



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

NEWSLETTER

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 Friend of the Grizzly,

We have lots of (mostly) great grizzly news to report, along with a blog, an inspiring video and two fantastic podcasts. But the best news is last week's ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upholding Endangered Species Act protections for Greater Yellowstone grizzly bears and staving off state-sponsored plans for trophy hunting. More on this important ruling below.

New Blog:

Charlie Russell, Grizzly Whisperer

By Louisa Willcox



Charlie Russell chats with a friend!

Louisa's blog was inspired by her interview with Gay Bradshaw (see Podcast below) about Charlie Russell, a long-time friend and bear whisperer who sought to discover the truth about grizzlies and the potential human-bear connection. In so doing, he aimed to bust the myths perpetrated by a lot of hunters and wildlife managers – myths intended to propagate fear of purportedly unpredictable and vicious grizzlies. He wanted to show by his own life and deeds that it is possible to not only accommodate, but also peacefully coexist with, one of the largest terrestrial carnivores we have left on Earth.

She concludes: "So much harm comes from our misunderstanding... Charlie believed that the answer is rooted in a change of heart. Harmony with each other, with the world, and with other sentient beings begins by taking an inner journey towards compassion and empathy. If given a chance, animals, including grizzlies, will return our love and understanding many times over, enriching our lives immeasurably. Charlie showed us through his lived example how we can live gently and peacefully among wild bruins – the man with a tender grizzly heart."

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2020/07/11/Charlie-Russell-Grizzly-Whisperer>

New Video:

Redefining Recovery, Coexisting with Grizzly Bears

In this inspiring and provocative new film, Dr. David Mattson and Steve Primm, a nationally recognized expert on large carnivore coexistence, offer a path forward to ensuring a healthy future for the grizzly. The film addresses a fundamental problem: the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan, finalized in 1993, is outdated and in urgent need of revision. The Plan fails to account for a monumental amount of relevant research published since 1992. And the Plan articulates an impoverished and outdated vision of recovery for grizzly bears in the contiguous United States that fails to envision what's possible, scientifically defensible, and needed to ensure long-term viability.

The remedy, they argue, is for FWS to revise the Recovery Plan to reflect the best available science and an emerging consensus regarding requirements for long-term viability – notably the need for large connected populations totaling thousands of individuals with both genetic and demographic connectivity. This kind of revision also needs to reflect lessons learned from on-the-ground experience of successful coexistence between people and grizzly bears, which contributes to a more generous and meaningful vision of recovery for grizzly bears in the contiguous United States.

Many thanks to filmmakers Ashley Siana and Jessica Portuondo at Morel Media and Wyoming Wildlife Advocates!

Click below to see video:

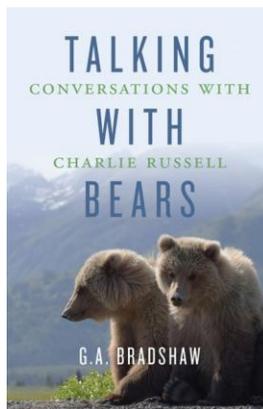


New Podcast:

Dr. Gay Bradshaw Discusses Grizzlies and Lessons from Charlie Russell

Don't miss this fascinating interview with Gay Bradshaw, psychologist, ecologist and pioneer researcher on animal trauma. The discussion features her latest book, [Talking with Bears: Conversations with Charlie Russell](#). She highlights Charlie's vision that he called "fitting in," which means deep listening, becoming part of where you are, rather than standing out and dominating other beings that has led to so much destruction. Gay concludes that we must "recede, refrain and restrain," and that we have a perfect opportunity now to make a radical change in our culture and devote ourselves to nature's wellness by putting ourselves second to nature.

<https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/gay-bradshaw>



You can buy Gay's book here: <https://rmbooks.com/book/talking-with-bears/>

Wilderness Podcast Interview with Grizzly Times

Adam Bronstein of Wilderness Podcast has a wide-ranging conversation with David and Louisa about speaking truth to power concerning grizzly bear management and delisting, the threats to grizzlies posed by excessive killing and climate change, and why state wildlife management must be reformed. Referencing conservation icon and philosopher Aldo Leopold, indigenous relationships with grizzlies, and robust science, they call for redoubling efforts on behalf of grizzlies and wild country.

<https://www.wildernesspodcast.com/grizzly-bear-advocacy>

In the News:

The Ninth Circuit Court Saves Greater Yellowstone Grizzlies, Again!

Last week, the Ninth Circuit agreed with District Judge Dana Christensen's 2018 decision to restore endangered species protections for Yellowstone grizzlies on the grounds that FWS had failed to review the impact of delisting grizzlies on remnant grizzly populations in the region; failed to consider the best available science on how delisting and subsequent trophy hunting would affect the population's genetic diversity; and neglected to recalibrate any new grizzly population estimation methods to prevent the creation of "paper bears" that might make the population seem bigger than it is.

Importantly, the Ninth Circuit judges found that the FWS' 2017 decision to delist was arbitrary and capricious because it improperly used two scientific studies to claim Yellowstone grizzlies were not threatened by a lack of genetic diversity, despite being the most inbred and isolated population in the continental U.S.

FWS officials say they are "disappointed" and are considering their next move. While the states and federal government are chomping at the bit to delist, they must address the court's concerns. Since this is an election year, we can expect that release of another delisting rule will be delayed.

This is the second time in a decade that the Ninth Circuit has ruled in favor of maintaining endangered species protections for the Greater Yellowstone grizzly.

Thanks go to the attorneys who work tirelessly on behalf of the grizzly – Nick Arrivo of Humane Society, Matt Bishop of Western Environmental Law Center, Tim Preso of Earthjustice, Tim Bechtold, and Bob Aland, plus Jeff Rasmussen for the Tribes. And David Mattson played a critical role advising the lawyers on the science.

- <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/506446-court-upholds-protections-for-yellowstone-grizzly-bears>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/09/yellowstone-grizzly-bears-federal-protections-court>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/us/grizzly-bears-yellowstone.html>
- <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/YellowstoneGrizzlyHunt-9CA.pdf>

Court Cancels Last Remaining Oil and Gas Lease in Badger-Two Medicine!



Badger-Two Medicine, Photo by Tony Bynum

The long fight against ill-conceived oil and gas development in the wild Badger-Two Medicine is finally over! A federal appeals court recently [upheld the cancellation](#) of the last remaining federal oil and gas lease in Montana's [Badger-Two Medicine](#) region.

The historic decision protects lands and waters sacred to the Blackfeet and critical for wildlife habitat. Lying next to Glacier National Park, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, the Badger-Two Medicine serves as an important wildlife corridor between these protected lands. A remarkable and diverse coalition of conservationists, sportsmen, ranchers and the Blackfeet Tribe has fought for decades to protect this 160,000 acre landscape that is home of grizzlies, wolves, bighorn sheep, moose and more.

Local advocates led by the Glacier Two Medicine Alliance have lost no time in moving to permanently protect this landscape legislatively. The Badger-Two Medicine Protection Act would prohibit energy development, roadbuilding and mountain bikes. The bill would also designate the Badger-Two Medicine as a Cultural Heritage Area, so Blackfeet people can continue to practice their cultural traditions and spirituality and have an ongoing role in decisions affecting its future.

- <https://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/2020/06/16/montana-court-rules-cancel-energy-lease-land-sacred-tribes/3201005001/>
- <https://www.glaciertwomedicine.org/blog/a-closer-look-at-the-badger-two-medicine-protection-act>

For more on the battle from one of its leaders, listen to this Grizzly Times podcast with Lou Bruno, founder of the Glacier Two Medicine Alliance:
<https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/lou-bruno>

Good News for the Selkirks' Grizzlies

In response to a lawsuit filed by five conservation groups, federal agencies have [agreed](#) to postpone planned re-construction of a road that would have harmed the last 50 or so grizzlies that hang on in Idaho's Selkirk Mountains near the U.S.-Canadian Border. Earlier this year the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Customs and Border Protection received approval to reconstruct the Bog Creek Road under the guise of border security.

The road is impassable, overgrown with trees and vegetation. The Forest Service closed the road in the late 1980s to protect grizzly bears. About 25% of all grizzly sightings in the Selkirks have occurred in this area, making it particularly vital to recovery of this beleaguered population.

Way to go bear defenders – Center for Biological Diversity, Idaho Conservation League, WildEarth Guardians, The Lands Council, and Selkirk Conservation Alliance!

https://www.khq.com/news/us-delays-repairs-for-north-idaho-road-in-grizzly-bear-habitat/article_9776d330-abdd-11ea-9829-f761760d5deb.html

Secretary Bernhardt Scraps Plans to Reintroduce Grizzly Bears into the North Cascades Ecosystem

U.S. Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt recently announced that the Department of the Interior will not move forward with a new Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan for the North Cascades Ecosystem, saying the bears aren't in danger of extinction (there are probably no more than 6) and local residents don't want them (meaning local conservative ranchers). This is a deeply disappointing but predictable development.

This region could support hundreds of grizzlies, which is why the National Park Service has been an advocate for the North Cascades restoration plan since analysis and writing began in 2015. Roughly 80% of public comments and people surveyed in the North Cascade region also support recovery of grizzly bears in this ecosystem. Conservationists have vowed to continue efforts to restore grizzlies in this much-neglected Recovery Area.

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/interior-scrap-plan-to-reintroduce-grizzly-bears-in-cascades>

For more on this debate, and why grizzlies should be recovered in the North Cascades, listen to this Grizzly Times interview with Jack Oelfke of North Cascades Park: <https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/jack-oelfke>

Extraordinary Claims by Upper Green Ranchers in Grizzly Bear Case



Upper Green River, Photo by George Wuerthner

Wealthy ranchers in Wyoming's Upper Green River area are making some extraordinary claims in response to a recent lawsuit filed by Western Watersheds Project, the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and Yellowstone to Uintas Connection to stop the killing of 72 grizzlies, putatively to protect cows grazing on public lands. They are also crowing about a recent court ruling denying a request for a preliminary injunction that would have prevented ranchers from killing grizzly bears that attack their herds while the court deliberates on the merits of the case.

The area has become the hotbed of conflicts between grizzly bears and ranchers exploiting public lands in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, in part due to the regressive attitudes of this particular group of ranchers who claim they have the "right" to kill threatened grizzlies to protect their tax-payer subsidized cattle.

Instead of working to prevent conflicts with grizzlies, these ranchers want to kill more bears. They also maintain that the historic Green River Drift, one of the nation's oldest continuously held livestock drives, is historically and culturally important.

And in a declaration to the court, rancher Albert Sommers' wrote: "It is my opinion that, without the Upper Green River Cattle Allotment, many of these ranches would be sold, and undoubtedly, some would be subdivided."

Really? This is nothing more than a red herring.

There is zero evidence that selling a ranch in a remote area of Wyoming increases prospects of subdivision. In fact, there is a robust market for big ranches in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem among the rich and famous. Furthermore, these ranchers get huge subsidies for grazing – and are generously compensated for any depredations. Even more egregious, several of the ranchers in presumed dire financial straits have received millions of dollars for conservation easements on their properties – which alone would preclude subdivision and development.

George Wuerthner, an expert on "welfare ranching", provides insightful responses to these ranchers' claims.

- <https://www.thewildlifeneeds.com/2020/06/03/35055/>
- <https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/13906-judge-denies-preliminary-injunction-on-grizzly-bears-stops-one-challenge-by-environmentalists>
- <https://www.wyofile.com/ranchers-grizzly-suit-imperils-rights-wildlife-migrations/>
- <https://www.counterpunch.org/2010/02/16/cows-condos-and-all-the-rest/>
- [https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/jun/11/green-river-drift-cattle-drive-threatened-grizzly-/](https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/jun/11/green-river-drift-cattle-drive-threatened-grizzly/)

Cool Stuff About Rare White Bears: Second Unusual White Grizzly in Banff Park, Alberta



Photo by Julia Turner Butterwick

Earlier this spring, an unusual white (but not albino) grizzly bear was seen in the Canadian Rockies – and now a grizzly cub with a white head and a brown body has appeared in this same region.

Paul Paquet, an internationally known carnivore expert, said he has never seen a white grizzly bear, and the cub is even more unusual. “It looks like it stuck its head in a pail of cream or a barrel of flour,” he said.

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/thought-it-was-a-panda-second-rare-grizzly-bear-seen-in-banff-national-park-1.4986881>

Spirit Bear Research Reveals Genetic Secrets



Photo by Debra Garside

New research on British Columbia’s Spirit Bear – a white-colored variant of the black bear – shows that this genetic variant is extremely rare but more widely distributed than previously thought. And by overlaying the frequency of the gene responsible for white pelage on the distribution of protected areas, researchers found that many hot spots for Spirit Bears are not adequately protected from destructions perpetrated by industrial logging. Current protected areas have “missed the mark,” said Doug Neasloss of the Kitasoo/Xai’xais First Nation.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/06/science/spirit-bears-canada.html?>

Take Action:

Protect Wildlands on Custer Gallatin National Forest!

The recently released Custer-Gallatin National Forest Management Plan falls woefully short of protecting habitat for wildlife, including grizzlies. It recommends that 29% of the Forest outside of Wilderness be open for logging and roadbuilding, while flinging the door open in much of the rest to mountain biking (for more on the problems of mountain biking in grizzly bear habitat, see this [video](#) and [web page](#)).

The Plan even shrinks interim wilderness protections for the 155,000 acre Hyalite Porcupine Buffalohorn Wilderness Study Area in the Gallatin Range, the largest unprotected wilderness in Greater Yellowstone.

The North Absaroka and Beartooth Mountains also contain extensive wildlands occupied by grizzlies that are not protected in this Plan. Much of the fault for these giveaways can be found in the cover provided by a group convened under questionable auspices and with heavy weighting to the interests of mountain bikers that allowed the Forest Service to claim it represented “a public consensus.” (For more on this, see [this essay](#).) The only remedy is for Congress to preserve what remains of candidate wilderness areas on the Custer-Gallatin Forest under protections offered by the 1964 Wilderness Act.

You can learn more how to help from the Gallatin Yellowstone Wilderness Alliance: <https://www.gallatinyellowstonewilderness.org/>

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 has been vital to the litigation success that restored Endangered Species Act protections to Greater Yellowstone’s grizzly bears. The skilled attorneys could not have won the case without David’s scientific expertise. He also recently helped with the successful appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court, which has implications for delisting of Northern Continental Divide or even all lower-48 grizzlies.

As we do not have our own nonprofit, a not-for-profit tax-deductible organization, *Conservation Congress*, 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 this Conservation Congress link:

[Donate](#)

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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