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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,

As summer wanes and hungry grizzlies pack on pounds, news of conflict and coexistence work tops headlines. With three guest columns in regional papers, we have been part of the unfolding story too – and are also featured in a new documentary film by Germany’s version of the BBC featuring Trump’s war on the environment, including grizzlies.

NEW BLOG:

Grizzly Twister and Other Games That Scientists Play

By David Mattson

David’s killer blog *Grizzly Twister* tackles the tortuous, twisted logic used by federal scientists – not unlike the contortions of players in Milton Bradley’s game – to justify removal of federal grizzly bear protections and allow more killing. We hope you enjoy the cartoon by Phil Juliano, who has enlivened many blogs over the years.

If you have had a niggly sense that what you hear in the media is only a part of the story, read on. Unraveling threads woven over the years, especially related to manipulations of science related to grizzly bear demography, David here provides an interpretation of the evidence that reflects reality rather than politicized thinking.

He concludes this way:

“In the case of grizzly bears, our taxpayer-supported scientists have not been acting as honest brokers of scientific information. This cankerous problem is compounded by the uncritical embrace of their platitudes and disinformation by managers, undiscerning journalists, and a vulnerable public. Until this root

problem is corrected, we will continue to be at the mercy of decision-making driven by corrupted science.”

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2019/06/29/Grizzly-Twister-and-Other-Games-that-Scientists-Play>

America First - Nature Last

This Award-Winning German Documentary Film on Trump and the Environment Features Yellowstone Grizzlies, Northern Cheyenne leaders, plus Louisa and David!

This powerful award-winning film by a team of German filmmakers at NATOURALE WIESBADEN – Germany’s version of the BBC – pulls no punches on the Trump administration’s handling of the environment. The film dives deep into Appalachian coal, the BP oil spill, as well as Yellowstone grizzlies, trophy hunting, and climate change. Filming was done just prior to Judge Christensen’s ruling last year that restored endangered species protections.

Northern Cheyenne tribal Chair Lawrence Killsback and elder Phillip Whiteman – both eloquent spokesmen for the Great Bear – did a great job. Enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch...>

Guest Opinions by David and Louisa

On the Endangered Species Act, Transparency, and Agency Duplicity

In a recent column in the Missoulian, David takes on the widespread but wrongheaded claim that grizzlies are coming out our ears, saying: “The world is not static for grizzly bears. In fact, they are probably under more duress now than they have been for decades. Grizzly bears are not the problem. We are the problem. One-sided stories that lack context will only make it more difficult to grapple with the challenges and complexities of living with grizzlies.”

<https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/people-in-the-backyard-of-grizzlies>

Two editorials by Louisa were published recently, as well. In the Billings Gazette she wrote about Trump’s decision to gut the Endangered Species Act (ESA), making it harder for the federal government to grant imperiled species the protections needed to prevent extinction, while facilitating removal of protections for species that are currently listed, including grizzlies. Not surprisingly, requirements to consider the impacts of climate change have essentially been eliminated.

<https://billingsgazette.com/opinion/columnists/guest-opinion-endangering-the-ark>

In the Idaho State Journal, Louisa criticizes Trump’s directive, articulated in a recently leaked memo to federal agencies, to withhold certain public records about how the ESA is being implemented. This includes instances where recommendations by career wildlife scientists may have been overridden by political appointees in the Trump administration. The memo confirms that the US Fish & Wildlife Service has already applied this guidance in deliberations related to its 2017 decision to prematurely remove ESA protections for Yellowstone grizzly bears.

<https://www.idahostatejournal.com/opinion/columns/grizzly-secrets-trump-administration-keeps-public-in-the-dark-about>

IN THE NEWS:

Conflicts and Coexistence Dominate News

Conflicts with grizzlies are exploding as the season advances, prompting trail closures in Glacier and Grand Teton Parks, safety warnings, and more relocations and bear killings.

In Greater Yellowstone, 20 grizzlies have been killed so far, 12 as a result of conflicts over cows, almost all on public lands.

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

In the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) at least 26 grizzlies are dead, although it's hard to know for sure what the current tally is given that Montana officials resist offering the public real-time information, as is done in the GYE.

On a positive note, we are seeing lots of stories about conflict prevention, including use of pepper spray (even free giveaways in Idaho!), respecting bears' space, and managing fruit trees.

- <https://www.mtpr.org/post/are-you-sure-you-know-how-use-bear-spray>
- <https://www.eastidahonews.com/2019/08/idaho-fish-game-has-180-cans-of-bear-spray-and-theyre-giving-them-away-for-free-this-saturday/>
- <https://buckrail.com/the-safety-of-wildlife-on-togwotee-pass-begins-with-humans/>
- <https://www.nelsonstar.com/community/managing-fruit-trees-critical-to-avoiding-human-bear-conflicts/>

Interestingly, in Kamloops, BC, activists have filed a petition to require use of Karelian bear dogs, rather than guns, to resolve problems with bears.

https://www.kamloopsbcnow.com/Petition_started_to_stop_euthanizing_bears_use_Karelian_bear_dogs_instead/

And North America is hardly alone. The EU recently moved to fully reimburse farmers for livestock depredations by large carnivores and pay the full costs of electric fencing and other protective measures.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment>

But some people continue to engage in dumb behavior and boast about it, as here involving a Canadian handing a grizzly a donut-like timbit. Fortunately, he was caught and received a \$2,500 fine.

<https://www.narcity.com/news/ca/bc/feeding-bear-timbits-definitely-not-a-good-idea-due-to-fines-and-danger-of-bear-attacks>



Ah, Wyoming...

Wyoming Game and Fish (WGF) persists in exacerbating rather than constructively solving problems. In a game of grizzly bear “take and put,” WGF has been trucking grizzlies around as apparent means of deferring resolution of on-the-ground problems.

Even more egregiously, they’ve been dumping the exiled bears into areas with high densities of not only humans, but also other grizzlies, increasing the odds of additional conflicts.

In another instance of punishing the innocent, WGF accidentally trapped a grizzly that had not been involved in any conflict – but then relocated it anyway.

<https://buckrail.com/grizzly-bear-moved-from-dubois-area-to-blackrock-creek/>

Author George Wuerthner offers important context for the chronic conflicts between the ranchers and grizzlies, reminding us that these are public lands and should be managed for broader public benefits, not the profits of a wealthy few.

<http://www.thewildlifeneews.com/.../griz-killings-in-upper-gr.../>

Suit to Stop a Trail from Slicing the Heart of the Yaak

The Yaak Valley Forest Council recently filed suit in federal court against the U.S. Forest Service “on behalf of the Yaak Valley’s last 25 grizzly bears,” in an effort to stop the agency from building the Pacific Northwest Trail through key grizzly habitat in the Yaak.

Yaak Valley Forest Council Chair Rick Bass called the current route “a giant train wreck.” The group favors an alternative route that would avoid this important habitat.

Good luck Rick and YVFC!

- https://www.dailyinterlake.com/.../yaak_advocates_describe_tr...
- https://www.thewesternnews.com/local_news/20190830/lawsuit_challenges_trail_route_through_yaak

Alliance for the Wild Rockies Moves to Block Clearcutting in Selkirks

Alliance for the Wild Rockies recently filed suit in U.S. District Court to halt the Hanna Flats logging project in north Idaho's Selkirk ecosystem, where only about 50 grizzlies hang on. The 3,000 acre project was excluded by the Trump Administration from environmental review.

"With such high mortality rates and so few bears, the population chronically fails all recovery goals and is threatened by inbreeding due to lack of connectivity to other grizzly bear populations," says Director Mike Garrity.

Go get em, AWR!

https://www.bonnercountydailybee.com/local_news/20190831/suit_filed_to_halt_hanna_flats_project

Outrage over Trump's Gutting the ESA

Once again into the breach, Earthjustice wasted no time going to court on behalf of several conservation groups to block the Trump administration from implementing its death sentence for imperiled species.

<https://earthjustice.org/news/press/2019/lawsuit-challenges-trump-administration-attack-on-endangered-species-act>

Outrage over Trump's move has been impassioned. We found this column in the Washington Post particularly touching: "Endangered bear confident it would not be treated this way if it were only a person."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/08/14/endangered-bear-confident-it-would-not-be-treated-this-way-if-it-were-only-person>

And this by Montana hunter, climate activist, and ESA defender Todd Tanner, who writes that "our fishing and hunting here in Montana, and in neighboring states like Idaho and Wyoming, are appreciably better because the federal government had the foresight to list the grizzly as a threatened species."

<https://www.newsweek.com/trump-administrations-attack-natur...>

And this beautiful defense of the ESA by Gardiner, Montana, conservationist Rich Lamplugh:

https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/opinions/guest_columnists/we-must-be-good-neighbors-to-endangered-species

Terror Entrepreneurs Ride Again

"Terror Entrepreneur" is a term David coined to describe men who fueled the witch craze in Europe by deliberately inciting fear and anxiety about people who were nonconformist or just different – mostly older single women involved in childbirth and healing.

Yet again, Cody Enterprise reporter Lew Freedman deserves the title. In a recent editorial, he praised Trump's new ESA rules, praying they will allow the states to get control over managing grizzly bears, so that more bears can be killed.

http://www.codyenterprise.com/news/opinion/article_886aefcc-c2b1-11e9-a6db-8354c2cbc1a1.html

Underscoring his sympathies, Freedman heavily promoted a recent book by Pinedale rancher Cat Urbigkit that hypes grizzlies as violent killers.

- <https://cowboystatedaily.com/2019/08/26/bear-attacks-increasing-worldwide/>
- http://www.codyenterprise.com/news/people/article_28ad0452-bd30-11e9-99b8-cf24108e9404.html

Other Terror Entrepreneurs include the Wyoming congressional delegation and Albert Sommers, a wealthy Pinedale rancher who operates in the epicenter of grizzly bear conflicts, here featured in this one-sided story by Angus Thuermer of Wyofile:

<https://www.wyofile.com/pols-judge-greens-lay-conflicting-claims-to-grizzly-science/>

Such stories beg the question of why journalists so gratuitously give a megaphone to Terror Entrepreneurs and other destructive ideologues in reporting that seems little more than propaganda.

55 Yellowstone Bison Moved to Fort Peck Reservation

Last week, 55 genetically pure bison were moved from a quarantine facility near Yellowstone Park to Montana's Fort Peck Indian Reservation, adding to the tribes' cultural herds now totaling near 600 animals.

Fort Peck's tribal government wants to become a source of bison for other tribes around the country. As historical fulfillment of this mission, five bison were sent to Wyoming's Wind River Reservation in May. Yellowstone bison are unique in being descended from the largest free-roaming population to survive slaughter by Europeans.

Yellowstone bison carry brucellosis, a disease that theoretically could infect cattle. Even so, transmission has never been documented in the wild, nor is it ever likely to happen. Driven by fear and ideology, stock-growers have stridently resisted any shipment of bison from the Park or among Reservations and demanded that wild bison captured during culling programs be quarantined indefinitely – if not slaughtered.

<https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/fruits-of-our-labor-yellowstone-bison-moved-to-fort-peck>

And Now for Some Cool and Funny Videos

There are lots of fun videos online this week. Here are a few:

- This Yellowstone grizzly makes easy work of rolling over a huge bison carcass: <https://www.ebaumsworld.com/videos/the-sheer-power-of-a-grizzly-bear-is-a-force-to-be-reckoned-with/86049720>
- Here we have a grizzly using a tree like a stripper pole: <https://nypost.com/2019/08/30/dancing-grizzly-bear-works-this-tree-like-its-a-stripper-pole/>
- And, here, a fat grizzly lazes in a pool in the Denver Zoo: <https://denver.cbslocal.com/2019/08/27/video-grizzly-bear-denver-zoo/>

Last Word from Blackfoot Confederacy Chief Stan Grier on the Sacred Grizzly

Stan Grier, Chief of the Piikani Nation and President of the Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs, wrote a poignant editorial last week about the sacred grizzly. He was instrumental in developing the Grizzly Bear Treaty that was the basis for legislation introduced last spring by Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ).

“Decisions about the fate of our sacred grandparent, the grizzly, are falling to those who see ‘management’ as allowing the destruction of our Mother Earth and all of her sacred beings for oil and gas development. For tribal nations, protecting the grizzly bear comes down to guarding our religious and spiritual freedoms, our treaty rights and our sovereignty. The sacred grizzly is considered to be a deity by many tribes, not a rug.”

https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/opinion/guest_shot/to-protect-the-sacred-grizzly-bear-follow-those-who-know

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*