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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 Grizzlies,

After a long winter, spring is exploding here in Greater Yellowstone – and even grizzly moms and their young cubs are up and about. Grizzlies have been all over the news recently, so we have a packed newsletter this week.

NEW BLOG: *Social Carrying Capacity Politspeak Bamboozle*

By David Mattson, PhD.

In this week's *Grizzly Times* blog (which follows this newsletter), David tackles the thorny and often misunderstood concept of “social carrying capacity,” used by managers to justify killing all sorts of animals, including grizzly bears. David reveals the betrayal of intellectual integrity implicit to how Yellowstone's grizzly bear managers are using “social carrying capacity,” as well as the extent to which its usage is part of a propaganda campaign that serves the partisan interests of wildlife management agencies and the politically well-connected few that they serve – not the broader public. David concludes that the term “social carrying capacity” should be relegated to the trash bin of Orwellian Politspeak.

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2019/05/13/Social-Carrying-Capacity-Politspeak-Bamboozle>

NEW PODCAST: *Estella Leopold, Part 3*

This week Louisa publishes the third of four episodes featuring an interview with Estella Leopold, the last remaining offspring of legendary conservationist, writer and philosopher Aldo Leopold. This episode is devoted to Estella herself, including her fascinating career as a paleobotanist, and her long-lasting commitment to protecting the environment and to mentoring students.

Estella shares stories about her illustrious career as a palynologist, her work in Bikini Atoll, China, Colorado, and elsewhere. She goes on to tell about her incredible work to protect the environment. Estella's integrative approach to conservation is truly impressive, although, of course, in her genes.

(Episode 37) <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/the-grizzly-times-podcast>

IN THE NEWS:

Louisa's Column in Idaho State Journal

Last week, Idaho State Journal ran a piece by Louisa on Aldo Leopold, the land ethic, and grizzlies. Thanks to Idaho State Journal for its commitment to covering the environment! And Thanks to Tom Mangelsen for the lovely photo of 399 with cubs that ran in the hard copy of the paper!

<https://www.idahostatejournal.com/opinion/columns/of-leopold-the-land-ethic-and-the-future-of-grizzlies/article>

One Million Species Face Extinction

It is impossible to ignore a devastating new report by the UN on the health of the planet's biota. One million plant and animal species are on the verge of extinction, with alarming implications for human survival, the report says. The report concludes that more plants and animals are threatened with extinction now than any other period in human history, that the current rate of loss is unparalleled, and that accelerating extinctions "means grave impacts on people around the world are now likely." The drivers are hardly surprising: climate change, pollution, agricultural practices, deforestation, invasive species, and urban expansion. If this is not a wakeup call...

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/05/06/one-million-species-face-extinction-un-panel-says-humans-will-suffer-result/>

You can find the report and related materials here:

<https://www.ipbes.net/>

Contact Your Representative to Support Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection!

Last week, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife held a hearing on the Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act, recently introduced again by Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ). The bill would ban trophy hunting and protect grizzlies for their ecological and cultural value. It would also guarantee Native American Tribes a role in conserving and managing grizzlies that are considered sacred by many tribes. Moreover, Tribes have claims to considerable suitable habitat where grizzlies could be recovered. Our thanks go out to environmental and tribal champion Rep. Grijalva, the persistence of key tribal leaders, and the testimony of bear expert Barrie Gilbert!

https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/jackson_hole_daily/local/article

You can find the bill here: <http://bit.ly/2YdDeHy>, and, for a while, see the testimony on Youtube here: <https://www.facebook.com/NRDems/videos/2172815872773615/>

Please contact your Representative and ask him/her to support the Tribal Heritage and Grizzly Bear Protection Act, sponsored by Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) – and ask your friends to do the same!

Connect with the link below where you will find David's testimony, submitted at the hearing, that underscores why the bill is so critical. You will also find a letter from David to then WY Governor Matt Mead that provides more evidence about why state-level management of grizzlies is so problematic in its current form. No matter whether grizzlies are listed or not, the states of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana need strong oversight by the federal government. (They simply cannot be trusted to manage our grizzlies).

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/action-alert>

Vigorous support is especially critical since the dark side, including Safari Club and Sportsmen Alliance, wasted no time in taking pot shots:

- <https://www.sportsmensalliance.org/news/anti-hunting-congressmen-introduces-grizzly-bear-hunting-ban/>

- <https://www.safariclub.org/blog/grizzly-bear-hunt-ban-gets-house-committee-hearing>
- <https://congressionalsportsmen.org/the-media-room/news/csf-submits-letters-to-reaffirm-state-management-bears-wolves>

Terror Entrepreneurs Ride Again

We regularly write about “Terror Entrepreneurs,” a term taken from studies of the early modern Witch Craze to typify people who incite violence against innocent and defenseless people as a way to accumulate and hold on to power. Back then they mostly burned women who were healers, but now their targets include immigrants, minorities, grizzlies, wolves, and more who are relatively defenseless. In recent weeks, the state of Wyoming – particularly Wyoming Game and Fish Department – has proven to be the main perpetrator. State officials are egging people on to kill grizzlies, throwing gas on the anti-bear fires burning in places like Cody. Proclaiming that Wyoming citizens’ tolerance is waning, WGF is trying to make it so and providing strong hints of encouragement.

http://www.codyenterprise.com/news/local/article_9f89def6-6c4a-11e9-9555-ab8de4c6b7a4.html

Here Dan Thompson of WGF irresponsibly hypes Yellowstone grizzlies as particularly dangerous and aggressive, even as he promotes the idea that, for lack of a trophy hunt, conflicts will worsen: <https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/article>

And here, another WY classic: WGF Commission President David Rael of Cowley compared a Wyoming grizzly hunt to other states legalizing marijuana in spite of federal legislation prohibiting its sale and use, saying “Why is it states can vote to grow pot when the federal government recognizes it as illegal – a felony.” And Commissioner Mike Schmid, of LaBarge, said this: “We [should] take that measly 100 grand from the feds [Section 6 funding under the Endangered Species Act] and tell them to keep it and manage the bears ourselves from this point forward.” More proof that Wyoming should never be given authority to manage our grizzly bears.

<https://www.powelltribune.com/stories/state-wont-launch-rogue-grizzly-hunt,18775>

Legal End-runs Proposed by Wyoming

It is not surprising that WGF is discussing another delisting move with Fish and Wildlife Service, even as they appeal the Christensen relisting rule to the federal 9th Circuit. WGF is pursuing all angles in their zeal to take over management of grizzlies and allow trophy hunting.

<http://www.codyenterprise.com/news/local/article>

Indeed, Wyoming’s brazenness knows no limits: the Equality State is also seeking to run federal environmental reviews – and we know what that would mean in a state that virtually never says no to industry: <https://www.wyofile.com/experts-question-wyo-quest-to-run-feds-environmental-reviews/>

Yellowstone Population Declining Due to Excessive Mortalities

Last week, the federal Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team quietly released its summary of the 2018 Yellowstone grizzly bear annual report. Of importance, at 709 the population estimate is slightly lower than last year – underscoring that the population is starting to decline even using biased counting methods. Almost certainly this is the result of continued record-breaking mortalities.

Importantly, mortality of independent males was 15.5% of the estimated total in the population, breaching the allowable limit of 15% established in the 2016 Conservation

Strategy. This is no surprise given that >70 bears died during 2018 inside the Demographic Monitoring Area, >10% of the total.

<https://prd-wret.s3-us-west-amazonaws.com/assets/palladium/production/atoms/>

Rough Start for Grizzlies this Year

We are already seeing significant grizzly bear mortality this year: six grizzlies have died, half of them in the notoriously hostile Cody area.

<https://www.usgs.gov/data-tools/2019-known-and-probable-grizzly-bear-mortalities-greater-yellowstone-ecosystem>

In the Northern Continental Divide, seven grizzlies have died so far this year, according to the NCDE Grizzly Bear Coordinator Cecily Costello. Unfortunately, Montana does not post timely records of bear deaths online, so you have to go back to officials to keep track.

Great Piece on Climate Change and Grizzly Bears

Writer Johnathan Hettinger wrote a must-read story on the effects of climate change on grizzlies, featuring a bunch of the grizzly gang, including Barrie Gilbert, David, and me, as well as climate and forest experts Jesse Logan and Wally Macfarlane:

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/051419/grizzly-bears-killed-climate-change-yellowstone-rocky-mountains-wildlife-survival-whitebark-pine-beetle>

Now for Some Good News:

Good safety messages are everywhere in grizzly country, even in the grizzly-less Bitterroot ecosystem. Thanks Forest Service!

https://www.kpvi.com/news/regional_news/bear-safety-event-and-training-coming-to-the-bitterroot/article

And a great piece in the Livingston Enterprise about successful coexistence work in the Tom Miner Basin:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/Montana-ranchers-share-the-landscape-with-13836431.php>

Ranchers involved in the Blackfoot Challenge Initiative are working hard to clean up carcasses to minimize bear conflicts:

<https://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/carcass-cleanup-tries-to-stay-ahead-of-grizzlies/article>

And the Jackson Hole airport is seeking vendors to sell bear spray:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/wyoming/articles/2019-04-26/jackson-airport-seeks-bear-spray-vendor>

Thankfully, people do not seem to be freaking out as grizzlies expand along the Beartooth Front:

<https://helenair.com/outdoors/grizzlies-are-the-new-neighbors-along-beartooth-front/article>

Fortunately, work to live amicably among grizzlies is happening in other countries as well. This lovely article in the New York Times highlights effective grizzly bear coexistence efforts in British Columbia:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/10/opinion/sunday/bears-hunting-canada-grizzly.html>

Good News for Cabinet Yaak Grizzlies: Another Legal Victory Blocking the Rock Creek Mine!

Thanks to committed lawyers at Earthjustice, the disastrous Rock Creek mine has been blocked again! The mine would harm if not extirpate the last few grizzlies that hang on in the tiny, fragmented, but critical Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem:

<https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2019/04/rock-creek-mine/>

Northern Continental Divide Grizzly Bear Committee Expands to Reduce Road Kills

Despite numerous highway overpasses and underpasses along Highway 93, cars are killing an increasing number of grizzlies and other wildlife. Montana Department of Transportation has been added to the NCDE grizzly managers' committee to better coordinate efforts to reduce road kills.

https://hungryhorsenews.com/outdoors/20190508/highway_93_proving_to_be_a_tough_crossing_for_grizzly_bears

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.

If you were following the last August's 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 a 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***