

Welcome to the Visit Big Sky Summer Cover 2026/2027 Visitor Guide Photo Competition. We're so excited to see Big Sky through your eyes. Please read these terms and conditions carefully before entering. By submitting your photograph, you agree to be bound by these rules.

1. Eligibility & Entry

Who can enter: The competition is open to amateur and professional photographers worldwide who are 18 years of age or older at the time of entry. Employees of Visit Big Sky and their immediate family members are not eligible to win prizes.

Submission Period: Entries will be accepted from Friday, August 15, 2025 at 12:01 AM MDT to Wednesday, October 15 at 11:59 PM MDT. Late entries will not be considered.

How to Enter:

- Participants must submit their photographs via the official competition portal on the Visit Big Sky website
- Each entrant may submit a maximum of 3 photographs.
- Each submission must include a title and a brief description (up to 150 words) telling the story behind the photo and what "Big Sky Summer" means to them.

Photo Specifications:

- Photos must be vertical (portrait orientation) and high-resolution at 300 dpi.
- Files must be submitted in JPEG format and should not exceed 10 MB per image.
- No watermarks, signatures, or identifying marks should be visible on the submitted images.
- Photos should accurately reflect the scene. Minor adjustments for color, contrast, sharpness, and cropping are allowed. Extensive digital manipulation (adding or removing elements, significant compositing, AI-generated images) is *not permitted* and will result in disqualification. We want to see the authentic Big Sky!

2. Photo Content & Ethics

- **Theme:** Photos must capture the spirit of "My Big Sky Summer," showcasing the natural beauty, outdoor activities, and community experience of Big Sky, Montana.
- **Originality:** All submitted photographs must be the entrant's original work, taken by the entrant, and not infringe upon the copyrights, trademarks, privacy rights, or any other intellectual property rights of any third party.
- **No Prior Publication/Awards:** Photos that have previously won awards in other major photography competitions or have been extensively published in print or online (beyond personal social media or portfolios) are not eligible.

- **Respect for Wildlife & Environment:** Submissions must adhere to ethical wildlife viewing and outdoor recreation practices. Photos depicting harassment of wildlife, off-trail travel in sensitive areas, or any other irresponsible behavior will be disqualified. Our wild spaces are precious, and we're committed to protecting them.
- **No Harm:** Entrants agree that no animals or the environment were harmed or put at risk in the creation of their submitted photographs.

3. Rights & Permissions (The Important Part!)

Copyright Ownership: The photographer retains full copyright to their submitted image(s). Visit Big Sky does *not* claim ownership of your photographs.

Grant of License: By entering the competition, you grant Visit Big Sky (and its affiliated entities, including the Greater Yellowstone and Big Sky Visitor Information Center) a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual, worldwide license to use, reproduce, publish, display, distribute, and create derivative works from your submitted photographs for promotional and marketing purposes directly related to Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky/Greater Yellowstone region.

Specific Uses Include (but are not limited to):

Featuring the winning photo on the summer cover of the 2026/2027 Visit Big Sky Visitor Guide. Displaying winning and shortlisted photos on the Visit Big Sky website, social media channels, and digital marketing materials.

We will use photos in future Visit Big Sky print publications, advertisements, and promotional collateral.

Displaying photos in exhibitions or at events promoting Big Sky.

Attribution: Whenever possible, Visit Big Sky will provide credit to the photographer when their image is used.

Model Release: If your photograph features recognizable individuals, you are solely responsible for obtaining all necessary model releases from those individuals (or their parent/legal guardian if they are minors) and providing them to Visit Big Sky upon request. Failure to do so may result in disqualification. By submitting a photo with identifiable people, you warrant that you have obtained these permissions.

Property Release: If your photograph features private property in a way that suggests endorsement or commercial use, you are responsible for obtaining any necessary property releases and providing them to Visit Big Sky upon request.

4. Judging & Awards

Judging Process: Entries will be judged by a panel featuring VBS staff, board members, and media partners. Additionally, the winner will be voted on by the public. Public voting will take place October 24, 2025, through November 7, 2025 online. Judging criteria will include: adherence to theme, originality, creativity, technical quality, emotional impact, and suitability for the Visitor Guide cover.

Odds: The odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received, the selection of finalists by representatives from VBS, and the subsequent public voting results.

Winner Notification: The winner will be notified by email and/or phone by November 10, 2025. If a winner cannot be contacted or does not respond within 7 days of notification, Visit Big Sky reserves the right to select an alternate winner.

Prizes:

Grand Prize Winner:

- Featured photo on the summer cover of the 2026/2027 Visit Big Sky Visitor Guide.
- Dedicated feature inside the guide.
- Recognition on Visit Big Sky's website and social media.
- Big Sky Swag bag valued at \$500.

First and Second Runners Up:

- Will be recognized on Visit Big Sky's website and social media.
- Will also receive a Big Sky swag bag valued at \$250.

Decisions are Final:

All decisions by the judges and Visit Big Sky regarding the competition, including eligibility and winner selection, are final and binding.

Prizes: No substitution of prize or transfer/assignment of prize to others or request for the cash equivalent by Winner is permitted. Acceptance of prize constitutes permission for Visit Big Sky and its partners to use Winner's name, likeness, and entry for purposes of advertising and trade without further compensation, unless prohibited by law.

5. Disqualification & Indemnification

Visit Big Sky reserves the right to disqualify any entry that does not comply with these Terms and Conditions or that, in our sole discretion, is deemed inappropriate, offensive, or harmful to the spirit of the competition or the Big Sky community.

Entrants agree to indemnify and hold harmless Visit Big Sky from any claims, damages, liabilities, and expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising from any breach of these terms and conditions, including but not limited to copyright infringement, privacy violations, or defamation claims related to their submitted photograph(s).

6. Privacy

Personal information collected from entrants will be used solely for the purpose of administering this competition and for future marketing communications from Visit Big Sky, from which you can opt out at any time. We will not sell or share your information with third parties for their marketing purposes.

7. General Conditions

Visit Big Sky reserves the right to cancel, suspend, or modify the competition, if necessary, due to circumstances beyond our control.

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of the State of Montana, without regard to its conflict of laws principles.

By participating in the contest, You, the Contestant, have affirmatively reviewed, accepted, and agreed to all of the Official Rules.