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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 Grizzly Bears:

Most of the news about climate change in the north is devastating. But in an interesting twist, grizzlies have been taking advantage of the opportunity to move north, as berries and shrub-dominated tundra increase there. Doug Clark, an Associate Professor and Centennial Chair in Human Dimensions at the University of Saskatchewan's School of Environment and Sustainability, takes you on a fascinating tour of northern Manitoba and the changes afoot in the guest column below.

The Grizzlies of Wapusk: An Unfolding Story of Change **Grizzly Times Guest Column by Dr. Douglas Clark**

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2018/11/02/The-Grizzlies-of-Wapusk-an-Unfolding-Story-of-Change>

Here is an addendum from Dr. Clark:

Grizzly bear-human conflicts are increasing in Churchill and nearby communities in Nunavut. Community members are highly motivated to work with Dr. Clark to monitor and better understand what bears are doing - especially around their remote cabins. In aid of this effort, we're seeking support to purchase at least 60 remote cameras for community members to deploy at their cabins, creating a regional citizen science monitoring network to understand and prevent conflicts between people and bears in this remote region. Anyone wishing to support this effort should email Dr. Clark at d.clark@usask.ca

IN THE NEWS:

- **Grizzly Bear Managers Downplay Deaths, Problems This Year - and Struggle with Next Delistings**

A conference call last week among Yellowstone grizzly bear managers revealed confusion about next steps following Judge Christensen's September ruling that restored Endangered Species protections for the population. Although the Fish and Wildlife Service has been planning to release a rule to delist Northern Continental Divide (NCDE) grizzlies, possibly later

this month, officials are also now contemplating delisting all remaining populations. This would remove all hope for recovering critically endangered Cabinet Yaak and Selkirks grizzlies, and end prospects for restoring grizzlies to the Selway Bitterroot (see below), while reducing populations, and keeping them isolated forever.

Managers also released official statistics for the numbers of grizzly bear deaths so far this year (64 total, 48 inside the Demographic Monitoring Area) and an estimate of population size (712), but they did not admit that male mortality limits have been breached - 15% of the estimated total number of males in the population. Nor, did they sound the alarm on the record number of deaths this year. Needless-to-say, we need the government - state and federal - to step up and do more to resolve problems - not deny that they exist.

<https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2018/11/grizzly-bears/>

▪ **Please Help Protect Grizzlies in Tom Miner Basin**

Although ranchers in the Tom Miner Basin, MT north of Yellowstone Park continue to set a positive example for coexisting with grizzly bears, the bears rely on habitat well beyond these ranchlands. Tragically, in the last few weeks, one set of subadult twin grizzlies that roamed outside the Basin were killed after becoming involved in conflicts over foods near peoples' residences. And, stories are conflicted about the fate of another set of twins, locally known as the "orphan twins" because they survived the death of their mother killed two years ago by an elk hunter. They have been very tolerant of people and well-behaved - and have not been seen for awhile.

State wildlife managers must step up efforts to promote coexistence and avoid further conflicts, especially between bears and big game hunters. This time of year, when bears are in a feeding frenzy putting on fat for winter, they can be attracted to hunting gut piles and, because of that, to conflicts that lead to their death.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks must do more to ensure that hunters are prepared, carry bear spray, and exercise basic precautions. Please contact MTFWP's Kevin Frey, the lead bear management specialist in Montana's portion of Greater Yellowstone at 406-581-6918 or kfrey@mt.gov, and ask him and others in his agency to redouble outreach to hunters, landowners, and others in this special place at this critical time.

Also, please contact Montana Fish and Game Commissioner Dan Vermillion, who lives in Livingston, and ask him to help ensure that MTFWP has adequate staff and resources for this work. Phone: 406-222-6024.

Please be polite, these are people who care, but who are spread thin.



Tom Miner Basin orphaned twins. Photo by Carole Deech.

▪ **Grizzly Bear in Montana's Bitterroot Valley!**

Grizzlies are showing us with their paws, yet again, that now-isolated populations can be re-connected. Last week, the first grizzly to have been seen in the Bitterroot Valley for many years was observed near Hamilton, but then trapped and moved back north into the NCDE. Following the failure of a proposed reintroduction effort in 2000, natural recolonization is now the only way to recover grizzlies in the vast Selway Bitterroot Ecosystem, where they were extirpated over 60 years ago. Located between the NCDE and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystems, this area holds the key to connecting Northern Rockies grizzlies and achieving lasting recovery.

The bear was relocated simply because he had removed a few divots on a golf course - no worse than most golfers. Too bad that officials did not let this bear stay put, and instead work to resolve the potential sources of conflict in the area.

https://www.dailyinterlake.com/local_news/20181029/caddyshack_grizzly_removed_from_golf_course

▪ **Of Violent Rhetoric and Dead Bears**

Comments following an article in the Powell Tribune last week underscore a broader, disturbing pattern of rhetoric promoting violence against bears, and even against people speaking up for them. One commenter in this thread said: "What the bears need in their diet is a little lead."

It should not be surprising that, in fact, bears have been on the receiving end of record amounts of lead this year. But, as Maximilian Werner wrote in a *Grizzly Times* essay last week, government agencies and even the press are complicit in fueling the fires of violence and intolerance.

<http://www.powelltribune.com/stories/grizzlies-captured-euthanized-south-of-byron,16461>

Signaling that thuggish behavior can have consequences, last week a Park County Circuit Court judge ordered a man who had killed a grizzly near Clark, WY illegally to pay a \$10,000 fine: https://www.gillette newsrecord.com/news/wyoming/article_67769168-684c-5c6e-8466-76133f83a8f6.html

And, Idaho is asking for information about the poaching of one of the precious few females in the Cabinet Yaak ecosystem:

<https://www.idahostatesman.com/outdoors/article221047125.html>

Showing that the violent rhetoric is not limited to anti-bear voices, the backlash against bowhunter Bob Legasa, whose friend stopped a charging bear near Yellowstone with bear spray, is also deeply disturbing and completely unjustified:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6331291/Hunter-survived-grizzly-bear-attack-Montana-gets-trolled-animal-lovers.html>

▪ **A Step Forward for Corridors**

In a boost for grizzly bear connections between Canada and the US, Alberta announced the designation of a protected corridor in Crowsnest Pass north of Glacier/Waterton Parks. In the US, we have not done anything like this - but could take some lessons from our neighbors to the north. <https://lethbridgenewsnow.com/article/622624/southwest-alberta-wildlife-corridor-named-after-former-premier-jim-prentice>

Please Consider a Gift to *Grizzly Times* this Year!

Grizzly Times needs your help! We've retired and are doing this full-time work pretty much gratis. If you were following the recent delisting court case, you know that David's role was absolutely vital to the litigation success that restored grizzly bear protections to Yellowstone's bears. Talented as they are, the attorneys could not have won the case without David's scientific expertise. And, there will be continued demands on David's time as this case is appealed to the 9th Circuit, and as delisting of NCDE grizzlies heats up.

As you know from reading our newsletters, blogs, etc., grizzly bears need help more now than ever, as threats are mounting. We will be expanding our reach to focus more on the NCDE - and we need to do more to help the beleaguered bears in the Cabinet Yaak and Selkirks ecosystems.

During this holiday season, we hope you will consider a donation to our efforts! As we do not have a separate nonprofit, Conservation Congress, a tax-deductible organization, has agreed to be our fiscal sponsor. (Thank you, Denise!).

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

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