

COLUMNS

# Campbell Vaughn: Montana trip reveals spectacular scenery and issues with going 'organic'

**Campbell Vaughn** Augusta Chronicle

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**Key Points** AI-assisted summary ⓘ

- Three friends explored Montana, fishing, camping, and enjoying scenic views after attending a wedding.
- Their adventures included visiting Glacier National Park, Great Falls, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, and Billings.
- The group enjoyed camping amidst wildlife, exploring dirt roads, and discovering the unique city of Billings.

Continuing the adventures in Montana, the day after our epic trip through Glacier National Park, we dropped the girls off at the airport in Kalispell, Montana for them to head back east. My cousin, Chip, and a buddy named Jim were left to spend some days exploring, fishing and camping.

Prior to my arrival, Chip and Jim drove to Livingston, Montana in 29 hours from Georgia to make the wedding party on the first part of this adventure. This was great because we had Chip’s truck to leisurely ease around the state as we please. When the travel party turned male only, we made no plans except to do what we wanted.

We started across the bottom side of Glacier National Park and rode through some amazing mountain and valley views. And before you knew it, we were riding across these plateaus with not a tree or mountain in sight. You could see for what seemed like a 100 miles.

We stopped in Great Falls to check out the Lewis and Clark Museum on the Missouri River. After a tasty lunch, we headed into Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest to look for some trout to catch. Most of the roads in Montana seem to follow rivers and streams, so finding a spot to fish wasn’t too difficult. We stopped off the road somewhere in the middle of nowhere and set up camp. We had deer walking right near our campsite and water trickling in the background. There was an ATV/Snowmobile trail that was next to our camp site, so we hiked a mile or so up the way to look at the scenery. The weather was a perfect camping temperature with lows in the mid-40s. The campfire and wilderness (no cell phone coverage) were perfect. We made it through the night without a bear visit, so I call it a win for our first night.

The next day was the same type of fun riding down every dirt road you could imagine and finding another amazing campsite.

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The final day of our random exploration of interior Montana led us to where I was to be dropped off for the National Association of County Agriculture Agents in Billings. Although Billings isn't as vast as some of the sites we had seen on the rest of our travels, the view heading into the city was special. When you arrive at the edge of town, you are on a rim that descends 250 feet called the Zimmerman Trail. I imagine houses on that scenic overlook were not inexpensive.

**Campbell Vaughn:** [Trip through Montana delivers a lifetime of memories](#)

Downtown Billings, where I was set up to stay, was fantastic. Everything was within walking distance and there were plenty of places to hang out and enjoy the historic town. After the three of us cleaned up from our non-showered three-day camping adventure, we were told to check out the Rainbow Bar. This was a local watering hole which was about to celebrate its 90th anniversary the day after I was leaving. The same family owned the Rainbow Bar continuously and it was in the exact same location. A cowboy-looking fellow came in and I asked him if he wanted to sit down and visit. We got to talking and he had just given a tour of his organic composting facility to a bunch of agriculture agents.

Anytime I hear the word “organic” related to a business, it usually piques my interest. Being truly organic is a tough recipe to follow. I found some interesting issues in the organic composting world. Seems that some ranchers just throw hay for the cattle without removing the string that holds the hay together. The cow eats the hay along with the plastic nonorganic string and it stays indefinitely in their stomach. Also, some growers can't use cow manure in compost material because 2,4-d herbicide is frequently used on pastures, and it will remain in the composted material for as many as four years after being ingested by the cows. Want to kill a tomato quickly, add 2,4-d.

If you haven't gone to Montana, put it on your list. I would go back in a minute.