



# On the Trail: Ousel Falls

Explore local hiking, biking and equestrian trails with Big Sky Community Organization's summer trail series.

BY CIARA WOLFE  
BSCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As iconic as Lone Peak itself, Ousel Falls Trail and its surrounding park is a favorite for both locals and visitors from around the world. This 1.6-mile hike, which crosses a ravine over the South Fork of the West Fork of the Gallatin River and meanders through the woods before ending at a 100-foot waterfall, is an impressive hike worth visiting any time of year.

However, early summer can provide one of the most memorable hikes along the trail. This time of year, you are likely to see an abundance of wildflowers along the trail and run into wildlife, like the Ousel bird (more commonly known as the American Dipper) dipping in and out of the river. Additionally, spring runoff is occurring; rising temperatures and melting snow make Ousel Falls that much more powerful.

So grab your camera, a water bottle and your bear spray—yes, a grizzly sow and cubs have been spotted in this area recently—and head out for a hike that will deepen your appreciation for nature and Big Sky.

*BSCO is a local nonprofit that connects people to recreational opportunities by acquiring, promoting and preserving sustainable places and programs for all. For more information about Big Sky's Parks, Trails and Recreation programs visit [bscomt.org](http://bscomt.org).*



OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO



**Distance**  
1.6 Miles  
Roundtrip



**Surface**  
Gravel



**Uses**  
Hike, bike,  
equestrian



**Difficulty**  
Easy

**Directions:**

The trailhead parking lot is two miles south of Lone Mountain Trail off Ousel Falls Road

**Amenities:**

Outhouse, benches, picnic tables, self-guided interpretive hike, fishing access

**11am-10pm Family Friendly Full Bar Full Menu**



**Ahhhhh...Here's to Summertime.**

**Please Drink Responsibly and NEVER put wildlife in your SUV...**

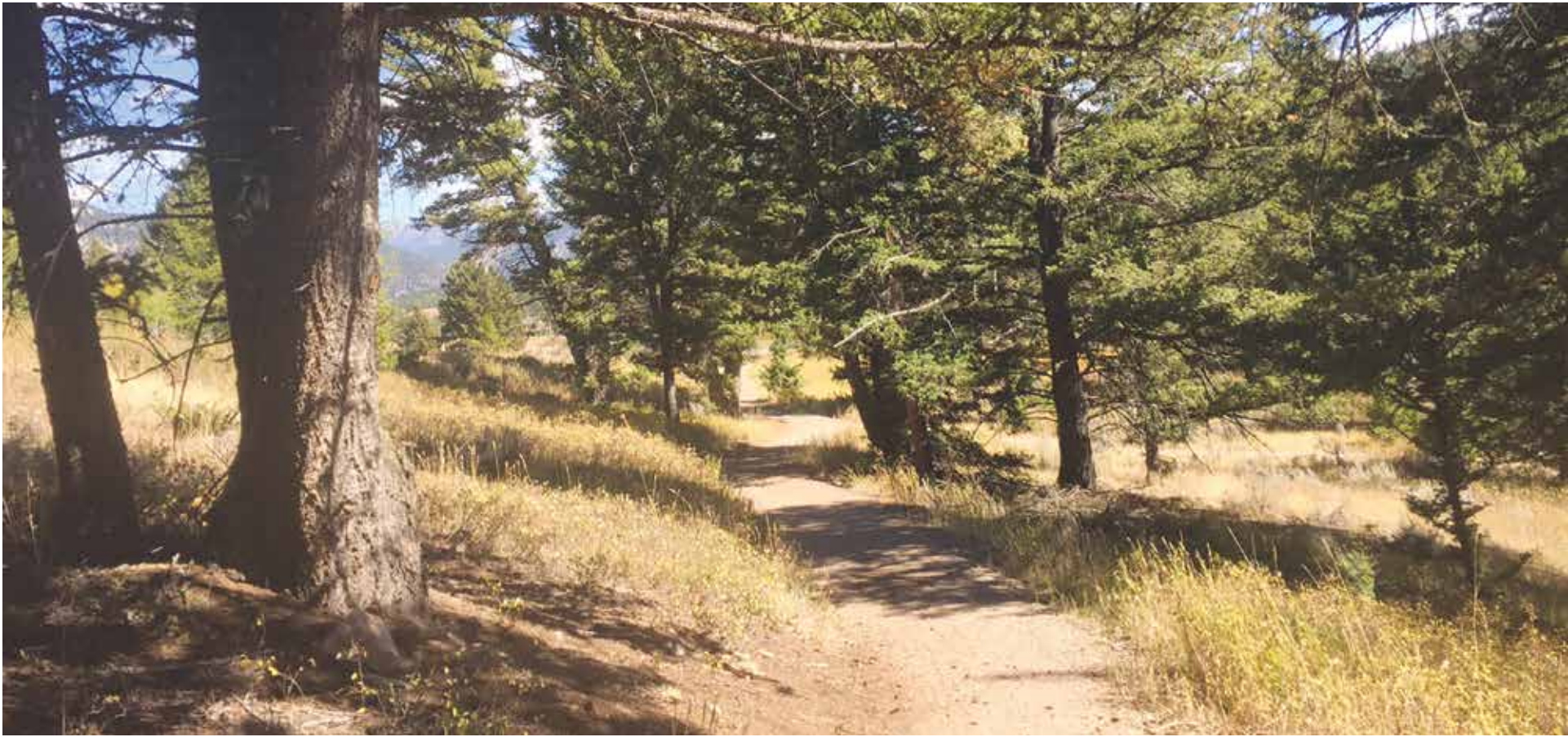
**48 Market Pl, Big Sky, MT 59716 | 406.995.3939 | LONEPEAKBREWERY.COM**





# On the Trail: Ousel Falls Trail

Explore local hiking, biking and equestrian trails with Big Sky Community Organization's trail series.



Ousel Falls Trail is a 2-mile hiking, biking and running path that connects Town Center with the trailhead to Big Sky's most well known waterfall. PHOTO BY AMANDA EGGERT

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BSCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Ousel Falls Trail from Town Center is a popular path for walkers, runners and bike riders. It not only serves as a commuter trail allowing individuals to safely walk and bike throughout Town Center, but also as an enjoyable trail for all abilities to tour this part of Big Sky.

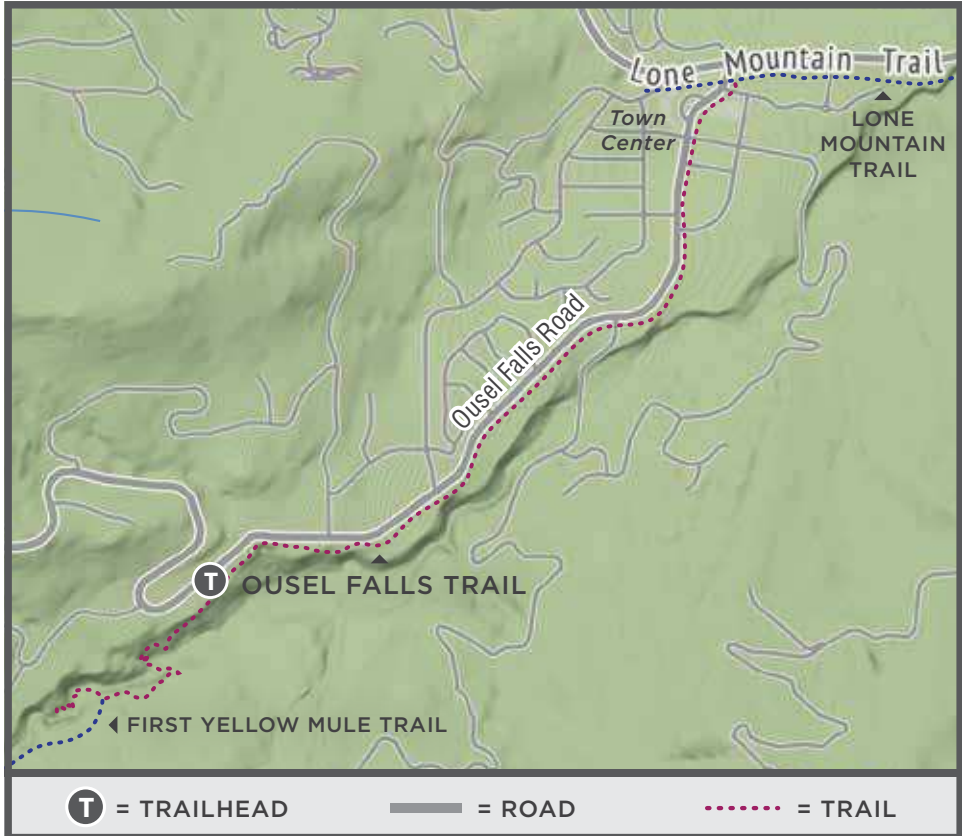
The 5-foot-wide improved gravel trail starts in a residential and commercial area of Big Sky (Town Center) and leads to the Ousel Falls open space park, with overlooks of the South Fork of the West Fork of the Gallatin River along the way.

Two miles in, the trail enters the park where you'll find picnic tables, benches and designated viewpoints along with a bathroom and parking area at the actual trailhead. Ousel Falls Trail is maintained throughout the winter to provide for year-round recreation in Big Sky. If you're looking for distance without too much difficulty, this is the trail for you.

The Ousel Falls Trail also connects Big Sky to the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Once you reach the park, you can take another 0.8 miles of natural surface trail to Ousel Falls waterfall or venture on to First and Second Yellow Mule trails, which are part of the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

The First Yellow Mule trail junction is located approximately 0.5 miles beyond the Ousel Falls waterfall trailhead. The Second Yellow Mule Trail junction is another 1.5 miles down First Yellow Mule. The Ousel Falls trailhead is the closest access to Forest Service land from the heart of Big Sky and the only horse-friendly access point for First and Second Yellow Mule.

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### TRAIL STATS

|   |                                    |                           |                                 |                                   |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   |                                    |                           |                                 |                                   |
| <b>Distance</b><br>2 miles one-way (the falls are an additional 0.8 miles from trailhead) | <b>Uses</b><br>Walk, run, and bike | <b>Difficulty</b><br>Easy | <b>Elevation Gain</b><br>265 ft | <b>Surface</b><br>Improved gravel |

**Directions:** Park near the restaurants and shopping center in Big Sky's Town Center and follow the trail as it travels southeast and generally parallel to Ousel Falls Road.