



PO Box 2406  
Livingston, MT 59047  
Phone: 406-224-2250  
Email: [info@GrizzlyTimes.org](mailto:info@GrizzlyTimes.org)  
Web: [www.GrizzlyTimes.org](http://www.GrizzlyTimes.org)

## 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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March 22, 2020

***Dear Friend of the Grizzly,***

Grizzlies are beginning to rouse themselves in Yellowstone and around the northern Hemisphere, a bit earlier than usual in what is the warmest winter ever recorded. Even Chris Servheen, former Fish and Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, and long a denier of the threat posed by climate change to grizzlies, now admits that for bears to awaken before much food is available invites conflicts with humans. And as we discuss below, that is only the tip of the iceberg of climate-related threats to grizzlies. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/11/mild-winter-bears-emerge-from-hibernation>



Grizzlies are arising from their winter isolation as many people den up in this strangest of times. And there is much news to report, as well as new cool videos and a blog by David. We are thrilled to share a stunning poem “Grizzly” by award-winning poet Ellen Bass which will soon be published in her book *Indigo*.

With this newsletter, we are delighted to kick off a new series of *Grizzly Times* videos, chock full of science and fun information. We extend a special thanks to filmmaker Krist Chinander and to wildlife filmmaker and photographer Brad Orsted for the use of his amazing footage of grizzlies. Hope you enjoy!

**NEW BLOG:**

***Traveling Fast & Silent: Mountain Biking With Grizzly Bears***

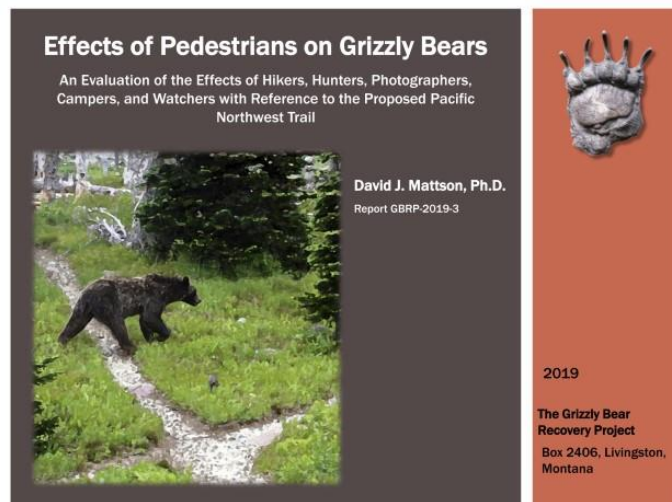
By David Mattson

In this blog (which follows below), David discusses the impact of mountain biking on grizzlies, which is particularly hazardous for female grizzlies with cubs, not to mention bikers.

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2020/02/27/Traveling-Fast-Silent-Mountain-Biking-With-Grizzly-Bears>

This video fleshes out the key themes in the blog: <https://youtu.be/8307SiOFuMM>

And if you want more on this topic, here is David’s detailed report on the Effects of Pedestrians on Grizzlies: [Report: Effects of Pedestrians on Grizzly Bears](#)



Learn more about David here: <https://youtu.be/bYuepdZJjOY>

**IN THE NEWS:**

**Grizzly Mischief**

We continue to see unhelpful political meddling in grizzly bear management across the board and at the highest level of government. Even though protection for the Yellowstone grizzly was restored by court order in 2018, Aurelia Skipwith, who was recently confirmed

as Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), wasted no time in making a special visit to the American Sheep Industry Association convention in Arizona, where she bashed environmental groups as “extremists” and vowed to remove protections for grizzlies and wolves.

<https://cowboystatedaily.com/2020/02/17/cat-urbigkit-the-fighter-leading-the-u-s-fish-wildlife-service/>

Meanwhile, Interior Secretary David Bernhardt recently announced a new policy to facilitate killing and harassing of grizzlies along Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front east of Glacier Park – despite the fact they are protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which should make such practices illegal. Interior is also funneling an additional \$250,000 to Wildlife Services to hire two additional employees to “deal with” livestock depredation along the Front, where grizzly bears have been moving eastward to compensate for the loss of native foods resulting from losses of whitebark pine and climate-amplified wildfires. Wildlife Services is notorious for killing large carnivores at the behest of the livestock industry.

Bernhardt also said that FWS will provide additional guidance on what the public can do to haze grizzly bears, including using paintballs, noise-making projectiles and visual deterrents. Needless-to-say, none of this is good news for grizzlies.

- <https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2020/03/grizzly-bear-control/>
- <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/grizzly-bear-hazing-rules-allow-paintballs#stream/0>

While some ranchers along the Front work hard to coexist with grizzlies, others like Trina Jo Bradley, who serves on the Montana Grizzly Bear Advisory Council, are fueling fears about “killer bears.” The council is midway through a year-long process authorized by Montana Governor Steve Bullock to address coexistence, connectivity and recovery of grizzlies in the state. The recommendations of the council will be used to frame the state’s upcoming revision of its grizzly bear management plans.

- <https://www.explorebigsky.com/grizzly-council-talks-funding-recreation-and-bears-in-libby/33392>
- <https://www.explorebigsky.com/grizzly-panel-reaches-half-way-point/32906>

The efforts of Bradley and other hardline ranchers to sow discord and broadcast misinformation are making a civil conversation increasingly difficult. They have provoked Montana Congressman Greg Gianforte to claim that grizzlies are seeking to eat children. Several scientists, including David and Chris Servheen – who have rarely agreed on much related to grizzlies – did their best to refute these bogus and irresponsible claims.

David offered this: “Between 1850 and 1950, humans killed over 60,000 grizzlies in the Lower 48, while grizzlies killed only 60 or so people during this same period of time – 1,000 times fewer. Even with Endangered Species Act protections, which began in 1975, humans have killed more than 1,000 bears in the Northern Rockies, while grizzlies have killed around a dozen humans in that time period...”

Representative Gianforte’s statement is yet another example of the evidence-free hyperbole that has come to typify our political discourse. It degrades the dignity of his political office and insults the intelligence of anyone who is the least bit informed about grizzly bears.”

If there was a silver lining here, it is in the recent launch of a website, Bear Tracks, by Montana journalist Johnathan Hettinger, who seeks to tell "the rest of the story" about grizzly bears. Keep your eyes peeled for more from Johnathan!  
<https://bear-tracks.org/2020/02/04/no-rep-gianforte-grizzlies-are-not-trying-to-eat-children->

### **Too Many Bears are Being Killed**

Far too many grizzly bears are being killed in the Northern Rockies. But, even though we saw record-breaking grizzly bear deaths in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) for the second year in a row, the government has dismissed the problem – despite the fact that over 80% of these deaths were caused by humans, and many were avoidable.

Even the New York Times got the story wrong, which is easy enough to do if you only talk to government officials with a vested interest in stripping grizzlies of all protections and killing more bears. Worse yet, the Times reporter Jim Robbins and others have missed the major reason why grizzlies are dying in such numbers: the direct and indirect effects of human-caused environmental change.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/science/grizzly-bears-deaths.html>

Here is more context for what's going on in the NCDE. A non-native fungal pathogen, white pine blister rust, has eliminated high-elevation whitebark pines that were a vital source of fat-rich seeds for grizzlies. Aggravating this loss, a warming climate catalyzed wildfires that burned more than 25% of grizzly bear habitat during the last 30 years, offering bears little to eat during post-fire decades. And on top of all this, during 1998-2010 berries withered during a severe drought that foreshadowed our future climate. All of these changes forced grizzlies to move downslope in search of alternate foods. What grizzlies are finding are people, guns, highways, railways, ranches, and subdivisions.

The bottom line is that the Northern Rockies – the grizzly's last redoubt in the Lower 48 states – are getting hotter and drier, and are projected to become more so. That will mean more fire, less food, and more dead bears. Improving coexistence practices has never been so critical.

For more on all this, see this testimony that David submitted last year to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: [Mattson Letter to Natural Resources Committee](#)

Robbins is hardly alone in missing key aspects of the dead bear story. Veteran reporter Angus Thuermer of Wyofile seems to have been duped by Wyoming Game and Fish (WGF) officials in a very strange case involving a grizzly bear that died in a trap from myopathy (overheating) last September at the Shoshone Lodge near Cody. Angus overlooked the contradictory WGF statements about the death, the questionable nature of the investigation, the cold weather at the time, and two exacerbating facts.

First, there were no signs around the site warning guests that a baited trap had been set for a grizzly bear within a few hundred yards of cabins occupied by tourists. Someone easily could have been killed, as in fact happened a few miles from this spot during 2010. That year, botanist Erwin Evert accidentally walked into a grizzly that was waking up from

drugs. He had no warning, because government trappers were in such a rush to get home that they had abandoned a druggy bear and pulled all of their warning signs.

According to extensive photographic documentation of the area taken by Bob Neven, who was staying at the lodge that night, there was no information around the trap site warning people of what was going on. Indeed, lodge employees actually wandered around the trap in the middle of the night. Really?

Compounding this, the man in charge of this trapping operation was none other than Luke Ellsbury, a large carnivore biologist for WGF, who had previously shot a grizzly bear from a highway thinking it was a black bear. Shooting a firearm from a public highway is illegal, as is shooting a grizzly bear. Yet Ellsbury got off with a slap on the wrist from his employer.

And we are supposed to trust the state of Wyoming with our grizzlies and our lives?

Finally, University of Utah professor and author Maximilian Werner, whose work has been published on *Grizzly Times*, shared a valuable perspective in the Salt Lake Tribune on The West's vicious and unrelenting campaign against predators. Even as society works to learn from our tragic mistakes in eradicating predators across the West, Werner documents the efforts of certain politicians to reverse our progress and make it easier to kill predators. His upcoming book on the topic is: "*Wolves, Grizzlies, and Greenhorns: Death and Coexistence in the American West.*"

- <https://www.wyofile.com/game-and-fish-documents-first-agency-trap-related-grizzly-death/>
- <http://www.codyenterprise.com/news/local>
- <https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2020/02/02/maximilian-werner/>
- <https://www.mtpr.org/post/grizzly-bear-encounters-southern-montana-increase-recent-years>

### Where the Buffalo Would Roam



As often happens in Yellowstone, late winter snows have been driving buffalo to lower elevation lands outside the Park to find grass. Thus far, we have seen a total of 610



Yellowstone buffalo removed from the wild, some by hunting but mostly by capture in a pen at the north end of Yellowstone Park. Many of the captured animals will be sent to slaughter, but some will be sent to a quarantine facility to test for the disease brucellosis. And more could be killed, as the Park Service has set a goal of killing 900 buffalo out of a total population of 5000 animals this winter.

The policy is based on an outdated and ill-conceived management plan built around the unsubstantiated notion that brucellosis transmitted from buffalo is a dire threat to cows – something that has never happened in the wild. And even if it did, there are no cows in the area where the buffalo are trying to migrate. This is an evidence-free political agenda driven by the livestock industry and the state of Montana at the expense of publicly owned wildlife.

The policy is bad for grizzlies too, as they are relying on more meat to make up for losses of other foods, including trout and whitebark pine seeds, lost because of climate change and the impacts of invasive species. And among Yellowstone's meat sources, buffalo is one of the best for bears. The massive size of a buffalo carcass insures there will be lots of meat for any bear fortunate enough to find it. Increasing numbers of bison in Yellowstone's northern herd have been one of the very few bright spots for grizzlies, as other native ungulates, including elk and moose, have been tanking throughout Greater Yellowstone.

But bears can hardly take advantage of buffalo since under current policies, buffalo that would otherwise die of natural deaths and be available as carrion, are removed from the ecosystem.

Compounding the inanity of current management targeting buffalo, it is elk, not buffalo, that have transmitted brucellosis to cows. In fact, there are nearly 30 documented instances of this having happened, including this winter in Montana's Ruby Mountains. But no one is doing anything about elk as a disease vector for the simple reason that sportsmen would go bonkers.

This is a tragic situation, where everyone loses: bison, grizzlies, and the broader public who love Yellowstone's wildlife.

For more on the use of ungulates by grizzlies, see this report by David: [Report: Grizzly Bears and Ungulates in Yellowstone Ecosystem](#)

But there is some good news. Congress recently held a hearing on the [Indian Buffalo Management Act](#) that would authorize \$14 million in grants and cooperation from the federal government to restore bison to tribal lands. Numerous tribes have some buffalo on their reservations but are eager for more. Tribes have a tremendous opportunity to lead the restoration of buffalo throughout the western plains.

Jason Baldes, the buffalo representative for Wyoming's Eastern Shoshone Tribe, sees passage of the federal act as a way to right an old wrong, saying: "The Indian Buffalo Management Act would help tribal nations restore bison to their rightful home and offer a chance for native people to reconnect, heal and revitalize our historical and cultural connections. Colonialism attempted to annihilate our language, our culture and us as a

people. This legislation would be a step toward making it right. The buffalo's story is not only a Native American story but an American story as well."

To stay abreast of developments on the issue, the Buffalo Field Campaign does a great job:

- <https://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org>
- <https://www.newsweek.com/bison-migration-slaughter-yellowstone-1489558>
- <https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/dozens-of-yellowstone-bison-killed-by-hunters-near-gardiner>
- <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/feb/15/livestock-disease-found-in-elk-in-montanas-ruby-mo/>
- <https://www.mtpr.org/post/elk-are-primary-source-brucellosis-yellowstone-area-report-says>
- <https://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/update-from-the-field-ibmp-exceeds-decimation-of-last-wild-buffalo-herds>
- <https://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/tribal-representatives-urge-passage-of-act-restoring-bison-to-tribal>

### **Groups Sue to Keep Idaho Road Closed to Protect Selkirks' Grizzlies**

Five environmental groups recently announced that they will sue the government over its decision to reopen a long-closed road bisecting important grizzly bear habitat north of Priest Lake in Idaho's Selkirk ecosystem. The U.S. Border Patrol asked the U.S. Forest Service (FS) to reopen 5.6 miles of the road, citing "legitimate threats to border security."

The road was closed in the late 1980s in an effort to protect the last 40 or so endangered grizzly bears that roam the rugged, wild country between Priest Lake and the Canadian border. About 25% of all grizzly sightings in the Selkirks have occurred in this area, making it particularly vital to recovery of this beleaguered population.

We are worried about national security threats from Canada? Seriously?

- <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/feb/03/long-closed-road-bisecting-grizzly-habitat-to-reop/>
- <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/mar/11/five-groups-sue-to-block-reopening-of-road-bisecti/>

### **Selway Bitterroot Grizzlies Afforded Full Protections under Endangered Species Act, Finally**

At long last, grizzlies that have made their way back to the vast Selway Bitterroot ecosystem will receive full federal protections under the ESA. These protections had been weakened to "experimental, nonessential" status 20 years ago when the government had planned to reintroduce them artificially, as was done with wolves. While the proposal was blocked by incoming President G.W. Bush, since then the status of these grizzlies has been in limbo.

We are seeing more and more evidence of threatened grizzlies returning to these wildlands – and of course they deserve protection!

- <https://www.mtpr.org/post/bitterroot-grizzlies-will-have-full-esa-protections-wildlife-officials-say>
- <https://www.kpax.com/news/western-montana-news/national-forests-told-to-protect-grizzly-bears-as-threatened>

**\*Take Action\*: Please Ask the Forest Service to Protect Selway Bitterroot Grizzlies**



*Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest*

The Forest Service recently released a terrible draft forest plan revision for the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests that opens the door to rampant logging and development in some of the wildest country left in the Lower 48 states. These National Forests are part of an inland temperate [rainforest](#) that is the farthest inland of any in the world, and provide refuge for numerous imperiled species such as [wolverines](#), gray wolves, grizzly bears, [Canada lynx](#), fisher, salmon, steelhead, and [bull trout](#).

Despite new grizzly bear sightings on these forests, the FS has ignored [grizzly bear recovery](#) in the draft plan. It fails to protect secure habitat for grizzlies outside of designated Wilderness. The Forest Service needs to do better!

The fabulous folks at Friends of the Clearwater are leading the charge on this plan and provide great information here:

- <https://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/forest-plan/>
- <https://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Show-Support-for-Grizzly-Recovery.pdf>

\* Please send comments by Monday, April 20, 2020. They can be sent to the Forest Service electronically through the agency's [website/comment form](#). They can also be sent via email to [sm.fs.fpr\\_npclw@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.fpr_npclw@usda.gov). (Remember to provide your name and address.) You can also mail them to:

*Zach Peterson  
Forest Planner  
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Supervisors Office  
903 3rd Street  
Kamiah, ID 83536*

**Kootenai Forest Withdraws Terrible Logging Plan**



The Forest Service recently withdrew a massive logging project – called Black Ram – in the Cabinet Yaak Ecosystem. The project would have had devastating impacts on the last 25 or so grizzlies hanging on in the Yaak portion of this ecosystem.

This population has no freeboard and any additional habitat destruction, let alone a project involving more than 90,000 acres and many new roads, could push these grizzlies over the edge. David submitted extensive comments on this catastrophic plan that was clearly headed to court.

- [Report: Effects of Black Ram Project](#)
- <https://flatheadbeacon.com/2020/02/23/kootenai-national-forest-places-hold-sprawling-logging-project-yaak/>

**Check Out this Cool Video of Grizzly Emerging from Den in Kicking Horse Sanctuary:** <https://infotel.ca/newsitem/as-humans-isolate-this-bc-grizzly-emerges-from-a-snowy-hibernation/it71438>



### **Grizzly, by Ellen Bass**

We are honored to be able to share this poem, *Grizzly*, by award-winning poet Ellen Bass. The poem will soon be published in Ellen's forthcoming book, *Indigo*. Ellen reached out to us after reading the recent piece in Sun Magazine on our work. Check out her other poetry books that include *Like a Beggar*, *The Human Line*, and *Mules of Love*. And stay tuned for a Grizzly Times interview with Ellen!

You can learn more about Ellen here: <https://www.ellenbass.com/>

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### **Grizzly**

*She grazes in a meadow, sulphur blossoms spilling  
from her jaw.*

*At this moment she seems so calm, she could be holy  
if what that means is something like being*

*wholly unaware of the good she gives,*

*how even her rooting tills the soil*

*and even her shitting ferries the seeds  
and even her bathing is a joy to behold*

*as I am beholding her this morning  
as she leans over a water hole, her shadow first*

*and then her reflection on the skin of the water,  
then the splash as she enters, the pond opening,*

*rippling, and the scritch as she scrubs  
her head with her paw, the great planet*

*of her head that she dunks and raises, shaking  
the water in wide arcs, spraying*

*the lens of the hidden camera. And now  
she climbs out, water rivering off her fur.*

*She is drying that huge head  
in the long grasses.*

*And here she hunkers  
over a bison carcass, slowly ripping free*

*the shoulder. Those precision instruments  
that work with an ease that seems—yes—delicate.*

*Blood stains the river and stains  
the snow bank and stains the rock.*

*Vessel carrying the chemicals of life—  
hair and bone, flagella and bloom.*

*She carries them, lumbering forward  
as she sinks her teeth and feeds.*

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### **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 – despite the gradual dissolution of our physical bodies.

If you were following the delisting court case, you know that David's role was vital to the litigation success that restored protections to the Yellowstone Ecosystem'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 Ninth 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: <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*

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**Grizzly Times Blog**

### ***Traveling Fast & Silent: Mountain Biking With Grizzly Bears***

**February 27, 2020**

**[David Mattson, PhD.](#)**



The impacts of mountain bikers on wildlands and wildlife is at the center of a heated nation-wide debate fueled by increasing numbers of increasingly well-organized bikers intent on gaining access to backcountry areas. There is no better example of the contentious debate between mountain bikers and wilderness advocates than in deliberations over how to manage remaining roadless areas on the Custer-Gallatin National Forest in Montana. Proponents of mountain-biking feature rights and equity in a rhetoric that unambiguously places ego front and center. Opponents feature moral

imperatives to protect intrinsic values, as well as irreplaceable wildlands for future generations.

Debates such as this one arising from fundamentally different ethical stances – even visceral impulses – are rarely resolved through the invocation of evidence. Under such circumstances most people selectively promote or disregard information in service of ideological purposes. Even so, I remain incurably optimistic about the prospects for empiricism.

Given these premises, what follows is a summary of what is known or can be readily deduced about both the impacts of mountain bikers on grizzly bears as well as the impacts of mountain bikers on themselves through hazards that inevitably arise from moving silently and at high speeds in areas occupied by grizzlies. I've restricted my focus to grizzly bears because they are an animal I am familiar with – beyond that I know just enough to be dangerous. What I present here is extracted from [a report](#) I recently produced in which I review research on relations between grizzlies and people on foot (i.e., pedestrians) and within which you can find relevant citations and references for what follows.

### **The Hazards of Mountain Biking**

Mountain bikers occupy a conceptual middle-ground between pedestrians and people on or in motorized transport. They do not employ noisy mechanized equipment that potentially gives advance warning of their progress, but at the same time they move at potentially high speeds. Unlike people enclosed in hard-sided mechanized vehicles, but like people riding off-road-vehicles (OHV) or on foot, they are exposed to the risks of physical injury from an attacking grizzly bear. Given these provisos, mountain bikers qualify for extrapolation of research that is otherwise focused on pedestrians, primarily because of their comparative silence, as well as vulnerability.

Emblematic of this point, Brad Treat was killed by a grizzly bear in Montana during June of 2016 after essentially colliding with the bear while he was traveling at high speed on a mountain bike along a trail with limited visibility. This incident elevated the profile of risks for both people and bears posed by mountain biking, although a number of similar incidents in Canada had highlighted the hazards of mountain biking as much as 20 years earlier. Concern about risks have also been magnified by the fact that mountain biking is becoming more popular in areas occupied by grizzly bears, reflective of the 28% increase nationwide in this activity during the last 10 years.

The few scientific investigations of encounters between bikers and grizzly bears paint a stark picture. Data pooled from all of the available reports show that 87% of all documented encounters were at distances less than 50 m, and that 52% involved females with young. Of these close encounters, 89% resulted in the biker either being approached or charged by the involved bear. Not surprisingly, of the 41 encounters described by bicyclists interviewed by Matt Schmor in Alberta, bears were described as being “startled” during 66% of them.

These risk-related figures are far in excess of the averages for other encounters between pedestrians and grizzly bears. The percent of encounters that elicited some kind of aggressive response from involved bears is an astounding 14-times greater for mountain bikers compared to people on foot. Even if, compared to pedestrians, a greater number of

“encounters” went undetected by mountain bikers, this alone would not account for the magnitude of this disparity. Moreover, the obvious heightened reactivity of bears to mountain bikers is not surprising given that average encounter distances were closer for bikers compared to the average 70-90 m involving pedestrians – and well within the overt reaction distance recorded for most grizzly bears.

These results are not unexpected. As Jake and Steve Herrero noted nearly 20 years ago, mountain biking is a perfect recipe for hazardous close encounters with grizzly bears given that bikers are often traveling silently at comparatively high speeds (11-30 km per hour), which increases the odds of rapid closure prior to detection, along with amplified reactivity among even highly tolerant bears. This same point has subsequently been made in several assessments of hazards posed by mountain biking in grizzly bear habitat.

The disproportionately large number of encounters between mountain bikers and female grizzly bears with young is also not surprising. If a person is approaching at high speed, solitary bears are plausibly better able to detect the approach and leave before being seen. By contrast, females with young are predictably challenged and delayed by marshaling their offspring before being able to depart, even if they detect an oncoming bicyclist at a distance. The plausible outcome is an encounter at close range with a highly reactive female grizzly bear mobilized in defense of her young.

#### **And, Then, Impacts on Bears**

The flip side of this dynamic between mountain bikers and grizzly bears is the likely short- and long-term impacts on involved bears. Greater immediate reactivity on the part of bears almost certainly translates into more rapid and sustained subsequent flight, along with longer-term energetic and physiological costs associated with impaired foraging, increased movements, and displacement of activity to sub-optimal times of day.

Moreover, if an encounter has turned out tragically for the involved human, the involved bear will likely pay for the outcome with its life, as was apparently intended when numerous well-armed men expended considerable effort to find the grizzly that killed Brad Treat after a surprise collision.

#### **Mountain Biking is Hazardous for People and Detrimental to Bears**

The weight of evidence unambiguously supports concluding that mountain biking is far more hazardous for involved people and more impactful on affected bears compared to any other pedestrian activity, with the exception of hunting. Given this perhaps self-evident verdict, it is not surprising that Parks Canada seasonally or permanently closed trails to mountain bikers several years ago in areas where chances of hazardous encounters were high (the Minnewonka, Moraine Lake Highline, and Bryant Creek trails).

Returning to where I started, I am under no illusion that this recitation of evidence and well-supported inferences will settle debates over whether mountain bikers should have increased access to roadless wildlands. If nothing else, those who view recreating on bikes as an entitlement would probably insist that potential harm to animals such as grizzly bears be proven beyond any reasonable doubt – as opposed to being well-supported by the weight of evidence, as in this essay. In the end, evidence is judged in reference to ethical propositions that inescapably reflect the kinds of people we want to be and the kind of world we want to leave our grandchildren.



Grizzly Times | PO Box 2406, Livingston, MT 59047

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