis Range near Fort Williams Scotland



The King Family: From Left: Mitch & Kylie (sister) Thompson with their children; Chris & Gari King; & J.



The King Ranch being presented the Environmental Sustainability Award from the Montana Stockgrowers June 2021



J.'s old Ford in front of a good hay crop of irrigated grass/alfalfa on Elk Creek

### Community Spotlight Continued...

with the BLM to fence off his grazing land, which allowed him to rest part of it each summer.

More recently, J. and his dad Chris have read materials and attended classes and workshops sponsored by groups such as the MSU Extension Service, the **Conservation District and Winnett** ACES. Such offerings delve into a variety of conservation topics including the use of cover crops, enhancing water development and intensive grazing. J. says he especially enjoys attending such conferences in person because he not only learns from the presenters, but also from the other attendees, who often have valuable insight to share.

### **New Stewardship Tools**

The Kings' latest range management tool is called "deferred grazing." J. says they have been pleased with the way their range has responded to the newer methods of grazing management. He says he can see an improvement in the condition of the pastures as indicated by healthy looking plants, of course, but also by the presence of more wildlife including many kinds of grassland birds, raptors, antelope and other species.

Not satisfied to rely only on their own observations, for the past few years the Kings have been hiring a professional range monitor to help them keep tabs on their pastures. This is an independent contractor who visits the ranch each year. He has several transects, or small plots of ground marked off and returns to each area every two years. He measures grass height, looks at ground cover, lists all species of grass that are present, and completes a thorough checklist evaluating each plot. These records help J. and his family compare the condition of the rangeland to prior years and thus

monitor the progress they are making.

When asked which techniques he is looking forward to trying next, J. mentioned a project involving the use of a cover crop he's excited about. A while back, the King Ranch acquired a new pasture that had about 30 unproductive acres below a reservoir. The hard

J. believes the future of the cattle business is bright. He is excited about the new trend of consumers looking for and valuing locally produced beef. He thinks the cooperative development of small packing plants might be a way to keep jobs and money in rural areas like ours, and he hopes to encourage such enterprises in a way be can.

pan soil supported almost no useful plants. J. planted a warm season mix of 10 - 12 different crops including millet, vetch, flax, Sudan grass and several other varieties in the poor ground. After irrigating the field from his reservoir, J. was pleased with the results he got. (See Photos Below) The mix of crops grew as tall as the backs of the King yearlings, providing excellent forage and improving the soil at the same time.

J. says they planted winter triticale in this area last fall, planning to use it for early summer grazing. Their hope was to use a no-till drill to replant the warm season cover crops after cattle had finished with it and produce two types of forage in one year. Because of the dry weather, the triticale didn't yield much this year, and the reservoir did not gather enough water to irrigate, but J. is unfazed. "Not every experiment works the way you plan," he says, "but there's always next year."

When asked about his personal goals for the next few years, J. says he'd like to do some work to improve water lines on the ranch, enlarge his cattle herd, and build in some safety nets to make getting through dry seasons easier. He thinks it's "cool" that he can use native range to build a strong business while still leaving that range in better shape than he found it. Sounds like a true environmentalist speaking; one that will "look after the land" for years to come.

By Dixie Iverson



3



### Superintendent's Message:

It seems impossible as I write this that school has been out for almost two months already. While it might seem like summer would be a slow time around here, our team has been busy making preparations for a fantastic 21-22 school year. Professional learning, research, conferences, repairs, cleaning, purchasing, updating policies and handbooks - all these pieces are critical to creating an environment where every learner can thrive.

One of the most important tasks each year is hiring excellent staff members. While we were unable to hire a full-time music teacher due to a shortage (49 open music positions this summer!), we are excited to announce that Casey O'Malley will be joining us as our full-time art teacher. She is really looking forward to coming to Winnett, especially after seeing the students' work from the Artist in Residence series last spring.

We hope you've been enjoying the Summer Food Program boxes - thank you to Megan and Kim for their awesome work in getting those put together and delivered! Once school resumes, breakfast and lunch will continue to be free for all enrolled students, but the boxes for non-enrolled students will not continue as the federal government is not extending that particular program.

Staff members will return Monday, August 16th for professional learning and we'll welcome our students back on Thursday, August 19th. "Back to School" information will be mailed out by Wednesday, August 4th. The first volleyball and football practices will be Friday, August 13th - make sure your physical is taken care of by that date. We hope this year is mostly business as usual for our regular student events and opportunities, but we're also hoping to be able to partner with the Winnett community in an intentional way to create new energy and opportunities. More information will be available in our September newsletter, on our Facebook page and school website, and posted around town.

We're looking forward to a great year. Have a safe and fun finish to your summer! ~ Lindsey Wilkerson



# Summer Break Sports

#### 2021-2022 Winnett School Schedules Top: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade -12<sup>th</sup> Grade Bottom: Kindergarten

Top: 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade -12 <sup>t</sup>	<sup>th</sup> Grade Bot	ttom: Kinderga	rten	01	00
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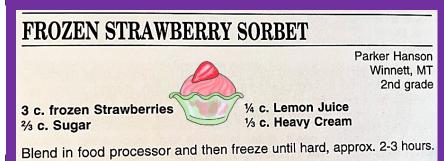
# **Kid's Korner**

## Back to School

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Winnett Rams	Volleyball	Playground	Computers
Lunchroom	Lunchbox	Backpack	Teachers
Pencils	Crayons	School	Football
Paper	Friends	Recess	Class

Books

### LOCAL COOKBOOK RECIPE HIGHLIGHT



# "Things Kids Say"

If you could invent something to make life easier, what would you invent?



Bus

Desk

"Infinite WiFi" ~Ridge



Ruler

"Something that when you press a button feeds dog food out." ~Anna



"I would invent a mini pivot for people's yards, because during the drought you have to move sprinklers around the yard a lot." ~Mayson



"I would invent a house that takes you everywhere and it would drive itself around and collect all the groceries you need." ~Tayt



"I would invent a robot that cleans dishes." ~Lealen



"A robot that could do anything I tell it to do." ~Kinley





"A teleportation device." ~Jasper

sper

### Cat Creek Oilfield Continued...

leaking lines; fences and berms now surround storage facilities to keep cattle from damaging equipment (and keep the equipment from damaging the cattle!); oil pumping units and tanks have new paint that blends them with the landscape; remediation of historical compliance and environmental issues: upgrading electric lines to well sites: continued cleanup and repair of buildings, equipment, and the landscape. These improvements have all contributed to a brand-new look for the Cat Creek Field. This will continue through-out 2021 in order to get the field functioning and operational for optimum performance while utilizing the existing infrastructure. These plans and improvements will also transpire on the Mosby and East Domes as time and labor allows.



The locals from the Sultanate of Oman for oil field development

Mark stated that former owners, Cenex and Conoco have done extensive geologic and reservoir analysis that is still applicable, but they were limited to utilizing the technology available at the time. This research and operating history has provided a baseline for the new Cat Creek Team to work from. They are using modern technology and techniques to evaluate current geologic and reservoir conditions to evaluate future economic plans for the field. The team is excited about the potential of the Cat Creek Oil Field in the years to come. Mark offered a simple analogy to describe current field conditions: the old field



Newly painted and refurbished pump jacks -Photo Credit: Leah Fisher

production was like a bottle of soda pop that someone shook up and allowed the "fizz" to flow out. As with that bottle of soda that would still have half or more of the liquid left in the bottle after the bubbles went away, the field still has extensive oil left remaining in place, it just lacks energy. Future plans (part three) will give an overview of potential projects with a larger labor force.

Contributions to the community include increased tax base, work crews who have increased local business income, equipment repair and workrelated needs are purchased locally, all of which has a trickle-

\*\*See Cat Creek Celebration Details on page 11. Watch for Part 2 of the Cat Creek Article in the September Edition. down economic effect. Mark is proud of the fact that this 100year-old Field can be a significant contributing factor to its namesake, Petroleum County, once again.

Look forward to more information on Field history, future plans, and the 100-year celebration coming soon.



Cat Creek Sign on HWY 200 Photo Credit: Krista Rowton



Mark's home in the jungle

### Winnett Volunteer Fire Department Step Closer to Breathing Easy

The Winnett Volunteer Fire Department has been on a mission the last nine months to raise the funds to replace 30-year-old Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) equipment and has been generously rewarded for their efforts. Town Pump Charitable Foundation has just granted the department \$10,000, and the Petroleum County Endowment gifted \$3000 toward the cause. The Winnett department's SCBA equipment expired, and in an effort to get by and ensure the safety of responders, the service received some old equipment a Minnesota department was giving away. Unfortunately, that equipment was only usable for one year before it also expired.

SCBAs are used to protect the user against oxygen deficiency, dust, and contaminants during emergency firefighting as well as during training exercises. These units are also widely used in clean up efforts to keep the user safe from dangerous gasses and toxic environments. It is lifesaving equipment for firefighters. SCBAs were once considered a luxury, but are now considered to be a necessary requirement of fire departments. It is no surprise that as equipment improves and technology advances, the cost of these units has skyrocketed, leaving our department ill-equipped to replace them without grant assistance.

Earlier, in the fall of 2020, the WVFD was granted \$3000 from the Montana Taverns Association. The Central Montana Foundation kicked in \$4620 toward the effort. These gifts, in addition to a \$10,000 commitment from the department coffers, bring the fundraising total to \$30,620. Fire warden, Glen Gillett, has a goal of purchasing six SCBA systems and twelve air cylinders. The fire department will continue seeking grant assistance to cover the remaining \$28,360 to complete this project phase and will then move into the second phase of the project: to purchase a fill station, compressor and safety cage to refill the SCBA air cylinders.

The twenty-four volunteer firefighters who cover the 1,675 square miles of Petroleum County and the town of Winnett are forever grateful to the foundations and our local endowment that have so generously backed this project. The purchase of these units will positively impact our department by ensuring the safety of each firefighter. They will also allow our crew to enhance their training, but mostly they will keep our firefighters breathing easy when handling difficult situations whenever the alarm sounds.  $\sim \mathcal{B}_{y}$  Leslie Juerson

### Petroleum County Endowment Fund Awards

The Petroleum County Endowment Advisory Board has awarded two scholarships; one to Madison Skinner, a graduating senior of Winnett High School and one to Brynn Jolma, an alumnus of Winnett High School. At the same time, grants were given to local organizations that had filled out applications. Those receiving grants were the Sheriff's Office, Winnett Volunteer Fire Department, Swimming Pool, School Library, Odd Fellows Hall Project, PCCC Heritage Wall Project, and Winnett ACES for the Winnett Times Newsletter. The money for the scholarships and grants comes from interest earned on donations to the Petroleum County Endowment Fund and a generous donation from the Mildred Bright Foundation (through Central Montana Foundation). Grants amounted to \$6,250 and Scholarships amounted to \$1,750.



Right Photo: Petroleum County Endowment President Jim Johnke presented checks to Bill Cassell for the Petroleum County Sheriff's Department and Glen Gillett for the Winnett Volunteer Fire Department.

Left Photo: Jim Johnke presented checks to Megan Flint for the Winnett Community Pool, Kim Jensen for the Winnett School Library, Lori Olsen for the Petroleum County Community Center Heritage Wall, and Carie Hess for the Winnett ACES newsletter project and the Winnett ACES Community Enhancement Committee for the Odd Fellows Hall project.

### Howard Lepper Flatwillow Memorial Hall

Flatwillow Hall was listed in the National Register of Historical Places by the Montana Historical Society. We want to thank Laura Nowlin for giving us the idea, working with us, and listing the Hall, along with her friend and fellow historian Betsy Bradly. Betsy spent several days in Petroleum County interviewing board members, community members and friends of their memories of Flatwillow Hall. She took notes, pictures, and filled out paperwork to submit to the Historical Society. They reviewed all the information and voted to list Flatwillow Hall in the Register. What a wonderful honor for our own Flatwillow Hall to be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

If those old walls could talk, we could hear and re-live all the fun times, activities, basketball games, school plays from 1921 to the present. July 2, 2021 Flatwillow Hall was 100 years old. We celebrated with a potluck, dance, socializing and fun times for everyone. It was a great way to start the 4th of July weekend. The Hall furnished the meat, everyone else brought their favorite hot dish, salad, dessert and furnished their own drinks. The Enhancement Committee had an ice cream trailer there to buy ice cream cones, there was a raffle for a Diana Brady print. The Hall did a 50/50 with half the proceeds going to the Hall, the other half was won by a lucky winner, who happened to be Tony Kuhry. Congratulations, Tony! The festivities began at 5:30pm and went until midnight. Dancing to the Neil Hamilton Band began at 7. The food was great, the music was great, the party was great. You can't have a dance at Flatwillow Hall without the tradition of a midnight supper. Flatwillow sandwiches, chips, pickle, and brownie were set out for everyone to enjoy as the party was winding down. Thank you to the board members, their families, friends, and anyone else that helped to organize, decorate, provide the midnight supper, put posters up around town and on social media, and then helped clean up afterward. It was a great time and so much fun to see friends and neighbors. Former residents of this area found their way back to reminisce, share memories, and catch up on the news.

I think we need to start a new tradition of a "summer kick-off" party at Flatwillow Hall with a potluck and dance and plan it early enough it isn't so hot and catch everyone before their summer work begins.



Sign out front of the Flatwillow Hall provided by the Montana Historical Society.





The 100-year celebration at the Flatwillow Hall in July that included an ice cream trailer provided by Chelsea McKenna, Flatwillow sandwiches and the Neil Hamilton Band.

## Winnett Pool Lessons & Fundraiser



Winnett Pool Swim Lessons







Photo Credit: Phyllis Arthur

Winnett Pool Fundraiser

Photos & Article by RayeAnne Lund

Please contact Patti at 429-5601 BEFORE WEDNESDAY to reserve a SENIOR MEAL.

٤	WINNETT		COMMUNITY August 2021	CA	LENDAR	R
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Methodist 1030am Baptist 11am Lutheran 4pm Mosby	2	3 PCCC Meeting 6pm	4 Ambulance 6pm	5 Pet. Co. Comm. 9am Library Meeting 2pm SENIORS	6	7 Tasha Keith Memorial Softball Tourney
8 Catholic 10am-Word Methodist 1030am Baptist 11am Softball Tourney Cont	Ş	10 PIE Meeting 5pm Sheriff's Reserve	11 Town Council 5-6	12 SENIORS Rimrock Readers 7pm Volunteer Fire 7pm	13 Booster Club Poker Run 4pm Sign Up Winnett Bar Billings Metra Fair 13 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>at</sup>	14 Catholic 530pm Mass
15 Methodist 1030am Baptist 11am	16 PIR Day ACES Board 4-6	17 PIR Day PCCC Meeting 6pm Booster Club 630 School Board Meeting	18 PIR Day Pet. Co. Search & Rescue	19 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL SENIORS	20	21
22 Catholic 10am-Word Methodist 1030am Baptist 11am	23	24 Lions Club	25	26 SENIORS	27	28
29 Methodist 1030am Baptist 11am FUN DAY-Rodeo Grounds: Registration 9, Events 10am ALL community me	30 PCCD meeting 3-5 setings & Events may not	31 t be listed. Calendar will	29 30 31   rodist 1030am 31   ist 11am PCCD meeting 3-5   shriion 9, Events 10am PCCD meeting 3-5   ALL community meetings & Events may not be listed. Calendar will be updated as any new info is given.		CONFIRM day/time of meeting or event before attending.	int before attending.
ALL community me	eetings & Events may not	t be listed. Calendar will	be updated as any new ir		ay/time of meeting or eve	ent before attending.

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Petroleum Co Endowment Anonymous Cash Donation

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Joan Murphy and Family

### **BRONZE**

Brenda Brady Terry & Lynda Johnston Cody Martinez & Savannah Moore Melody Whitcher

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### **CONTACT INFO**

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#### COMING SOON:

Winnett Community Businesses, Organizations & Group Contact Information.

#### Page 6 Puzzle Answers



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