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Newsletter and Blog

Featuring updates on grizzly bear conservation activities,
and the latest *Grizzly Times* Blog
from [Louisa Willcox and David Mattson, PhD.](#)
Co-Founders of *Grizzly Times*.
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Dear Friends of the Grizzly,

We have a lot of exciting news to share this week...

Grizzly Sighting!

For the first time in more than a decade, a grizzly bear has shown up in Kelly Creek in the North Fork of the Clearwater, in the vast Selway Bitterroot Recovery Area on the Montana-Idaho border. Hopefully, this bear will be left alone, unlike “Arnie” (for Arnold Palmer), the grizzly that showed up on the Stevensville golf course in the Bitterroot Valley last fall, and was unceremoniously hauled off to the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem for the crime of creating divots as he dug earthworms.

The appearance of a second confirmed grizzly bear in an ecosystem where grizzlies had been eliminated 60 years ago underscores the need for a government game plan to conserve grizzlies there. A 2000 Fish and Wildlife Service plan to reintroduce grizzlies in the Selway Bitterroot was aborted after G.W. Bush was elected President. Now, grizzlies are getting there under their own steam, raising hopes of recovery in an ecological lynchpin that could reconnect long-isolated grizzlies throughout the Northern Rockies.



The Kelly Creek bear was originally reintroduced last year to the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem to augment that critically endangered population – but wandered south. This wandering male was spotted recently near a bait station established to attract black bears where they could then be shot by hunters – raising serious questions about the wisdom of leaving rotten fruit and donuts out for bears, when feeding wildlife is otherwise illegal. Needless-to-say, this bear is really vulnerable.

Recently Western Environmental Law Center filed a suit on behalf of Wilderness Watch, Wild Earth Guardians and Western Watersheds Project to stop the practice of baiting black bears in Idaho and Wyoming. (Montana prohibits the practice).

David just recorded this narrated PowerPoint of a talk he recently gave in Hamilton, Montana, and Moscow, Idaho, for Friends of the Bitterroot and Friends of the Clearwater on the history and potential for grizzly bear recovery in the Selway Bitterroot:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF3U2S74asE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpDle37gDZ0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iszhSc7sS8g>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvr9n-uo7iY>

And here are a few relevant articles:

- https://lmtribune.com/northwest/grizzly-turns-up-at-kelly-creek/article_481f3938-f5b0-539e-8da4-6b276fbc00a2.html
- <https://www.missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2019/06/bitterroot-grizzlies/>
- <https://wildearthguardians.org/press-releases/grizzly-deaths-spur-bear-baiting-challenge-in-idaho-wyoming/>

NEW BLOG: *The Gallatin Forest Partnership and the Tyranny of Ego*

Proving that David has not been sleeping much, here is his latest blog on self-transcendent aspirations vs. egotism and greed in our relations with nature, epitomized by the current debate about Wilderness in the Custer/Gallatin National Forest. Even if you are not a fan of Terry Gilliam (of Monte Python fame) and haven't seen his latest movie *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, you will enjoy! (The blog follows below.)

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2019/06/19/The-Gallatin-Forest-Partnership-and-the-Tyranny-of-Ego>

Scientists Speak Truth to Power

Scientists play a vital role in correcting the record when government officials go off the rails in service of partisan and pro-development agendas. Here are three examples from this week's news, featuring some of the grizzlies' biggest science heroes.

In the run-up to a meeting this week of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee in Missoula, three world-class grizzly bear experts criticized government efforts that have so far failed to recover the grizzly. The experts were Dr. Fred Allendorf, a University of Montana Regents Professor of Biology Emeritus, and one of the world's foremost authorities on conservation genetics; Dr. Lee H. Metzgar, former director of the Zoology and Wildlife Biology Programs at the University of Montana and author of numerous papers on grizzly bear population ecology and viability; and Dr. Brian Horejsi, a leading authority on grizzly bears and other wildlife in the Canadian Rockies.

They argued for the need to reconnect isolated grizzly bear populations, increase numbers to thousands of individuals, and correct false assumptions about the health of grizzlies in Canada. Thanks Brian, Fred, and Lee!

https://missoulian.com/news/local/grizzly-meeting-leaves-lots-off-agenda/article_219e36a1-432e-50de-b093-77adb48beabf.html

Last week the indomitable Dr. Barrie Gilbert challenged the bankrupt claims by Wyoming Game and Fish and other agencies – not to mention the purportedly objective Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team -- that grizzlies are coming out our ears because the “ecosystem is full.” Barrie says this: “Just because grizzlies are expanding their range further from the protected park does not indicate that there is a surplus available for legal killing. Rather, an interpretation of lowered density because of an impoverished food base is more likely.”

https://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/experts-disagree-on-why-grizzlies-are-ranging-further-afield/article_ba60df81-615e-5aeb-9beb-2e17a3627b7e.html

In an example of lazy, one-sided journalism, Flathead Beacon reporters never thought to call any independent scientist (or anybody outside the government) to comment on recent claims by Wayne Kasworm of Fish and Wildlife Service that the Cabinet-Yaak grizzly is healthier because of an augmentation program. The story states: “Thanks largely to an augmentation program that Kasworm helped establish, there are an estimated 55-60 grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem, with a projected growth rate of 2.1 percent annually.”

In fact, as David discussed in the Cabinet-Yaak talk shared last week (link below), that population growth has probably not increased since 2012, and the perilously isolated subpopulations of the Yaak and Cabinet Mountains remain critically endangered.

<https://flatheadbeacon.com/2019/06/20/grizzly-augmentation-improving-genetics-cabinet-yaak-bears/>

See this video for a different perspective on what's been happening with growth of the Cabinet-Yaak populations:

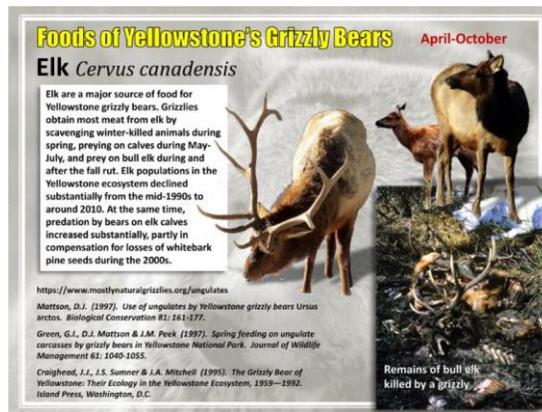
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvqHJ6ziUIQ>

Check Out These Cool Videos!

Last week, the Jackson Hole News and Guide ran a story about grizzlies in Granite Creek near the Hoback River south of Jackson that included an amazing video shot by Gary Spaniol on his phone of two grizzlies hunting an elk calf. Well worth seeing!

https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/grizzly-range-grows-into-granite/article_b7d9b907-a2d6-50d3-ac1f-c1182959da8a.html

And parenthetically, David has put together a series of Base Ball cards of information on Yellowstone grizzly bear foods – here is the one on elk:



You may not have heard of Laura Grizzlypaws, an amazing Indian dancer from BC who literally *becomes* a grizzly – but you should definitely see some of it! Here is a recent story: <https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/entertainment/local-a-e/laura-grizzlypaws-bringing-bear-dance-to-heatwave-1.23863091>

And her cool YouTube channel with lots of videos of her dancing and singing – yes, she has a beautiful voice too, plus as you can see she is drop-dead gorgeous: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_LCDftXIMf3k8C2JTxlSwQ



IN THE NEWS:

Racing Through Grizzly Habitat?

A really good way to get killed or hurt by a grizzly bear is to run in the woods – even better to run a marathon race. But that is what the Forest Service could allow on the Flathead Forest, where just 3 years ago, Brad Treat, a mountain biker was killed after slamming into a grizzly at high speed. A Board of Review, that included representatives of the Forest Service as well as former FWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator Chris Servheen, investigated the fatality and recommended that people not run or bike fast in grizzly country.

But the Forest Service seems poised to approve four permits. Servheen submitted extensive comments to the FS saying: "Issuing such permits will send the public a very conflicting message about how to recreate in bear habitat, and send a bad message about the veracity of agency advice about how to recreate safely where there are bears...doing so will contradict years of agency educational efforts."

Many thanks to Keith Hammer of Friends of the Wild Swan and Arlene Montgomery for closely monitoring this situation and preventing the FS from issuing the permits with no analysis!
<https://www.missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2019/06/runs-grizzly-country/>

For more background on the issue:

http://www.swanview.org/articles/whats-new/bear_expert_opposes_trail_running_permits/268

Logging Threatens Upper Blackfoot.

Last week, Alliance for the Wild Rockies and Native Ecosystems Council sued the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest in Missoula federal court for failing to preserve habitat for grizzlies, elk and other wildlife from impacts associated with logging and roadbuilding. The 2,000 acre project in the upper Blackfoot drainage would degrade and fragment key habitat that lies between two roadless areas.

Managers claimed the project was excluded from the need for public comment because it was part of the 5 million acres that Montana Governor Steve Bullock identified as candidates for maintaining "forest health," which is increasingly used by the Forest Service to justify damaging logging projects.

By the way, if you have gotten this far, this is the 3rd article you have read by the dedicated journalist Laura Lunquist, who has covered the environment for many years! We cannot take good journalism for granted anymore, so please consider supporting the Missoula Current -- and thank you Laura!

<https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2019/06/lincoln-logging/>

Bittersweet

These two poignant stories really got our attention.

Last month, Alex Neumann, a native of northern BC, was fishing along a noisy river when he got mauled by a mother grizzly protecting her 3 cubs. He managed to talk and back his way out of there, and even drive himself to the hospital for treatment. But he did not report the incident till much later because he did not want the provincial officials to kill her, saying he had lived in grizzly country all his life, respected bears, and never had a problem. Plus, it was Mothers Day. Wow.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/outdoorsman-survives-grizzly-attack-near-prince-george-1.5180802>

National Geographic did a nice story on the Grizzly Discovery Center in West Yellowstone, featuring the inmates and how they wound up there, to emphasize the need to be careful with food and attractants.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/06/problem-with-feeding-grizzly-bears-yellowstone/>

Please Consider a Gift to *Grizzly Times*

We need your help! David and I have retired and are doing this full-time work pretty much gratis, and despite the gradual dissolution of our physical bodies.

If you were following the recent delisting court case, you know that David's role was vital to the litigation success that restored protections to Yellowstone's grizzly bears. The skilled attorneys could not have won the case without David's scientific expertise. There will be continued demands on David's time with the appeal of this case to the 9th Circuit Court, potential delisting of NCDE or even all Lower-48 grizzlies, and mounting threats to the Cabinet-Yaak population.

As we do not have our own nonprofit, Conservation Congress, a not-for-profit tax-deductible organization, has agreed to be our fiscal sponsor. (Thank you, Denise!)

You can make a one-time contribution or sign up for a monthly donation through the Conservation Congress link below.

<https://www.conservationcongress-ca.org/give>

Or, you can mail a donation to:

Conservation Congress
2234 Sierra Vista Circle
Billings, MT 59105

* Be sure to note that your contribution is for *Grizzly Times* (GT).

Thank you for your continued support - in any way - it is greatly appreciated!

***For the Bears,
Louisa and David***