



PO Box 2406
Livingston, MT 59047
Phone: 406-224-2250
Email: info@grizzlytimes.org
Web: www.grizzlytimes.org

Newsletter and Blog

Featuring updates on grizzly bear conservation activities,
and the latest *Grizzly Times* Blog
from *Louisa Willcox*
Executive Director of *Grizzly Times*.
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Hi Friends of Grizzlies,

As we await a ruling by Federal Judge Christensen on the Yellowstone grizzly bear trophy hunt —hopefully before September 15 — we thought you might enjoy a recap of the court hearing on August 30 in Missoula. With David Mattson’s talk on grizzly bears and buffalo two days prior, and people flying and driving from all directions, it was truly “The Week of the Bear.”

Many thanks to the lawyers representing conservationists and the Tribes for providing a powerful, albeit nerve-racking day! They had all done their homework, as had the judge, who granted a stay on the hunt that had been slated to begin on September 1.

With no more nails to bite off, I know I am not alone in anxiously awaiting the outcome...

BTW, a film of David’s killer talk will air on September 25 and 28. More details next week.

LATEST BLOG:

What is Changed? Judge Christensen Probes Grizzly Bear Delisting.

By Louisa Willcox

This Blog follows the Newsletter below.

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2018/09/06/Whats-Changed-Judge-Christensen-Probes-Grizzly-Bear-Delisting>

IN THE NEWS:

• **Grizzly Bear Deaths Continue to Skyrocket in Yellowstone and Glacier Ecosystems.**

Grizzly bear deaths continue to spike, just as backcountry seasons for elk hunting begin -- which is when most bear deaths usually occur. In Greater Yellowstone, 39 grizzly bear deaths have been reported by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team so far this year, with the majority (16) due to conflicts over livestock, followed by “Defense of Life and Property” cases, and black bear hunters presumably mistaking grizzlies for black bears (13), most of which are still “under investigation.” Five females, most with cubs, are included among the total.

<https://www.usgs.gov/data-tools/2018-known-and-probable-grizzly-bear-mortalities-greater-yellowstone-ecosystem>

In the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, which includes Glacier National Park, 27 grizzly bear deaths have been reported so far this year. This exceeds year-end totals during recent years which have been nearer 22-23. Four cubs have also been orphaned and removed from the population. In a tragic series of events that reflect burgeoning human populations, 12 grizzlies have so far been killed in vehicle collisions.

<http://www.mtpr.org/post/grizzly-bear-deaths-montana-pace-record-highs>

Aside from livestock-related conflicts, elk hunters are now the other leading cause of grizzly deaths in the Yellowstone ecosystem; not garbage, as was the case a few decades ago. In both the Glacier and Yellowstone ecosystems, bears are eating more meat, in the form of livestock and big game. As a result, conflicts over meat have been a dominant driver of grizzly bear deaths, as bears eat more meat to compensate for losses of other foods caused by climate change and non-native species.

Despite protestations of government apologists, populations in both ecosystems have flatlined in recent years. Increasing conflicts are not due to more bears, but rather due to increasing deadliness of people.

• **Rancher Calls Grizzly Bears That Get Entangled With Livestock “Murderers and Rapists.”**

In a piece eerily reminiscent of the current resident of the White House, a sheep rancher from the Rocky Mountain Front equated grizzlies that get tangled up with livestock with “murders and rapists.” Huh? She said this just as state officials completed stringing electric fence around her sheep corral. Moreover, State officials routinely kill grizzly bears that have been involved in more than one conflict with people or livestock, even though these grizzlies are still protected under the Endangered Species Act.

My immediate response was to wonder why we bother catering to people such as her. Acknowledging that “electricity is the Achilles Heel of the large predator world,” she has nothing to complain about, especially since the fencing was donated, as was the labor to erect it.

This rancher, an obvious devotee of Trump, unleashed additional vitriol on the author of a letter to the editor who challenged her claims, pouring gas on the fire of increasingly uncivil public discourse. Meanwhile, as driven by its regressive masters, Montana is sprinting to delist grizzlies in the Glacier ecosystem, even as the delisting of Yellowstone’s grizzlies is forestalled in court – at least for the next week.

We need to remember that grizzlies may have conflicts with people, but only because they are hard-pressed to make a living in the midst of increasing numbers of people.

According to government officials, most conflicts with livestock and people can be avoided.

<https://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/2018/09/05/lisa-schmidt-grizzly-npr-abbby-hutton-defenders-wildlife-ranching-hunting-season/1201730002/>

• **Sheep Experiment Station Gets Green Light, Again.**

For many years, environmentalists in alliance with a handful of federal land managers have tried to put a permanent stop to sheep grazing in the Centennial Mountains along the

Continental Divide that straddles the Idaho/Montana border. Grizzlies have been expanding into the Centennials which, scientists maintain, provide the best connection between the long-isolated Greater Yellowstone bears and Idaho's vast Selway Bitterroot ecosystem, where grizzlies have long-since been extirpated.

Domestic sheep grazing is notoriously deadly to grizzlies, because sheep are like hamburger on legs, and herders are armed and deadly. Environmentalists stopped sheep grazing in the Centennials for years, and the Obama administration attempted to defund the federal "Sheep Experiment Station" after finding that its practices do not benefit the public at large. This so-called "experiment" is fundamentally about perpetuating a breed of sheep that could be grazed just about anywhere else. Indeed, over the past few decades, land managers have removed sheep from core grizzly bear habitat, but not these peripheral lands that are increasingly important to bears. In the wake of this recent, unsuccessful round of litigation, sheep grazing is now expected to resume in this critical connective habitat next summer. <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article217941575.html>

**For the bears,
*Louisa and David***
