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## NEWSLETTER

Featuring updates on grizzly bear conservation activities,  
and the latest *Grizzly Times* Blog and Podcast  
from [Louisa Willcox and David Mattson, PhD.](#)  
Co-Founders of *Grizzly Times*.

[Visit our Website](#)

[Listen to our Podcasts](#)

May 26, 2022

Dear Friend of the Grizzly,

The Northern Rockies is especially green and lush this cool wet spring, but the snow is still low enough to keep grizzlies out of much of the high country. This means that in many places people and grizzlies are cheek by jowl – as has been the case for hundreds of years in Romania, home to Europe’s largest brown bear and wolf populations. There, roughly 7,000 brown bears (same species as the grizzly) live in a landscape with a human population density as great as that of Appalachia in the U.S.

In this newsletter we put the spotlight first on our friend Gabi Paun, a leading Romanian environmental advocate and founder of Agent Green who shares an inspiring idea.

### **NEW PODCAST:**

**Romanian Environmentalist Gabi Paun Proposes New Peace Park Along Border of Ukraine**

<https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/gabi-paun>

In Grizzly Times’ latest podcast, we feature an interview with Gabi Paun, who has created – and is promoting – the idea of an international Peace Park on the border of Ukraine, Romania and other neighboring European countries in the Carpathian Mountains. The park is intended to be a symbol of peace, coexistence, and unity for people and wild animals in this wild ecosystem. Gabi and Agent Green also aim to create a Peace Route, a path that will cross the entire Carpathian chain,

from the Czech Republic to Serbia, crossing Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania.

Gabriel (“Gabi”) Paun is a Romanian environmental and animal welfare activist, with more than two decades of experience in Romania and other parts of Europe, as well as Africa and Australia. Gabi has a degree in ecology and served as an organizer for Greenpeace before founding the Romanian group, Agent Green, focused on animal welfare, forestry and wildlife issues.

He has enjoyed major successes stopping the spread of genetically modified crops in Romania, exposing illegal logging in the country’s forests, and investigating and exposing cruelties of the live animal export industry. He also campaigns for protecting the well-being of farm animals and companion animals, and for coexistence of people with wolves and brown bears.

In 2016 Gabi won the prestigious European environmental award, EuroNatur, a reward that was also bestowed on Nelson Mandela and Mikhail Gorbachev.



*Gabi Paun in front of illegally cutover forest in “protected” landscape in Romania.*

Some quotes from the podcast:

*"We have been working to help families fleeing the war in Ukraine, and now we are also working to try to save animals... Imagine what happens when people leave, and the animals are abandoned – lions, wolves and more."*

*"One day in Spain, after working with a film crew documenting the terrible export of live sheep to Africa, I fell asleep -- and had a dream to create a new National*

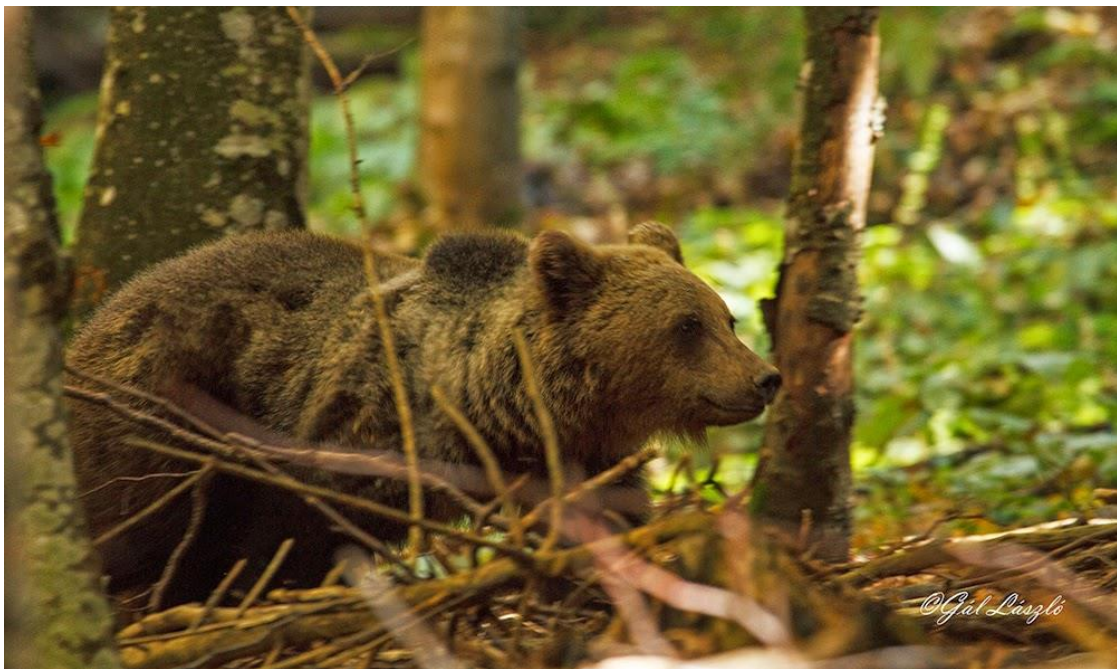
*Park in the Carpathian Mountains on the border of Ukraine and Romania. It came from nowhere somehow..."*

*"In Ukraine and Romania, we share nature, we share culture, and the Carpathian Mountains are magical – soft wood/hard wood forests, big rivers, brown bears, wolves, lynx and more."*

*"A Peace Route across the Carpathian Range is also necessary. Eastern Europe has been the source of all the world wars so far, and a battlefield for big world powers. Coming together in a positive project, like creating this Peace Route, would be a strong signal that Eastern Europe is united and not divided – and not the source of war... The Carpathian Mountain chain has been historically a border between east and west. Why not make this the thing that unites the east and the west?"*

*"As long as we fight for the bears and the forests, we have a chance. If people like us let go, then the chance is gone. It's wasted. It's a problem which unites U.S. and Romania – we have the very same problems."*

*"There's a corner of mind that says: "What happens if this work escalates – and so on?" But we can't live in fear. If we stop doing what we're doing, then we're already dead. And there is nothing that makes you feel more alive than taking action for things that you believe in. And we believe in kindness, we believe in defending nature, people, and animals."*



*Brown Bear in the Carpathian Mountains. Photo by Gal Laslo*

PLEASE consider contributing to Agent Green, which is also working in Romania to promote coexistence with bears in Europe's largest remaining wildland ecosystem.

<https://www.agentgreen.ro/doneaza/>.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

HERE: <https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/gabi-paun>

### **Of My Friend, Brian Peck**

Louisa's friend, Brian Peck, passed away on November 7, 2021, in his Columbia Falls, Montana home in the company of his loving wife Linda after a short battle with cancer. He had an indefatigable enthusiasm, irrepressible sense of humor, and wide breadth of knowledge garnered from many years in the natural world. Brian's life is an example of how one can navigate a world that is unjust to wild animals and leave them safer and better understood.



*Brian Peck: Warrior for the Wild, Champion of the Bear*

Last week, Louisa attended a celebration of his remarkable life with friends and family and offered this:

*"Brian Peck was my friend, my colleague for thirty years and a fellow warrior for the wild. We shared a passion for all creatures vulnerable to human avarice and disregard, especially for ones with big teeth – notably grizzlies. I admired Brian's*

*huge heart and fearlessness at a time when wild animals – and indeed the earth – face mounting threats.*

*Brian was at least part grizzly bear – ferocious, curious, and caring. I think it was not accidental that he often signed emails to friends: ‘Growlingly, Brian.’*

*In the 1990s, I had the chance to include Brian as a member of a team I assembled to launch a new region-wide Sierra Club campaign advocating for grizzly bears. He continued as a key member of my team when I went to Natural Resources Defense Council, taking the lead on grizzlies in the Northern Continental Divide population, and in the often-forgotten Cabinet Yaak, Selkirks, and North Cascades.*

*Brian was unmatched in his perseverance. And I have never known someone to sacrifice so many holidays on behalf of protecting wild animals. That is because, like clockwork, right before Thanksgiving and Christmas, government officials would often cynically release terrible proposals to log or mine our public lands – when they assumed people were too distracted to comment. Not Brian. As an additional deterrent, these proposals would invariably be defended by hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of mind-numbing text, that only someone with Brian’s eye to detail and discernment could make sense of.*

*A typical Brian comment letter ran 10, 20 or more pages, because, in part, he was flagging issues for potential litigation. A key point here is that conservationists have been – and continue to be – enormously successful saving bears and habitat due to the work of lawyers, who depend on the work of advocates such as Brian to identify the problems early.*

*Brian was the sharp end of the stick who relentlessly pushed government officials to do their job for grizzlies. Too late for Brian’s ears, at a recent meeting of grizzly bear managers, Cecily Costello, and the recipient of much of his criticisms as well as lead state grizzly bear official for the NCDE population, highlighted his contributions in front of the others and said that Brian will be missed.*

*The point being that outside criticism like what Brian provided matters to holding our government accountable – and I would argue, to making our democracy function.*

*Brian was a natural born teacher, and over the years, we led many tours into Yellowstone for donors and members of the media for Sierra Club and NRDC. Time and again, I watched Brian – patient, inspiring, with a twinkle in his eye – open people’s eyes to the complex ecological underpinnings of the Northern Rockies.*

*Brian was, above all, devoted and loyal to his friends, and I feel blessed he considered me one. In going through his correspondence, I was struck by how much he bucked me up when I was unsure or exhausted, writing: ‘Live long and*

*prosper and RAISE HELL!’ Or: ‘It’s show time! Take no prisoners, give no quarter.’  
Or: ‘Once more into the Breach!’*

*Brian’s death brings me back to his relatives, grizzly bears. Grizzlies that have long represented renewal and regeneration, and the power of life. A mother bear disappears in a hole in the ground, seemingly dies for five months, and reemerges in the spring with tiny cubs by her side. It is no surprise that the ancients saw the bear not only as an animal that mirrors ourselves, but as a symbol of the promise of transformation. In fighting for the bear, Brian was fighting for this ancient promise.*

*If Brian were here today witnessing the threats to bears and their habitat, he would offer this: ‘Once More into the Breach, My Friends!’”*

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/in-memory-of-brian-peck-warrior-for-the-wild-watchdog-of-the-grizzly-and-friend>

### **She is Risen! Update on 399 and Jackson Hole Grizzlies**

The next newsletter will feature a blog and podcast featuring the grizzly matriarch, 399. Here, we will only provide a summary. Jackson Hole’s 399, one of the world’s most famous grizzlies, was first seen this year in Grand Teton Park on Easter evening – along with her four two-year-old cubs, already half her size. They then went on a terrifying walkabout south of Jackson where she and her cubs had previously found human foods.

Shortly after, 399 kicked off her cubs after being approached by a boar grizzly. The future of her newly independent youngsters is in question given that they lack her skill in navigating a human-dominated environment. Plus, Wyoming Game and Fish managers have made it clear they will not tolerate more “infractions.” The agency has been notoriously hostile to roadside bears – killing six Jackson Hole grizzlies last year as if to prove its doctrine of intolerance.



*399 and Gang in April, 2022. Photo by Walt Ackerman*

On a more positive note, in March the Teton County Commission unanimously approved new regulations that strengthen measures requiring that residents make sure their garbage is not available to bears. At the same time, Wyoming Wildlife Advocates launched Jackson Hole Bear Solutions (<https://www.jhbearsolutions.org/>) to facilitate and deliver bear-resistant dumpsters to local residents.

A new art and education initiative, the Grizzly 399 Project, has also been recently launched by grizzly bear fans, including Grizzly Times. For more details, including how you can help, please see the end of the newsletter.

- <https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/local/fans-enthuse-as-grizzly-399-cubs-emerge>
- <https://buckrail.com/399-separates-from-her-four-cubs/>
- <https://wyofile.com/grizzly-399s-four-cubs-will-soon-reach-a-life-or-death-crossroads/>
- <https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/local/grizzly-managers-expect-a-tough-road-ahead-for-399-and-her-cubs>

### **Grizzlies on the Move**

Roaming farther each year, grizzly bears have recently been sighted for the first time in the North Moccasin Mountains near Lewistown, Montana, and again in the Elkhorn Mountains on the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest. Sightings of grizzly bears have also been increasing in the vast Selway-Bitterroot Ecosystem and on the plains east of the Rocky Mountain Front.

The sighting of a grizzly bear in the North Moccasin Mountains is the first since grizzlies were extirpated in this area over 100 years ago. And evidence has been mounting during recent years that grizzly bears are calling the Elkhorns home. Both areas lie far outside boundaries of the area where managers have made provisions for protecting grizzly bear habitat – the so-called Recovery Area.

These newly colonized areas are not only key to reconnecting long-isolated populations, but also offer the promise that grizzly bears will reoccupy ecosystems and habitats from which they were extirpated by Europeans intent on cleansing a world of all impediments to commerce and agriculture. Thankfully, grizzlies in the lower 48 states are still protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Contrary to the mythology promoted by many bear managers, this increase of grizzlies on the periphery of core grizzly bear ecosystems is not solely due to an increase in numbers of bears. Changing habitat conditions caused by climate change and a related increase in wildfires have also prompted bears to forage more widely.

For more on this dynamic, see David's report, the Heart of the Grizzly Bear Nation: <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/files>

And for more on habitat that is suitable for grizzlies in the Northern Rockies, see David's report, "The Grizzly Bear Promised Land:" <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/files>

- <https://helenair.com/news/local/grizzly-bear-caught-on-camera-in-elkhorns-serves-as-warning-forest-officials-say>
- <https://mtstandard.com/outdoors/grizzly-bear-confirmed-in-north-moccasin-mountains-near-lewistown>

### **Conservation Groups to Sue Over Montana's Paradise Valley Grazing Decision**

The Western Environmental Law Center recently filed an intent to sue the Forest Service on behalf of six environmental groups over a plan to increase grazing by cattle in the eastern foothills of Paradise Valley south of Livingston, Montana. This increase in cattle grazing would harm grizzlies and other wildlife, as well as those who care about public lands for reasons other than cattle "production." The Forest Service has long promoted cattle grazing in deference to a few ranchers, while taxpayers across the United States subsidize the arrangement.



*The East Paradise Grazing Plan would harm habitat in the foothills of the Absaroka Mountains. Photo of Emigrant Peak and the Yellowstone River, in Paradise Valley, Montana by George Wuerther*



The Custer-Gallatin National Forest's plan significantly expands grazing in some of most ecologically important areas of Paradise Valley, even after the agency acknowledged that removal of livestock grazing would provide the greatest benefit to the public by protecting riparian areas and preventing competition with wildlife for forage and space.

Aren't public lands supposed to be managed for the benefit of the public? Apparently not. That is why these environmental groups are suing on behalf of all of us – the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, the Western Watersheds Project, Native Ecosystems Council, the Center for Biological Diversity, Wyoming Wildlife Advocates, the Sierra Club, and the Friends of the Bitterroot.

Although the Forest Service received numerous comments, many from prominent biologists and well-known conservationists such as Dr. David Mattson, Dr. Roger Rosentreter, Dr. Jerry Freilich, Dr. Barrie Gilbert, Dr. Reed Noss, and Yvon Chouinard, among others, the agency ignored them.

To read David's comments on the Paradise Valley Grazing Plan see:

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/files>

<https://www.thewildlifeneews.com/2022/05/12/conservation-groups-threaten-to-sue-on-east-paradise-grazing-decision/>

#### **GOOD NEWS:**

##### **Vital Ground Conserves Key Wetlands and Grizzly Habitat in North Idaho**

An important wetland complex that provides precious spring habitat for grizzly bears in North Idaho will remain undeveloped after The Vital Ground Foundation completed the final phase of its Bismark Meadows Project this week. This southern portion of the Selkirk Ecosystem that stretches north into British Columbia is home to just 50-60 grizzlies – so every bit of good habitat matters.

And this is some of the ecosystem's best 1,110 acres of wetland that had faced significant development pressure due to its proximity to Priest Lake, a growing tourism and vacation home destination.



*Lush habitat of Bismark Meadows protected at last!  
Photo Courtesy of Vital Ground*

In 2001, Vital Ground began methodically purchasing private parcels comprising the Bismark Meadows complex as they became available from willing sellers. “This is the culmination of two decades of work with many dedicated partners to ensure Bismark Meadows remains permanently accessible to wildlife,” said Vital Ground Executive Director Ryan Lutey.

<https://cdapress.com/news/2022/may/05/outdoors-vital-ground-completes-conservation-key-w/>

### **Five Amazing Canadian Women Working to Protect Grizzlies**

Although the fields of bear research, guiding, filmmaking and conservation have been traditionally occupied by men, we are seeing increasing leadership by women, including women of color. Meet a few of them in this article – Indigenous bear guides Sherry Moon and Krista Duncan; polar bear guide and filmmaker Karine Genest; polar bear researcher Alysa McCall; and conservation scientist Courtney Hughes.

Inspiring women, all – and a fascinating read.

<https://www.chatelaine.com/longforms/women-working-with-bears-conservation/>

### **Grizzly Travels 2,800 Miles, Baffling Biologists**

This is a cool story about an inspiring bear, nicknamed Ethyl. This sow grizzly did not stick to a typical 70-square mile home range, instead she travelled more than 2,800 miles – before ditching her radio collar.

Because she was fitted with a satellite collar after she had raided an apple orchard, biologists were able to track Ethyl's travels – to the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the Front Range of the Rockies, down to the northern reaches of the Bitterroot Mountains, over interstates and freeways, and near cities, including Coeur d'Alene in Idaho. After hibernating in the Idaho panhandle, she headed east again. She lost her collar near Glacier Park in October 2014 – but her movements continue to baffle biologists.

The more we think we know about grizzlies, the more they amaze...

<https://missoulian.com/news/local/from-idaho-to-montana-ethyl-the-bear-rambled-2-800-miles>



*Map of Ethyl's Amazing Walkabout in Montana and Idaho, from Radio-collar Data*

### **Fun Video: Yellowstone Grizzly Steals Another Bear's Elk**

This short video from last fall, posted to the YouTube channel “Yellowstone Twins,” features a grizzly bear stealing the carcass of a recently killed elk. This vignette was captured in Yellowstone’s Hayden Valley by twin sisters Vanessa and Brianna Lindsey.

Carcasses of winter-killed or weakened ungulates are especially important to grizzlies during cool wet springs such as the one we are experiencing.

<https://www.newsweek.com/watch-yellowstone-grizzly-steal-another-bears-elk-1704666>

**Announcing Grizzly 399 Project – Please Help!**

A new initiative, the Grizzly 399 Project, has recently been launched by fans of grizzly bears and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem's world-class wildlife, including Grizzly Times.

At a time when grizzlies are increasingly threatened by habitat loss and climate change, the 399 Project seeks to find ways for these animals and humans to peacefully coexist. The group believes that art and innovative wildlife education are part of the answer.

Founders of the group are friends of Deidre Bainbridge, a Jackson Hole environmental activist, attorney, and champion for wildlife who had a special fondness for grizzly bears. Deidre passed away in 2019. The Grizzly 399 Project honors Deidre's legacy.

The "Friends of 399" plan to raise \$1 million during a 2022 campaign managed by the Deidre Bainbridge Wildlife Fund, a Wyoming not-for-profit organization. A portion of the raised funds will be used to create a bigger-than-life bronze sculpture of Grizzly 399. The group plans to make substantial grants to numerous wildlife nonprofits pursuing innovative wildlife education programs.

Advisors and supporters of the project include Tim Tennyson, Terri & Ray Thomas, Tom Mangelsen, Cynthia & Daniel Starks, Todd Wilkinson, Louisa Willcox, and Dr. David Mattson.

You can help by donating here: [www.Grizzly399.org](http://www.Grizzly399.org)

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### **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 most recent 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 helped with the successful appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court, which has implications for delisting of Northern Continental Divide grizzlies, and perhaps all grizzlies in the lower 48 states.

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 HERE](#)

Or, you can mail a donation to:  
Conservation Congress  
C/O Denise Boggs  
1604 1st Avenue South  
Great Falls, Montana 59401

\* 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*