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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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September 22, 2020

Dear Friend of the Grizzly,

As the golden leaves of aspen and cottonwood bespeak fall, grizzlies are kicking into gear packing on the pounds to survive the winter famine ahead. Meanwhile anti-bear Senators are up to some old tricks again in Congress, providing a backdrop to the usual unrelenting assault of destructive projects being promoted by the Forest Service. But we have good news to report on buffalo, funding for conservation, and brave grassroots work on behalf of the bear.

We are delighted to share the new Grizzly Times podcast with acclaimed poet Ellen Bass. Ellen's latest collection of poems entitled *Indigo*, includes a gorgeous poem "Grizzly." For years, Ellen has worked with victims of sexual abuse who have found healing in the act of writing. In this interview Ellen reflects on the explosion of poetry in response to these distressing and difficult times.



Ellen Bass

A few excerpts:

Ellen on the inspiration behind her poem Grizzly: “I could not stop watching this video over and over of this grizzly bear eating a bison. As I try and describe in the poem, her extreme delicacy -- I mean her claws were so long, and she just seemed like somebody handling chopsticks really carefully and precisely... And I was just amazed, and I wanted to try and capture it in language. I wanted to admire the bear and just take kind of living photograph in words.

...for those of us who are traumatized by what we’re doing to the planet, I think the thing that writing does is it gives us a space to acknowledge to ourselves what we feel. And I think that that is really essential... Writing is one place where we can stop and not run away from it, acknowledge it, and maybe explore it.”

Click on the icon below or go to <https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/ellen-bass> to hear Ellen's Podcast:



IN THE NEWS:

Tell Your Senator to Oppose Yellowstone Grizzly Delisting Bill!

The Senate recently held a hearing on a bill that would strip Yellowstone grizzly bears of Endangered Species Act protections and prevent any court challenge of its delisting decision.

Sponsored by Wyoming Senator Mike Enzi and Montana Senator Steve Daines, both Republicans, the bill would cause immense harm to grizzlies and set back recovery by reinstating Fish and Wildlife Service's 2017 delisting rule that allows state-sponsored trophy hunting and more lethal management of bears.

If the bill were to be passed, it would set a terrible precedent for the Endangered Species Act, allowing disgruntled legislators to do end runs around the ESA. Representative Liz Cheney, R-Wyoming, authored an identical companion bill in the House of Representatives.

The 2017 delisting rule was overturned by a federal court in 2018 and subsequently upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The only case of legislative delisting of a species occurred in 2011 when Congress removed protections for wolves in Montana and Idaho, largely due the efforts of Senators facing reelection and trying to curry favor with regressive voters.

Please contact your Senators and tell them to oppose this harmful move! You can find their contact info here:

- <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
- <http://www.environews.tv/091920-gop-senators-stripping-yellowstone-grizzly-of-endangered-status-while-killing-your-right-to-sue/>

David and Other Scientists Blast Pro-Hunting Bias and Other Failures of Montana's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council



Yellowstone Grizzly, photo by Jim Peaco, NPS

David's critique of the recently completed process undertaken by Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks designed to produce recommendations for managing grizzly bears has been picked up in regional press. His critique was the subject of Grizzly Times' last newsletter. He tackles critical failings such as the State's lack of transparency and impartiality; failure to represent the spectrum of public interests; partisan efforts to sway the Council's deliberations; and unchecked efforts to bully and intimidate pro-bear Council members.

- <https://www.mtpr.org/post/council-files-grizzly-management-recommendations-without-consensus-hunting>
- <https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2020/09/grizzly-bear-hunt/>

David's critique: <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2020/08/21/To-Hunt-or-Not-to-Hunt-Grizzlies-That-May-or-May-Not-Be-the-Question>

Drs. Adrian Treves and John Laundre also weighed in with a powerful opinion piece published in the *Missoulian*, writing: "the alleged benefits of carnivore-killing policies – both hunting seasons and lethal management by state officials – are overstated and unsupported by robust scientific evidence. Research shows that these policies are likely to undermine coexistence efforts by stoking social intolerance and failing to address conflicts. Continuing to promote these ineffective wildlife management policies wastes limited resources and harms nature, animals and people."

<https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/science-does-not-support-the-claims-about-grizzly-hunting-lethal-removal>

While the advisory council stopped short of recommending a grizzly bear sport hunt, a hunt will undoubtedly be authorized in the Montana's upcoming grizzly bear management plan.

David Comments on Two Harmful Decisions on Custer Gallatin National Forest

The Custer Gallatin National Forest in southwestern Montana has mounted an assault on grizzly bears and the wild places they depend on. This two-pronged assault is in the form of a revised Forest Plan and a massive logging project southwest of West Yellowstone—euphemistically and appropriately known as SPLAT.

The Custer Gallatin encompasses northern portions of the Yellowstone Recovery Area, and provides potentially critical linkages to grizzly bears in Montana's Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. The Forest Plan and SPLAT blatantly fail to protect grizzly bear habitat or the grizzly bears that live inside the Custer Gallatin National Forest.



Grizzly Habitat, Custer Gallatin National Forest

For more details on failings of the Plan and SPLAT, see the comments that David recently submitted and posted to our Grizzly Times Reports web page:

- <https://ac0c4080-191f-4917-bc0f-9e80bf3a3892.filesusr.com>
- <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/grizzly-times-reports>

White House Withdraws Nomination of William Pendley to Head Bureau of Land Management

On Saturday, the Trump administration withdrew the controversial nomination of William Pendley to head the Bureau of Land Management amid signs that the choice would hurt the reelection prospects of Republican Senators Cory Gardner (CO) and Steve Daines (MT).

Pendley previously was president of the right-wing Mountain States Legal Foundation, where he had urged the sale of federal lands to make way for development. At the Foundation, he also sought to undermine protections of endangered species such as the grizzly bear, and sued the Interior Department on behalf of an oil and gas prospector seeking to drill in the Badger-Two Medicine Wilderness along the Rocky Mountain Front.

Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) said: “it’s hard to imagine a worse pick for BLM than someone who doesn’t believe in the very idea of conservation.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/08/15/white-house-withdraws-nomination-william-pendley-head-bureau-land-management/>

Great News for Buffalo: The Largest Transfer from Tribes with Buffalo to Those Without

Sixteen tribal nations in nine U.S. states, including Alaska, have received buffalo from the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes’ quarantine program of Yellowstone buffalo. Forty graduates of the program were recently rounded up and loaded onto livestock trailers in the largest ever tribe-to-tribe transfer of buffalo.

In the last 25 years, Montana has led a slaughter of over 4,000 bison that had roamed north of Yellowstone Park's border in search of snow-free grass. The slaughter is based on unsubstantiated claims that brucellosis, or Bangs disease, will be passed from bison to cattle – which has never been documented in the wild, however elk have been implicated. The more likely reason for the slaughter is an ideological commitment among ranchers to maintain power and preserve an ecologically autoclaved landscape.

Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes developed a quarantine facility to ensure that brucellosis-free and genetically pure Yellowstone bison would be available to grow and strengthen tribal herds. This recent transfer of bison fulfills the 2016 Buffalo Treaty's aspiration to restore the cultural, economic, and spiritual importance of buffalo in tribal life. This Treaty was a model for the 2017 Grizzly Bear Treaty that was signed by 270 tribes and traditional societies.



For more on the bison treaty: <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/bringing-back-the-bison-tribes-and-first-nations-sign-historic-treaty>

About the amazing shared journey of bison and grizzlies, see this 2018 talk by David Mattson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AXACD8byE>

About the grizzly bear treaty: <https://www.piikanationtreaty.com/copy-of-home>

- <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/fort-peck-tribes-intertribal-buffalo-council-complete-largest-tribe-tribe-buffalo-transfer#stream/0>
- <https://www.ktoo.org/2020/09/05/3-yellowstone-bison-arrive-at-their-new-home-near-old-harbor-alaska/>
- <https://tulsaworld.com/news/state-and-regional/cherokee-nation-brings-in-yellowstone-bison-to-boost-herd-genetics>
- <https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/historic-transfers-of-yellowstone-buffalo-to-tribes-across-us-happening-this-month>

Western Bumblebee Numbers are Tanking

A federal review of existing data unveils an alarming trend for the western bumblebee population, which has seen its numbers dwindle by as much as 93% during the last two decades. Multiple factors are contributing to the demise of the bumblebee, including pesticides, habitat fragmentation, a warming climate, and pathogens.

The bumblebee's roll in pollinating the flowers of huckleberries and other berry-producing shrubs is of particular relevance to grizzlies given that berries are a staple food for bears in many areas. Bumblebees have declined by about 70% in Montana alone.



For more on the connection between pollinators, berries and the grizzly, see this by David Mattson: <https://www.mostlynaturalgrizzlies.org/fruit>
And David's prognosis here: <https://www.mostlynaturalgrizzlies.org/future-prospects-1>

<https://www.denverpost.com/2020/07/25/western-bumblebee-populations-decline/>

Conservation Groups Sue Flathead Forest to Stop Damaging Road Building and Motorized Use

Four conservation groups have fired opening salvos in a lawsuit that seeks to restore safeguards for the protection of imperiled grizzly bears, lynx, wolverine, and bull trout on the Flathead National Forest in northwest Montana. The Forest's new management plan strips previous restrictions on road access and opens the door to uncontrolled construction of new roads and motorized traffic.

The 2.4 million-acre Flathead National Forest plays an essential role in long-term recovery of grizzly bears in the Northern Continental Divide, which is a critical source of colonizing grizzlies for the Selway Bitterroot, Greater Yellowstone, Cabinet-Yaak, and Selkirk Ecosystems.

Good luck WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project, Swan View Coalition, and Friends of the Wild Swan!

- <https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/06/conservationists-to-federal-agencies-restore-protections-for-imperiled-wildlife-in-the-flathead-national-forest/>
- <https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2020/08/lawsuit-flathead-species/>

Restoring Grizzlies to Colorado?

Forty years after the last known grizzly bear was killed in Colorado, conservationists are making the case that the federal government should consider restoring the Great Bear. There are currently no grizzly bears in the state, although a hunter killed a grizzly as recently as 1979 in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has consistently acknowledged that restoring grizzlies to Colorado is part of meaningful recovery for this species, but has done nothing to achieve this end. After being successfully sued by the Center of Biological Diversity, FWS is finally looking at prospects for recovery of grizzlies in Colorado. The Service's review will be completed next year.



Wolf Creek Pass, San Juan Range, the area where Colorado's last known grizzly was killed

The map that can be accessed by the following links shows potential suitable habitat for grizzlies in the lower-48 states, featuring a compilation of research by David Mattson and others:

- <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/potential-restoration>
- <https://www.boulderweekly.com/news/make-colorado-grizzly-again>

**GOOD NEWS:
Great American Outdoors Act Signed into Law**

Congress recently passed the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Along with providing funding taken from royalties on energy production on public lands to address the ruinous backlog of “deferred maintenance” in our National Park system, the GAOA permanently authorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund, guaranteeing that it will be funded at \$900 million per year. This authorization prevents short-sighted venal politicians from diverting money from this fund—as has been done by Montana’s Senator Daines and Representative Gianforte. Paradoxically, although both are taking credit for the bill’s passage.

The bill was a politically safe measure backed by diverse groups that included everyone from conservationists and sportsmen to veterans. In a powerful essay, Hal Herring writes: “public lands and waters and the spectacular national parks of the United States are the great unifiers of our people. So is the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the quality of life for all of us that it enables.”

<https://www.fieldandstream.com/story/hunting/why-the-great-american-outdoors-act-came-at-just-the-right-time/>

On the remarkable coalition behind this: <https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/>

Harmful Lolo Forest Logging on Hold

After grizzly bear advocates threatened to sue, the Lolo National Forest pulled the plug on a project designed to massively increase logging and road-building, ostensibly to engage in further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over impacts on wildlife, including grizzlies. The Forest Service cynically timed withdrawal of the project to protect themselves from liability for legal fees incurred by the groups that litigated the proposed project.

The Lolo Forest’s proposed Soldier-Butler project is planned for the Ninemile watershed of southwestern Montana, astride a critical corridor used by grizzly bears to migrate from the Cabinet-Yaak and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems to the Bitterroot Recovery Area. Grizzlies have only recently been documented in the Bitterroot, although several models show that this Recovery Area could support hundreds of bears.

Thanks to the Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force for their work on behalf of the grizzly!

<https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2020/08/lolo-forest-ninemile/>

Bear Spray Works, Again

Two elk hunters recently deployed bear pepper spray to effectively deter a charging grizzly that they encountered near Island Park, Idaho. They were hunting with bows in brushy country and surprised a grizzly at close range. The bear knocked one hunter down but retreated quickly when sprayed by his partner. The man’s injuries were slight.

Hunter-related grizzly bear deaths are mounting as grizzlies seek more meat to compensate for the climate-driven loss of other important bear foods. More than ever, hunters need to be prepared for a close encounter with a food-stressed grizzly.

<https://www.rexburgstandardjournal.com/news/hunters-prepared-with-bear-spray-survive-attack-in-island-park>



For some safety tips: <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/bear-safety>

COOL VIDEOS:

Grizzly bear cubs riding on mom's back in

Alaska: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/12335755/grizzly-bear-cubs-ride-mum-back-river/>

Showdown between Two of Banff's Biggest Badass

Grizzlies: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/grizzly-bear-chase-bow-valley-parkway-canmore-banff>

Mama Yellowstone Griz Stands up to Wolves (click on photo to view video):



<https://cowboystatedaily.com/2020/08/10/badass-mama-grizzly-bear-stands-up-to-pack-of-wolves-harassing-her-cubs/>

Please Consider a Gift to *Grizzly Times*...

We need your help! We 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 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, and perhaps 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 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,
David and Louisa*