

Actionable intelligence to live a Free & Inspired Life

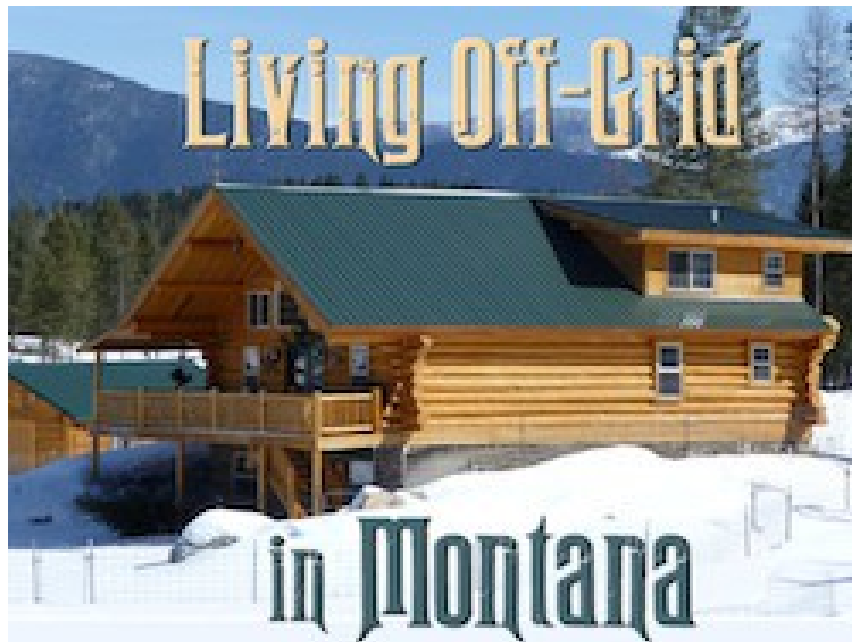


The Solari Report

January 10, 2023

**Solution Series:
Off-Grid Living
with
Rich Scheben**

Brought to you by Solari and Corey's Digs



James White: Hi, this is James White once again for the *Solution Series*, brought to you by *Solari.com* and *CoreysDigs.com*. I am joined, as always, by my cohost, Corey Lynn. Corey, it's great to have you here today, and it's always good to see you.

Corey Lynn: Good to be here. This is going to be another fantastic episode!

White: It is going to be very, very informative. Our guest today, Rich Scheben, has been doing this for a long time. I would consider him an expert in the topic that we are covering today. We are talking about off-grid living. Let me give Rich a brief introduction.

For over twelve years, Rich has been on talk radio. He is a regular on *USAPrepares.com* with Vince Finelli. He has been living off-grid for over 15 years. He came from the metropolitan area of New York where he lived for 26 years. He was a drug rep – of all people, and people we are not too friendly with here on this broadcast because we know what pharmaceutical medication does to you. Nonetheless, we are delighted to have Rich Scheben, the Montana mountain man, here on the broadcast with us.

Rich, we are so glad you are here.

Rich Scheben: Thank you, Jim, and thank you, Corey. It's my pleasure. Hopefully we can give your listeners and readers some good ideas and some solutions on how I go about things (see the *Solari website* for visuals for this report).

Lynn: First off, we should say that it's ten years old, but you did write a book. Give us the title of your book.

Scheben: It's kind of a mouthful, Corey. It's titled, *One New York Man's Journey to Off Grid Living in Montana*.

Lynn: I think it would be great if you shared your story of how you learned, at a very young age, what was going on and why you decided to make the move in the first place before we get into all the awesome things you are doing.

Scheben: I grew up in New York, and I enjoyed New York; I enjoyed the nightclubs. I enjoyed everything about it, but I had an inner, innate desire to live in nature, to live in the country, and to do the ‘mountain man’ thing, as Jim said. I learned some lessons along the way to show me the illegitimacy of the system. I’ll give you a few quick examples that I gave in the pre-interview. I think that is what you are alluding to.

In 1979, I was 19 years old. I was bench-pressing 365 pounds. I was trying to get a job as a New York City fireman, so I could have carried most people up and down ladders. That was the year that the women’s groups of New York City sued – and you can look it up if they haven’t censored it – and demanded that they lower the bars of standards and expectations for a job. I was told that the only way, as a white man, to get a job at that point, was if I had veteran’s credits.

After that, in 1982, I got a degree in forestry. I went to the National Forest Service, which was one of the methods of getting to the Northern Rockies, where I’m in today. I’ve been in Montana for 37 years. I’m 62 right now.

I went to the interview and showed up with a great degree and experience. They told me at the interview that because I was a white male, they would not hire me. Basically, they hired two girls sitting in the waiting room who were 18 years old and had no education and no experience.

Something very similar happened to me with GlaxoSmithKline. So, I realized early in life that hard work, effort, results, qualifications, word of honor, standards and expectations, and merit didn’t ‘hold as much water’ as we thought. So, my three degrees were somewhat of a waste in a way. If I had to do it all over again, I probably would have been an electrician, being one of the 10% of electricians to have the ability to work on off-grid homes and set them up on batteries, the way I’m living now. I would have made such a difference in people’s lives.

So, I learned early on that the system is corrupt to the ‘bone’, that merit doesn’t mean anything, and all this fancy talk about ‘equality’ and ‘fairness’ and all these politically correct buzz words don’t mean anything. One of the things that I do on talk radio is uncover a lot of the economics to share that the bottom 93%

isn't getting 'equality and fairness' and all this; they are actually losing ground, and the money is going to the top 1-2%.

My solution is what I'm doing now, and I'm 'practicing what I preach'. I'm living off-grid, living off the land, and being as frugal as I possibly can.

White: When you say 'living off-grid', I've been to your place there. You are quite fully off-grid. Some of the systems that you have there that I recognize – and if I don't catch them all, please correct me – is a tremendous garden. You also have a gravity-fed water system. You also do animal husbandry where you raise a variety of different animals. Of course, you have the dogs to protect yourself from the grizzly bears. You also have the electrical set-up where you collect the solar energy and store it in the battery packs, and then you utilize that in your house.

It's fascinating how you've been able to put all of that together. How long did it take? We can go over each one of those elements if you don't mind.

Lynn: And hunting as well.

White: Right, you're a world class hunter. Did you do all of that at one time? When you decided to go off-grid and live in the place you're at now, did you put all those elements in place at once, or did you start with a cabin and then build out from there and create each one of those systems? Was it like one year you put a garden in, and then the next year you did the electricity, and the next year you did the animal husbandry? How did that process work?

Scheben: I bought a piece of land; I started with 166 acres. This is all in my book, so it's not like I'm making all this up. After I was in the corporate corrupt system for over 20 years, I bought land and built a little on-grid cottage that I lived in for two years. My objective was to sell it right after two years so I could reap the benefits of the capital gains exemption law and not have to pay taxes. Then I built a log cabin that I'm in right now. You've been here several times.

So, everything I did was not necessarily all at once. I expanded on things: I expanded my solar panels; I expanded my raised bed gardens; I added one greenhouse.

The only thing that I always had was the chickens and the guard dogs. The reason I have guard dogs is that, as per my trail cam's, I get a 3:1 ratio of grizzly bears to black bears. We have mountain lions and coyotes and fox and many different types of birds of prey from eagles to ospreys to ravens and hawks. The osprey is actually a fish hawk, and they attack my chickens. Without dogs, I wouldn't have a carrot in the garden, a goat or a chicken in the yard, and I wouldn't have this lifestyle. They all work in synergy.

The goats keep my pasture grass down and protect me from fires. The chickens provide us with meat and eggs. The garden produces a lot of produce. They all work in synergy because when I clean out the barn and the chicken coop, all the straw-laced 'poop' goes into the compost pile and stays there for almost a year. At the beginning of November, I will harvest the pile and spread it around in the gardens, including the raised beds and greenhouses. So, I make my own soil and supplement the nutrients with all those critters, but they all work in synergy – except for the one time when one chicken identified as a guard dog, but that didn't work out very well.

Lynn: You were starting to tell us about the greenhouse. When you talk about living frugal and living below your means, I think that is very important. I think that our culture tends to overspend, overdo it, get in debt, and become reliant. The whole idea is that we need to move into self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

How did you accomplish that? I know you built a sizeable greenhouse somewhat inexpensively. How did you do that?

Scheben: That's a good question. In this lifestyle, it's not just about frugality, but it's about living with the basics of food, water, shelter, and energy. That is where 95% of my money goes.

I have two greenhouses. One is stick-built, and it's an average greenhouse. The other one I built rather inexpensively with UV treated plastic. The first thing I did was put in raised bed gardens. I even recommend to anyone who is going to build a garden to put the raised beds in first. That way if there is machinery or you need room to maneuver, then you can pour the soil into the raised beds, and you put up a garden fence around all the structures.

That being said, I put up a ridge pole and some posts after I put in the raised bed, and I used what is called ‘cattle panels’. They are 16’ panels. Most people who have ‘critters’ probably know what I’m talking about. It’s a great tool.

I did this: Here is the ridge pole. I put the cattle panels over the ridge pole, and overlapped them. They are 16’ long. The wire, which the cattle panels are, has memory. So, I put a little wire in to connect it in a few places so that it connects to the ground, and I put in some rebar and wired the cattle panels to the rebar. Basically, I threw the UV plastic over it, and built two ends with doors on the side – very crudely – and it works great.

Lynn: Are the panels solid, or are they transparent? What are they made of?

Scheben: They are made of wire. They are called cattle paneling, and they also have something called ‘pig paneling’. It’s the same thing. You have squares in it about so big, and it’s just a large number of squares. The bottom portion of the cattle paneling has smaller holes. Once it gets up to about a foot off the ground, they are basically square holes going all the way up.

White: So that is basically your framework going up.

Scheben: Absolutely, and I built the whole thing for \$500.

Lynn: And roughly how large is it?

Scheben: It’s about 40 feet long by 12 feet.

White: That’s a huge greenhouse!

Scheben: That’s me standing there. However, I wanted it to be big enough – because I’m six feet tall – so I could walk under it without ducking.

Lynn: After you put on the panels, you put the UV treated plastic on, right?

Scheben: Yes. Many people buy cheap plastic and don’t think of it. The sun is too powerful, especially here in Montana during the summer months. Montana

summers are brutal. I know it sounds hard to believe, but they are hot; they are brutal.

White: That is true. The sun is brutal.

Scheben: It's unbelievable. I'm not a big heat fan. My favorite temperature is between 40 and 60 degrees.

Lynn: Me, too!

Scheben: Right now, in my cabin, it's 78 degrees because I put the last log in. It's toasty in here.

Lynn: It's 78 degrees in your cabin?

Scheben: Yes. I put in the last log because I thought I'd be sitting here for a while, and I shouldn't have done that.

Lynn: Tell us about that. That was another 'cool' thing that you were talking about with the special curtain in how you heat the cabin. You operate solely from the solar battery system that you have, right?

Scheben: That is correct. I do have a little non-vented propane stove. I only use it during the shoulder seasons for a few weeks of the year – early or late in the day. It's unvented, so it's not safe to use as a full-time heater. Does that make sense?

I do have that, but what you are talking about is a thermal curtain that separates my cabin. When I built my cabin, I made the wood cook stove, the tables, a place where we watch movies (for our very little entertainment center), and a solarium on the southeast corner of my cabin. I start and germinate my seeds in the solarium every year.

All of that is on one side of the thermal curtain, which we can put up and down in literally three or four minutes. Basically, we just move it to the side, and we have a thermal curtain that keeps one half of the cabin cool and the other half warm – sometimes a little too warm.

Everything is about conserving energy, but we don't fight seasonality. What I mean by that is downstairs I have a little refrigerator. It's not even chest-high; it's about belly-high. It's a Sun Frost refrigerator. The compressor is on the top in the cool, unfinished basement. So, it very rarely has to turn on to keep the food cold because the compressor is not like a typical American refrigerator where it's on the bottom and the heat dissipates through the box.

This time of year, I'm not fighting seasonality. So, I keep my refrigerated food on the basement floor right by the French doors. It stays a perfect 35 to 38 degrees.

Lynn: Let me go back to the greenhouse quickly. How did you do the roof part?

You had the wire panels along the sides, and then you said you covered it with UV treated plastic. Did you build a framework structure for the roof, and then the UV treated plastic over that as well?

Scheben: No, the panels create a U shape. So, I put the UV plastic right over the cattle panels that I hooked on and overlapped. So, if my elbows are here, here is the ground, and here is the top, I put the UV treated plastic over that.

On the side, there is something called a lath. So basically, you either hammer nails or use screws. A lath is just about this wide. It's a piece of wood, and I screw it into the side of the greenhouse with another piece of wood on the other side. Then the plastic fits right inside of it.

Lynn: And this holds up to strong winds and snow storms? That doesn't impact it at all?

Scheben: No. My cabin is in a hidden valley. It's a very small valley. If I had to describe it, it would be like in the movie, *Dances with Wolves*, with Kevin Costner. At the end of the movie, the Sioux tribe had a winter ground that they camped in. They showed how they maneuvered down the trail to get to this tiny hidden valley. That's somewhat what my place is like.

White: Whoever stayed to watch the end of that movie? It's about six and a half hours long!

Scheben: I don't know that it's quite that long. I'm into nature, and I try to dial out all the political incorrectness about those types of movies. I'm just into the natural world; that's my thing.

White: Speaking of that, you have quite a collection of animals that you raise. One of our first guests was Jim Gale. He does the living gardens.

Lynn: He does the Food Forest Abundance.

White: He was talking about how he keeps certain insects around because they work in synergy, like you talked about, with the plants that he produces to help keep the other insects down. It sounds like you have that same sort of system going with the animal husbandry. You have a harmony with the animals that you raise. Can you tell us about that?

Scheben: Unless I have a chicken trying to identify as a guard dog, everything runs quite smoothly. I must have animals to take down the fire hazard, which is the meadow that this cabin is in. I chose goats because we get milk, and my girlfriend enjoys doing things like making homemade cheese.

I give plenty of tours; I've given thousands of tours over the years about self-sufficiency. I try to give people Plan B's. I've talked a great deal about getting family and friends together, especially if somebody is compromised with capital resources or skill sets. One great example is an older person who may be able to do the purchase of the property, and the younger people could do the labor of the homesteading. There are many different ideas and solutions that have to be negotiated. If everything is on paper, you can do it.

The synergy that you are talking about is that I need to make soil for my garden. Everybody thinks, "Oh, pretty vegetables are so good for you." 'Pretty' vegetables are not good for you; they are only good for you when the pretty vegetables are sitting in nutrient-dense soil. All the benefits of the veggies come from the soil; that is where the nutrients come from. So, you must make sure that you add enough supplements to your soil every year.

I use the natural way to do it. You can put some magnesium and some sulfur in, which I've done very infrequently, but all the 'poop' from the chickens and goats that is laced in straw is added to the compost pile with eggshells and coffee grounds. Every little tomato stem goes in there.

I have zero waste. When you have goats, chickens, dogs, and a compost pile, waste is either being eaten or it goes into the compost pile.

I need the guard dogs because of the grizzly bears and the mountain lions and the black bears. Here in northwest Montana, we probably have more mountain lions than anywhere else on the continent.

White: It's been said that if you are walking through the woods in Montana, there is no doubt that at some point, there will be a mountain lion in a tree that has been tracking you one way or another if you walk long enough.

Scheben: I sent you a picture of a mountain lion. I was calling in an elk not too far from my cabin, and a mountain lion was stalking me, so I shot it. It was legal because I had a tag. I'm just saying that the predator-to-prey relationship in this 'neck of the woods' is very out of balance.

I mostly bow hunt; eighty-five percent of what I harvest is with a bow. I'm not anti-gun; I shot a moose with a gun a couple of weeks ago, but I love the challenge of archery.

That being said, last spring I went down to the Seeley Swan, just a little south of you, Jim, and was hunting black bear. In my six days of hunting, I saw one grizzly, but you can't shoot them, and five black bear all within 60-70 yards. One black bear I stalked, and I didn't expect it to move the direction that it did. I had to hug up to a tree because it literally walked two yards behind me. I was quite lucky there. Then there was a mountain lion 35 yards away. I didn't see one deer, one elk, or one moose.

We have a major imbalance because the powers that be have purposely put nonindigenous extra-large, not from this 'neck of the woods' or the northern portion of the continent, oversized wolves. Grizzlies have been protected for so

long that they are killing the black bears, and they are the number one predator on fawns and elk calves and moose calves. So, it's getting to the point where it's very obvious that the powers that be are trying to consolidate power, money, and control and destroy our food.

White: That's not everybody. You have the Great Pyrenees dogs, right? I think that not all locations have as many aggressive animals as Montana.

Scheben: No, not with wolves and grizzly bears; of course not. I'm telling you that this is why the solutions are to decentralize and to be self-sufficient. You have to, not only think outside the box, but you must live outside the box.

Many people talk about it, but they don't 'pull the trigger' on that dream. We have to explain to people that it can be done, especially when you come from a metropolitan area like New York City. The Boy Scouts indoctrinated me into camping and hiking and canoeing and fishing and all those things, and I just graduated from there and expanded my skillset.

I don't see too many other options with the corruption and the way things are other than to decentralize and be self-sufficient now.

White: Give us the process of how that works when you turn the light on in your house. What is the process of getting that energy? You're not on the grid; you don't have telephone or electric poles; you don't have city electricity or sewer or any of that. So, when you turn your light on, what is the process of making that happen?

Scheben: First of all, that is what 'off-grid' means. Off-grid has a very simple definition; it means that you are not connected to the corporate electric grid. That's, more or less, it.

I know people who live off-grid who have no electricity; I know people who live off-grid who only have a generator; I know people who live off-grid who have \$50,000-\$60,000 systems. Mine cost me \$16,000 because I have a very simple 675-amp power system.

I use deep-cycle lead acid batteries. They are the cheapest golf cart batteries that

you can get. There is a little maintenance to it. You have to check the electrolytes and things like that. I don't use a hydrometer to check specific gravity because I've been doing this for so many years that it's just like second nature to me.

To answer your question with specificity, I have a battery bank, I have an inverter charger, I have a few things like DC disconnect trimeters and a solar charger and things of that nature, and, of course, the solar panels outside. When the sun is out, it shines on the panels, and the battery bank gets banked with DC current. When I turn on a light inside my cabin, the inverter charger takes the amps and volts out of the batteries, it goes through the inverter charger, and gets converted to AC. When I turn on my generator to pump water or to use during low-light periods like now to charge my batteries (because with a deep-cycle lead acid battery, you want to charge your batteries roughly every seven to eight days), the AC generator helps me do that. It goes through the inverter charger and banks as DC. I have lights just like everybody else does; I just live much more rugged.

I always tell people, "When you want to live off-grid, you have to assess your needs, your comfort, your capital resources, and your ability and desire to live as rugged as you want to live." Everybody has different answers to those questions.

White: What kinds of things do you feel that you have missed out on? We want to manage people's expectations. Can you bake a cake if you want to in your oven, just like you would be able to do here? Can you put Christmas lights up around your house – not that you have many people around. Does that drain too much energy? What kinds of things do you have to sacrifice when you say that you have to 'rough it up' a bit?

You still have most of the modern conveniences, right? You are just very frugal. Is that accurate?

Scheben: For example, we do a lot of solar outdoor lights instead of the traditional Christmas lights, and that works extremely well. I'm looking at my wood cook stove right now, and I've cooked everything in there from pizzas to giant turkeys to cakes. We do a lot of Dutch oven cooking.

We've had people here. When you're on national radio and when you write a book, you get many questions. Many people seek you out. I've had people here from all over the world. In the meadow, I have a fire pit. We do Dutch oven cooking there, and you wouldn't believe the reactions that you get from people.

Half of the people who show up here from metropolitan areas around the world can't even legally have a fire in their yard. So their freedoms, their liberties, and their options are minimal. It's just like technology; the more technology you have, the less freedom you have. I discussed that when I was on the air for two hours this morning before I 'hooked up' with you.

I have to think about it. When you ask what I'm missing out on and what I'm losing, I think that everything I do is a gain. I am gaining skill sets. When I see people's faces when they come here and see this lifestyle, I see it.

Granted, many people say, "Wow!" They see my taxidermy mounts or my pictures. I used to have a website for those who might remember www.OffGridMontana.com. I had that for years, and I recently took it down because of the way that things are going in this country. Many people say, "Wow! What a high adventure! What a great nature and outdoor lifestyle you've led," but there are also many people, as they are exiting, say, "Wow! This is a lot of work!"

So, you have to decide what lifestyle you want to lead. Unless you come from 'huge bucks', you are going to have to do most of the work yourself, which includes the gardening and taking care of the animals.

Right before I came on the air with you, after the radio show that I was on, USAPrepares.com this morning, which I monologue, I had to break ice for the 'critter' water and pour hot water that was in big pots that I brought close to a boil from the wood cook stove and poured into rubber containers.

I have some of my goats separated because we don't want to have all the goats 'bonked'. We have a male (a billy), and it's funny that I'm saying this because he got loose and got into the other pen, so right before my girlfriend went to work, we were running around chasing that buck because she had to go to work and I

was minutes from going on a radio show. You have to expect things like that. Everything you have to do, you can't 'call the guy'. But there is also much less that can go wrong.

Lynn: Right, and it's so rewarding. I believe building things with your own hands, growing your own food, and knowing that you're not having to rely on anyone, is true freedom and privacy. You are unplugged from the control grid. I love that.

Is the wood burning stove your primary heat source, or do you have any other kind of heat source?

Scheben: Other than what I mentioned earlier, I have the non-vented stove that is only good for a few hours a day during the shoulder season, the wood-cooked stove is almost my only source of heat during the winter.

Lynn: So, you are constantly chopping wood and having to put that in there?

Scheben: Getting into your 60's, things don't get any easier. I keep putting toothpicks underneath my pillow, hoping that the free heat wood fairy is going to show up, but she never does.

White: You chop all of that in the summertime, right?

Scheben: All year. I don't usually run the chainsaw during December, January, and February, but from March through early November, it's wood.

Many people wait until the last few weeks or months to get their wood; I do it throughout the year. I use about nine or ten cords of wood. It manages the forest because as trees die, which they do – whether from beetle kill or the root system is not healthy enough because there are too many rocks where they set their seed or whatever reason – you must harvest trees to reduce the fire hazard. It's all part of silviculture, which is the study of trees. It's all about nature; everything is synergistic.

Lynn: So how much wood does it take to get you through the winter? I realize that trees are different sizes and 'whatnot', but roughly, how much wood do you

have to cut to get you through a winter?

Scheben: I usually go through nine to ten cords per year on average. There are different BTUs, depending on the species. Here in this 'neck of the woods', Doug Fir and Tamarack or Western Lark are the best two for BTUs, but I will burn Lodgepole Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Engelmann Spruce, and I've even burned Aspen, but it rots rapidly, so you have to use it rather quickly.

I'm looking out my window, and I've probably burned ten or eleven species. I've even burned some Alpine Fir or Birch if I can acquire it. I would say that 90% of my wood I try to make Fir, Larch, and Lodgepole Pine. You could probably throw Engelmann Spruce in there, too.

The BTU's change depending on the species. Then if you throw in a round log versus a split one, you are going to slow down the fire and cool off the cabin a little. So, when I put in different pieces of wood in the stove, I place it in different areas. If it's too hot and I have a split one in my hand, I will turn it over and put it on the round side so it burns a little slower.

Lynn: That forestry degree did come in handy.

Scheben: There is such a thing called common sense and logic. So that helps, too.

Lynn: I'm just talking about knowing all the different species of the trees you were 'rattling' off.

Scheben: I know! But I'm a dendrology fan; I've always been. I'm about nature; I give tours on edibles and medicinal plants.

White: Let me interrupt for a moment. That's nothing! I've been to Rich's house, and we walked around his yard. He reached down every time, picked up a plant, and tells you where it's from, what it is used for, how you properly cook it, how you prepare it, what you have to combine it with to get the maximum benefits.

Lynn: Why didn't you take me there when I was in town last year?

White: I don't know why we didn't. I think, Rich, you may have been out of town hunting. Corey, I think you came during hunting season for Rich.

Scheben: What month was it?

White: It was October.

Scheben: I'm in the woods.

White: Yes, he was hunting.

Scheben: What you need to do is get here when I'm not in the bush. You have my number. Just call me, and I'll give you and yours a personal tour. It's different being 'on the ground'. Even if you saw my old website or see the pictures in the book, it's always different on the ground.

Lynn: I'm sure. I want to know more about your water system or systems. How do you manage to get water inside the house, and hot water versus cold? How do you get water to the gardens? I know that you have a unique system there. Also, do you collect rainwater as well?

Scheben: Those are very good questions. I'll start with my overall system, which many of your listeners and readers will have a hard time believing. They are going to say, "This is too rugged for me," but this is the way I chose to live. I enjoy camping. I know that the 'glamping' term is overused, but that is exactly how we live.

That being said, I don't have a hot water heater or a pressure tank, and I don't have interior pipes. Do I have everybody's attention?

Lynn: That would do it!

Scheben: I realize that many people would balk on that, but I want to tell you something: I've visited over 200 off-grid homes in my life, and 95% of them are in Montana. I'll tell you that everybody does it differently. It depends on your skillsets, your ability and desire to live rugged, and your capital resources. It all

depends on your desired lifestyle.

I have to say that if you want to live like this, you almost have to go in with cash. I hate to say this if there are any young people listening or reading this. That's why it's a good idea to combine natural resources with friends and family and do this. A lender or a bank is not going to lend unless everything is done to code.

The foundation, the septic, the drain field-which is gravity-fed- the well, and everything are certified and to code except for the water I will be explaining right now. I decided to do it this way because less can go wrong. I saw where we were going with supply chain disruptions many years ago. I could see how the powers that be were consolidating power and control, and I wanted to do things inexpensively but with a little extra elbow grease.

Many of the animals, we take to a butcher, but 70%, we butcher ourselves. It's just a different way of doing things.

I have two tanks – one above the wood cook stove, and there is a pipe. I add water to the hot water reservoir of the wood cook stove. It has a 20-gallon reservoir. Then I have another pipe that's smaller that hooks up to the sink. There is a gravity feed to the sink. So, when I'm washing dishes, which I'm going to be doing right after I'm done here, I will take hot water from the stove, pour the boiling water on the dishes, let it soak for a few minutes, and then rinse off the soap with the water. That's how I do it.

I have a claw-foot tub. So, if my girlfriend wants to take a bath, we take a hose from the water reservoir, and connect it to the claw-foot tub. We put pots and big containers of water on the stove until they are hot, and pour the wood cook water into the claw-foot tub.

During the summer months, I have what is called a Cody water heater in the greenhouse. We can take showers or baths in there. I'll fill up the claw-foot tub with the garden hose, and that is what I use for the two tanks. I fill it up with a garden hose about once a month. Then I'll put a pump in there from this Cody water heater, and the water goes through the propane Cody water heater connected to a 12-volt battery. In half an hour, it's a hot bath, or in ten minutes,

it's a hot shower.

So, everything is 'outside the box', but I urge people with what is not coming and what is here – and I talk plenty about the stagflation that is here and the 'little guy' is going to see stagflation, deflation, and inflation. I won't go into that today, but the solutions are that you must think differently; you have to think 'outside the box'.

Too many people just think about it, but they don't 'pull the trigger'; you have to do it.

White: I think that most 'city folks' would probably shriek in horror just thinking about raising goats and cleaning up manure and doing all of that. Talk about culture shock! How do you ease into this? We would like to see everybody get to where you are, and we all wish that we were there, but you are at a well-advanced level. Give us the starter kit; what is the starter pack if we are starting out?

Lynn: On that same note, do you have any books that you recommend that might show how to construct a water system or power system similar to what you have or variations thereof?

Scheben: My book, *One New York Man's Journey to Off Grid Living in Montana*, touches on this. But since you brought that up, let me tell you that I had phenomenal four stars out of five on the book until the powers that be knew what I had. Then my book was suddenly coming with a missing table of contents or missing the first chapter or missing the second chapter. I had words moved around and sentences deleted.

We are in a book-burning era. So, all these things I talk about on the air, from election fraud to the vaccine bio-weapon, to the phony economy, to the printing of money, all get censored. The last thing that they want is for this information to get out.

It's not about teaching people knowledge; it's about controlling and managing the people. That's what the elite want. So, when people hear these solutions, the elite cringe.

In my book, I have many references on how to go about things, but there is so much information on off-grid living. When I first started living off-grid and was going on the radio, people thought off-grid meant hiding from the authorities. No.

Lynn: Right, or living in the middle of nowhere.

Scheben: I'm only four miles from a small town. Where Jim lives in the flathead, I'm about 45 minutes from Whitefish. So, I don't consider this to be the 'boonies'.

To live in the 'super-boonies' today, takes super-money.

Lynn: And I don't think it's wise, given everything going on. I think it's still important to be somewhat close to necessities because of the way that they are trying to 'stomp out' the real small towns in the first place. The whole concept of off-grid simply means being unplugged from the electric source and their water source and surveillance source. That is exactly what you are doing, and yet you are only four miles from a town. I think that is ideal.

Scheben: It's just a different way of doing it. I don't have a smart meter. I've talked about many of the complications and dangers with that, and the surveillance, and the cell phone tracking. I mentioned in an article that if you are on the wrong website, they have the capability to up the radiation on your cell phone.

I know it sounds hard to believe, but when I say 'decentralize', I also mean going back in time. Obviously, I'm on a PC, but what I'm saying is that there is nothing wrong with learning the lost 19th century skills, but dovetail them with 21st century technology. That's what my Solaray is; it's 21st century technology solar panels. It's all electronic.

I'm just saying that the old skillsets we've lost, need to come back.

White: We are talking about if things collapse and everything went dark, you probably wouldn't even know it if you didn't go into town. How long can you

keep going? Is it indefinitely?

You really could live off your land; you have a water supply. If things 'went south' around you and you had to stay on your property and secure in place, how long could you live there with what you have now with your animals and the garden and 'whatnot'? How necessary is it for you to even go to town in an emergency situation?

Scheben: My girlfriend still works three days a week; she's semi-retired. We still go to town to pick up the mail. We still get little things. It's not like we do big shopping trips, but we still want to get some canned goods to replenish things.

If the 'crapper hit the fan', how long could I stay here? I would say easily six months if not longer, but we'll still have to go places – whether it's harvesting meat or catching fish. Granted, I live on a small river or a stream, and that is the reason there are so many grizzly bears. There are kokanee salmon in the fall, and the grizzlies are everywhere. I've had them walk behind me while I was standing there with a bow and arrow. They're just walking by. Thank God I've always had the wind in my favor.

White: I've had a bear walk right up next to me before. Talk about being terrified for a quick second! Thankfully they ignored me and kept going, but they could have mauled me in two seconds, no problem.

Scheben: In a small spare you wouldn't stand a chance unless you have a firearm.

Lynn: I have a question that I think might be on some people's minds, only because I have done plenty of research in different states and counties and zoning codes and all of that, which we know they are also working on altering.

You are in a great area when it comes to low-level restrictions with what you can do on your property. James and I could probably go there and park RVs and live off your land, and you're not going to get in trouble for that. Most places, you're lucky if you can park an RV in your driveway for two weeks out of a year, or it has to be on the side of the house and covered so no one sees it.

With the water system, for example, you said that you made your well to code, but that everything you did within the structure, you didn't have to file for a permit. I assume that you were able to build the cabin the way you wanted, but what about the electric? Did they look at the system that you set up for the electricity, or does that not fall under their purview either?

Scheben: When I did this, I made sure that I had the right person do it properly and get everything approved and signed off. You must do things like that for resale.

Let me give you an example of what is happening here now: Because I built this off-grid, I didn't need a permit to build the cabin. I'm not even sure, in this county, if you still need a permit, even to be on grid. I don't know. You might not even have to do it.

Certain things that needs certification like a well and a septic and drain field I can give you an example on. I know people who have put in their own homemade septic and drain field, and they did it to code. But guess what? They didn't get it certified; they didn't get the stamp of approval. Then when they wanted to sell their property, they had issues because they are looking for a cash buyer.

It's the same thing when you want to subdivide. You can do what is called 'family land transfers'. You can do BLA's (bound lot adjustments). I did them all. You can also do subdivisions. I did them all because I dabbled in land development the last 18 years because I had no choice post-corporate America.

You cannot build a subdivision unless you have what is called a 60-foot easement. So, you must have a 60-foot-wide easement, whether it be for utilities or whatever it is. It could be the side of a ditch; it doesn't matter. You cannot subdivide unless you have a 60-foot easement except if you do a family land transfer, which you can only do five. There are some gray areas with that, but those are some of the loopholes that some people use.

There is nothing wrong with living off-grid; it's just a different way of doing it. There are always lending issues depending on who you want to sell to.

White: We only have about ten minutes left. What I would like to do for the people listening or reading this is leave them with some immediate things that they can do. If you want to decide to start living off-grid, you're right: You must think all of this through.

Let's say they get through the "mental gymnastics and they conclude that, yes, a husband and wife or a family get together and decide, "Yes, we are going to do this. We think it's time."

Give us the first few steps. Obviously, they have to find land somewhere that is preferably away from a town but close enough to where, if they must go into town or go to a hospital, they are not 40 miles away.

So, the land goes first. Then you build the house. Let's say that you get the land and you build the house. Let's start there. What animals would you get to start? Would you always get a goat first? Would you start your garden right away? How soon do you have to put the electricity in? Give us that process. If someone wanted to do it – and I know we are not going to cover it all here with this brief ten minutes left – let's do a *CliffsNotes* version, if you would.

Scheben: That is a very good question. The first thing that I would do is decide how much acreage you want; that is capital resources. It's how much time you want to put into the land. I would always make sure that you have trees. I would never buy flat pasture with no trees because you will have no privacy, your water table could be compromised from some of the chemicals that were put there from a past farmer, and I would want a balance of natural resources.

Lynn: And firewood.

Scheben: I want ridges, I want draws, and I want a meadow and live water. You can't get everything you want, but I would want end-of-road privacy property. A five-acre piece in this 'neck of the woods' is worth as much as a 20-acre parcel if it's at the end of the road, which means that nobody has an easement through your property. Just so you know, in northwest Montana, 95% of the properties have an easement going through it. So, I'm giving you the ideal

situation.

I want wood lots because I want trees for my heat. Soil is irrelevant because I make my own soil. I bring in good nutrient soil that I pay for from a nursery, and then as my soil expands the way that I shared with you earlier in the program, I will expand on more raised beds. So, I would recommend you get a place with semi-southern exposure for a good garden.

Here in Montana, the sun is so high during the summer months and it's so brutal that you don't need as much southern exposure as you think.

I set up my cabin at the edge of a northern slope so that during the hot summer months, the cool air filters from that and cools down my cabin so that I don't need air conditioning.

If you are going to live off-grid with solar, you definitely want some southern exposure. You don't want too much northern exposure because the days are so short and the sun is so low.

White: When you say 'southern exposure' do you mean where the sun from the south hits your land or home and there are no trees blocking the sun? You want it unobstructed?

Scheben: You don't want anything blocking solar panels. When you put your hand on a solar panel and cover 5% of it, you've destroyed 90% of the solar power of that panel just by doing that – at least temporarily. So, you want as much southern exposure as possible.

During eight months out of the year I get more energy than I know what to do with. That is why I have a small system of 675-amp hours. Each battery is 225-amp hours, and I have them wired in three sources together in clumps of four, and three. So, three times 225 gives you the 675 amps in our system.

If you do your homework, 95% of the people have a much bigger system, but then they must run a generator or the AC supplements much longer during that short period of the year, which is now because we are only two to three weeks away from the shortest day of the year. Those people have to run the 'bejeezus'

out of their generators, depending on the battery. Is it lead acid? Is it silicon salt? Is it iron sulfate, which needs 45 degrees, not applicable for Montana? Is it lithium? There are so many different choices out there.

Lynn: Which batteries do you use?

Scheben: I use the cheapest Trojan T-105 lead acid deep-cycle batteries, and I do that purposely because I will get eight or nine years from them. The whole battery bank costs me \$1,500, and the entire system cost me \$15,000.

For most of these questions, the answer is, "It depends on how much work you want to do." There is a learning curve here. You can read all the books and ask all the questions, but you must do plenty of reading and research and do your homework because you have to figure out how many amps and volts you want. It varies depending on the collection of the sun through the Solarays. You must do that homework; nobody can do it for you.

Your appliances and the way you live is going to have to be relevant to the size of your off-grid electrical system.

Lynn: Do you have appliances? Do you have a microwave or anything?

Scheben: I don't have a microwave because I wouldn't have a microwave if I lived on a grid; it's very unhealthy for you, but I have a coffeemaker.

The big things that we have are the coffeemaker, the iron, the vacuum, and certain things that take a lot of amps. Those things run very infrequently.

Once the coffeemaker is done, we will take the coffee pot and put it on the edge of the wood cook stove.

White: And you use the coffee grounds for your compost pile, right?

Scheben: Correct. And let me put something in perspective here: I keep talking about the AC generator, and everybody probably is thinking in the background, "Oh, he's living off his AC generator."

Just for context, I use 200 gallons of high-octane gas per year for my generator, my side-by-side ATV, which is 98% a work tool, my wood splitter, and my chainsaws. That's 'off the top of my head'. So, it's 200 gallons of gas for all four of those things for the entire year. So, if you're thinking that when I go to the flathead, like when I'm meeting you Jim, 200 gallons of gas is a few trips.

I want to put that into perspective in case your listeners or readers think that it's all AC generator. It's not even close. Two hundred gallons of gas is nothing to the four things I just mentioned for year-round use.

I also push up my water with the AC generator; I water my garden with the AC generator. So, it's not as much of a hardship as you think. Every time I run the AC generator, I'm banking volts and amps into my battery system.

Lynn: How does that work with watering your garden? How do you have the water set up out there?

Scheben: That is a good question. I've been doing this for 15 years. So, when I started doing this, many of the things I first purchased and built are obsolete, but the old items – more analog and less computerized items – work better. They don't break down as much; they last longer because they are built better.

That being said, when I run my AC generator to water my garden, even though that time of year, I probably don't even need to bank energy – and I know that time of year in the summer, I don't even need to bank volts and amps because the summer days in Montana are ridiculously long. In fact, I often shut down my upper panels and only use the four little panels on top of the shed during the summer.

Lynn: Right. It doesn't get dark until 10:00 at night sometimes in the summer.

White: Even later than that! I would say it gets dark at 10:45 sometimes.

Scheben: Yes, or even later than that. Around June 21st, you can see the sun starting to rise – or at least the horizon getting bright – as early as 4am.

Lynn: Call me ignorant, but most of us have a spigot on the outside of the

house, and have a hose connected to it, and use that to water. So how does the water system tie in with the generator to water your garden?

Scheben: I have my generator wired to my well, and I have a spigot. I connect the hose to the spigot and run my generator. Because I've been doing this for 15 years, so much of my equipment is obsolete. I didn't have the option of having an inverter charger that was 220 or 240 volts, so I use 110-volt. Could I have wired two in unison in order to pull up water with the batteries? Yes. But because of this lifestyle that I lead, when I get water for the animals or water the cabin once a month with a garden hose, I'm banking those volts and amps into my system. So, I chose to do it the way that I'm saying because I didn't have access to a 220- or 240-volt converter charger, even though I could have wired two 110's together.

So, this works well, and that is why I wanted to put the gasoline usage into perspective.

White: Before we go, goats or chickens? Which would you choose if you could only choose one?

Scheben: You had to put that last?

Lynn: That's not a fair question.

Scheben: I probably have ten acres of pasture right now. I think that if I didn't have goats in my meadow that I cleared thousands of trees from, and if I didn't have the ability to keep the grass down with the goats, I would have to mow it.

The only place that I mow is in the garden, around the raised beds. Obviously, the goats don't read the sign to eat just the grass, so I have to mow there.

The chickens are for food and eggs, and both species offer fertilizer. So, everything works in synergy. Many of these questions depend on your lifestyle. I know people who have horses; I know people who have cows; I know people who have miniature cows; I know people who have sheep. Is it a pet, is it food, or is it both?

Everybody has to make certain decisions on what works best for them. It depends on their interest, their hobbies, their capital resources, their desires, and their ability and desire to live rugged.

I will tell you something: If you are thinking about living this way, one thing that is almost impossible to do is leave. I traveled so much in corporate America, especially the way that things are now with the TSA and the facial scanning and all of that, I don't feel the need to travel anymore. I could talk about all of this for half an hour, but I won't. I'll just say that travelling isn't what it used to be; it's no longer fun.

So, I don't miss travelling. I got it out of my system in corporate America, and I'm very happy being more of a homebody. I have to be a homebody because the animals depend on us. We can't just leave them and let the water freeze up because they will all die.

Lynn: That is why friends and family going in together could be beneficial. That way, if a couple of people did need to leave and do a little travelling or whatever, there is always someone to 'hold the fort down'.

Scheben: Absolutely, and there are different ways of doing it. Sometimes I'll bring in neighbors and friends to do it. I have the big male Great Pyrenees who is getting a little aggressive, and I can just look at him and he will back down, but if I'm not here, he can be scary.

I give tours, and there are many children. I give tours to everyone. As long as I'm there to watch, everything is 'cool'. But when someone comes in to housesit, like the last friend, she came over and was bit in the butt. So, she is afraid of the dog.

White: That's a huge dog! I'd be afraid of it, too. Are you kidding me?

Lynn: I love Pyrenees. They are beautiful!

Scheben: They are beautiful, but they are more functional and purposeful. Many people who live in apartments or tiny houses buy them, and it makes

them very unhappy; they are born to guard. They have been bred to guard since the days of Julius Caesar. They love chasing grizzlies.

I had three dogs around one of the grizzlies eating apples from a fruit tree. I have mountain lions walking by and black bears. Almost every day, you see coyotes and fox, and never mind the birds of prey; these 'guys' literally stop aerial attacks, or at least 99% of them.

Lynn: I know we are out of time, but I have to ask: What are your top five medicinal plants that you feel everyone should grow if they are in the right climate to do so?

Scheben: I would say chaga and burdock, but I wrote down some of the plants that I harvest here: Dandelion, elderberry, fireweed, foxtail grass, gooseberry, hawthorn, and lamb's quarter. Lamb's quarter grows everywhere. It's high in vitamin C and calcium. It's great to add into your salad, but don't eat the seeds.

I also harvest plantains, wild onion, Oregon grapes, red clover, and wild asparagus. Burdock is one of the plants that was discussed by a nurse from Canada.. It's very healing; it's a blood purifier. You eat the roots. It has anti-inflammatory purposes as well. It eliminates uric acid. It's just a great plant, which is very popular in China.

Violet has vitamin A and C. Kinnikinnick, thimbleberries, strawberry or raspberry blite, which is in the spinach family, are others. I also add that to salads. It all depends on things like toxicity. Is it a medic? Is it a laxative? You have to think of your liver and kidneys. Oxide daisies scare many people, but the leaves, early in the season, are delicious and very nutritious. I add it to salad, but it is considered a noxious weed. The only reason many of these weeds or plants are noxious is that cattle won't eat them. I'm not kidding you.

Never take anything at face value. You must do reading and research, and it's fun; nature is fun. I didn't use the word 'fun' today, so I will make up for it right now: Fun, fun, fun! The lifestyle is fun! It's not only about survival; it's about nature and appreciating it and respecting it.

White: It sounds like people need to get your book if they want to get the details. Give us the name of your book again before we come to the end of the interview.

Scheben: Last time I checked, you can get it at Amazon. The title is, *One New York Man's Journey to Off Grid Living in Montana*. Be aware that because of the politically incorrect nature of the book – not just the self-sufficiency – I use financial economics, social and political rationale, and I give real life scenarios of what happens and what has happened. So, many of the powers that be want to distract us, use deception, 'dumb us down', and use divide and conquer strategies. So, they don't like the book.

You are going to get words mixed around and sentences deleted. You might have the table of contents or the introductory chapter eliminated. I've seen it all.

Lynn: Is it available on Kindle, or is it in paperback?

Scheben: I believe you can get it electronically in a Kindle version. Ninety-nine percent of my reading comes from real life books in my hand. I don't know if you can see over my right shoulder, but those are some of my books.

Lynn: Is your book available in paperback?

Scheben: Yes.

Lynn: So, you are saying that on reprints they may have messed with even the paperback version.

Scheben: I'm a proof kind of guy. Here is my book, *One New York Man's Journey to Off Grid Living in Montana*. This is chapter one on the first page. So, the introductory chapter and the table of contents have been eliminated from this particular book.

I've had books come back to me where you wouldn't believe the editing. It's almost scary. When I say that we are living in the book-burning era of America, I mean it.

White: People will have to take a chance because they have no other choice. I guess they will have to take a 'stab' at it and hopefully, they don't put the table of contents at the end.

Scheben: We are at a point in history where anything that you say wouldn't surprise me anymore.

White: It's not going to surprise you that we are coming to the end of the broadcast because we've been teasing that for a few minutes. Do you have anything else that you want to say before we go?

Scheben: I just wanted to say to everybody that if you want to live off-grid, if you want to be frugal, if you want to be self-sufficient, if you want to live off the land, if you want to learn skillsets, I will show you every time a child who grows up with a fishing pole or a bow and arrow or a shotgun in their hand, the odds of that person being on the corner selling or taking meth or any drug is very slim.

We must go back to common logic and common sense, and you can't get that through artificial means. In the book, I have an acronym: Keep away from SARP (synthetic, artificial, refined, and processed, which includes propaganda, hoaxes, false flags, lies, and gaslighting).

You have to think that we are in an era where you must do your own reading, research, verification, and vetting, and you have to think for yourself.

White: Think for yourself: I think that is a good way to end the show because that is what we try to have people do here with *Solution Series*. We try to give them solutions and have them think for themselves.

Corey, is there anything else that you wanted to say?

Lynn: I'm looking forward to going back to Montana and hanging out at your place.

White: Yes, we will go out there. We just can't do it during hunting season because I can't even get in touch with Rich during hunting season; he is gone

for week at a time.

Scheben: Corey, you are always ‘welcome by my fire’. Just be open-minded because it’s going to be a shocker for most people who haven’t seen this kind of lifestyle in person.

Lynn: No, I would love it! If there weren’t grizzlies, I would pitch a tent right outside. Or maybe I could borrow your dog, and he could hang out with me in the tent.

Scheben: I think we could find something for you.

White: Rich Scheben, Montana mountain man, it’s been a great conversation! I’ve been to your place, and you really have done it right; you are the ‘real deal’; you’re the genuine article, no doubt about that. We do appreciate you taking time out of your day to be here with us on the *Solution Series*, Rich.

Maybe we’ll do a follow-up episode in the spring. We’ll go there on location and do a ‘Part II: On Location’ with you. I think that would be a ‘pretty cool’ thing.

Lynn: That would be ‘awesome’!

Scheben: Sure.

White: We are at the end of the broadcast. We do appreciate you looking in and joining us once again on the *Solution Series*, brought to you by *Solari.com* and *CoreysDiggs.com*. You can go to <http://CoreysDiggs.com> and click on the link at the top to join the *Solution Series*, or go to <http://Solari.com>.

Until next time, this is James White for the *Solution Series* saying goodbye for now.

MODIFICATION

Transcripts are not always verbatim. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity, usefulness and readability, while staying true to the original intent.

DISCLAIMER

Nothing on The Solari Report should be taken as individual investment advice. Anyone seeking investment advice for his or her personal financial situation is advised to seek out a qualified advisor or advisors and provide as much information as possible to the advisor in order that such advisor can take into account all relevant circumstances, objectives, and risks before rendering an opinion as to the appropriate investment strategy.