

BOZEMAN COHOUSING

A Recipe for Connection

On a Bozeman property framed by the iconic mountain ranges of Southwest Montana, a handful of soon-to-be neighbors pitch to one another a variety of fruit trees they hope to grow together. Though the ground they stand on is dusted in snow, creativity abounds as they excitedly imagine biting into persimmons, figs, and citrus grown in their own neighborhood. While the Montana clime is foe to such sweet treasures, the enclosed atrium they plan to build is designed to allow for such tasty phenomena to be grown in a more Mediterranean-like environment.

The atrium is just part of the plan for Bozeman Cohousing, a neighborhood of people committed to living in close community with one another. The property is bare, save for an old barn which currently houses a trip of charismatic goats, but will soon be vibrant with homes, gardens, and edible landscaping—collectively called an “agrihood.”

Through intentional design, the neighborhood creates opportunities for spontaneous interaction with other community members. The interior is bound by a network of shared spaces and pedestrian pathways to encourage run-ins with neighbors, and a community house will be the gathering place for shared meals and other activities.

Steve Allison-Bunnell, a Bozeman Cohousing member, delights in considering the



Photography by Lynn Donaldson

fellowship around food and how it will be an integral part of the Cohousing community.

“That sense of connection really goes beyond the dinner table,” he said, describing the organic reciprocal relationship that blossoms from cooking and eating with others. “I hate cooking for myself ... but the moment you have somebody to cook for, it’s a gift.”

Growing food and cooking are two of many ways that Bozeman Cohousing intends to foster community connections and relationships, and yet cohousing is not about sharing everything. Well-designed private homes have traditional amenities, including a full kitchen, creating a balance of personal privacy and neighborhood engagement.

Katie Gilbertson, a Bozeman Cohousing member, envisions coming home from work in the evening and joining her neighbors on

the porch of the common house. Gilbertson’s family enjoys using food to travel the world, and she suggested having a sushi night.

Megan Welborn, another member, hopes to connect her neighbors with her own family traditions through recipes that have been passed down over generations.

Allison-Bunnell, an improvisational cook, learned to glean inspiration from the ingredients themselves. He imagines the wonder of pulling veggies from the ground, marked by the beautiful quirks of homegrown produce, and transforming them into a dish that can be shared.

The current members of Bozeman Cohousing have diverse backgrounds and identities, but they all share in their intention to connect, be it by grabbing neighbors for a ski day, sharing happy hour beneath the unmatched view of mountainscapes, or receiving the gift of someone’s cooking. They look forward to welcoming other members and integrating their passions, and perhaps fielding a few more suggestions for the atrium orchard.

—Bella Butler



COMMUNITY FACTS

- 5.3 acres, 2 miles from downtown Bozeman, connected to trail system
- Contemporary two-story townhomes and single-level flats for sale
- Construction to begin fall 2021
- All homes are solar-equipped and energy-efficient
- Shared open spaces include an atrium, workshop, kids’ play areas
- Multi-generational community creates a family support system
- Learn more at bozemancohousing.com/edible

