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## NEWSLETTER

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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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October 28, 2020

*Dear Friend of the Grizzly,*

Winter has hit with a vengeance, bringing snow and arctic winds to Yellowstone country. With the elk, deer, and bear hunting seasons underway, we are bracing for more grizzly bear deaths on top of the alarming total of 43 Yellowstone bruins killed so far this year.

But there is good news too. More grizzlies keep showing up in the Selway-Bitterroot! Despite the failure of a reintroduction plan 20 years ago, grizzlies are recolonizing the vast ecosystem on their own. A cool photo is below.

### **NEW BLOG:**

#### ***60 Minutes' Toothy Porn***

by Louisa Willcox

Louisa critiques a recent episode of 60 Minutes that was billed as an exploration of challenges in coexisting with grizzly bears, but provided little more than a buffet of toothy pornography – the kind that titillated crowds in Roman times. By serving up violence and gore, CBS's 60 Minutes not only betrays its civic duty but also its special responsibility as the most watched show in TV history to uphold the highest standards of journalistic integrity.

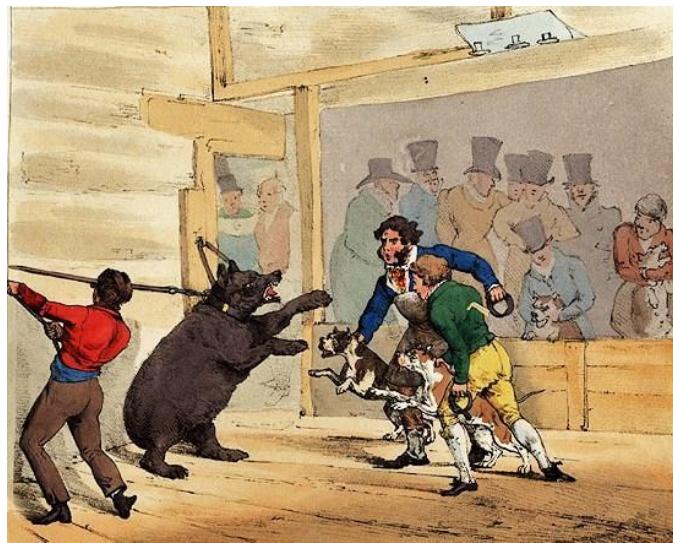
The producers granted just a few short minutes to the show's only professional practitioner of coexistence, the dedicated Bryce Andrews, who did his best to explain how people do indeed manage to live amicably with bears. In all, 60 Minutes missed a golden opportunity to explore what meaningful recovery of grizzly bears in this country could look like if we humbled ourselves and showed more compassion.

Louisa concludes with this:

*"Shows like 60 Minutes hearken back to our darker brutal past, not a brighter future for us or the creatures we share the planet with. More than ever, we need journalists to step up on behalf of the broader public interest, not greedy advertisers, exploiters of the land, or those seeking the thrill of killing a grizzly to mount a head on the wall."*

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/60-minutes-toothy-porn>

Click on the image below to read the Blog:



**NEW PODCAST:**  
***Grizzly Expert Reno Sommerhalder***

Reno Sommerhalder is a naturalist, filmmaker, author, and guide whose passion for grizzlies has literally taken him around the world.

Reno has studied bears in Canada, Alaska, Russia, Italy, Spain, and France, among other places. Originally from Switzerland, for many years Reno has lived his dream in the Banff region of Canada where he studies bears and works to promote coexistence.



*Reno Sommerhalder*

Some Excerpts:

*“No matter where I’ve been around the world, bears in general have been very peaceful towards me. I’ve had literally 10,000 encounters with brown and grizzly bears over the past 35 years. It’s very clear if we give bears a chance to be peaceful, and if we give them the respect they deserve, we will get the same respect in return.”*

About adopting orphan grizzly bear cubs with Charlie Russell in Kamchatka:  
*“The cubs quickly adopted us and followed every one of our steps into the wilderness... And they knew exactly which plants to eat at what time of year without either one of us or their mother having shown them.”*

*“When you start learning about bears, it’s really difficult to avoid learning about salmon, learning about plants, learning about berries, learning about water, learning about soil, learning about everything. Because you realize the bear is just one species amongst many in that chain of interconnectedness – and we humans are part of that chain.”*

<https://www.grizzlytimespodcast.org/post/episode-46-reno-sommerhalder>

Click on the image below to hear the Podcast:



#### **IN THE NEWS:**

#### **Wyoming Senator John Barrasso Holds Hearing About Gutting Endangered Species Act, Blocking Judicial Review of Delistings, Including for Grizzlies**

In a swipe at federal judges and the national public interest, Wyoming Senator John Barrasso, Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, recently held a hearing on his bill to gut the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and prohibit lawsuits on removing protections for five years after the decision.

Predictably, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon spoke in support of the measures, making him the third consecutive Wyoming governor to testify in support of eviscerating the ESA to give states a bigger role in managing iconic species such as Yellowstone's wolves and grizzly bears.

Fortunately, Senate Democrats including the top Democrats on the Environment Committee, Tom Carper of Delaware and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, vigorously protested this move.

Booker said this:

*"Let's recognize the global crisis we are in. It's estimated right now that one in six species are threatened with extinction in this century alone... This is not just a crisis for wildlife, destruction of habitat, and loss of biodiversity, it is a threat to humanity."*

- <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/governor-gordon-supports-barrasso-effort-reform-endangered-species-act>
- <https://missoulacurrent.com/outdoors/2020/09/barrasso-species-delisting/>

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/wyoming-governor-let-states-not-courts-help-species>

### **Wildlife Director, Montana Senator, Ranchers Grouse About Reinstating ESA protections for Yellowstone Grizzlies**

Montana Senator Steve Daines recently hosted a meeting in Great Falls featuring U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service director Aurelia Skipwith and local ranchers to bellyache about the 2018 court-ordered reinstatement of ESA protections for Yellowstone grizzlies. In keeping with the Trump administration's disregard for the public backstop offered by the judiciary, Skipwith complained: "When we're looking at our decisions... it [delisting] shouldn't be left up to the courts and the judges."

Daines and Skipwith vowed to do what they could to expedite delisting. Aside from pushing legislation to delist grizzlies, both indicated they would examine ways to provide "more flexibility" to deal with grizzlies in response to a request by ranchers. In case you were wondering, "flexibility" is code for killing more bears.

<https://www.krtv.com/news/montana-and-regional-news/ranchers-talk-with-usfws-chief-about-de-listing-grizzly-bears>



*Photo by Reno Sommerhalder*

### **Ousted Land Director Refuses to Leave Post**

A controversial Director of the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has said he has no intention of leaving his post after a U.S. District Court judge deemed his tenure and ongoing occupation of the position illegal. Acting head of BLM William Perry Pendley defended his stance last week, saying: "I have the support of the president," showing his utter disregard the other two pillars of our putative democracy: the judiciary and Congress.



The BLM manages 248 million acres – more than any public lands agency in the U.S. Pendley has long advocated selling off our lands and enriching his corporate allies. He was a longtime president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a legal organization funded by conservative and industry fat-cats such as the Charles Koch Foundation and Exxon Mobil.

Pendley has also made light of killing endangered species, going so far as to tell a group of rightwing activists, “This is why out west we say ‘shoot, shovel and shut up’ when it comes to the discovery of endangered species on your property.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/10/william-perry-pendley-bureau-of-land-management-refuses-to-leave>

### **Massive Coal Mines Proposed Near Glacier National Park in Alberta**

Award-winning journalist Andrew Nikiforuk ably details the disastrous impacts of massive new coal mines proposed north of the U.S.’s Glacier Park National Park in Alberta, Canada. Australian billionaires plan to industrialize nearly 800 square kilometres of the southern Canadian Rockies to supply coal for Asian and Brazilian markets. The Alberta government has opened its arms to industry by sweeping away regulatory obstacles that have long been in place.



*The orange shading shows the lands proposed for mining against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountain Front.*

Multiple open-pit mines would stretch from Crowsnest Pass north into the Oldman River watershed – lands that Blackfoot have called the “Backbone of the World” and that are home to grizzly bears, elk, mountain sheep and more. This wild country is vital in connecting grizzly bear populations in the U.S.’s Northern Continental Divide ecosystem to habitat further north. Simply put, we cannot recover grizzlies in the coterminous U.S. without ecological connections to more robust populations in Alberta and British Columbia.

Opponents include wildlife advocates, fishermen, and ranchers. Noted water scientist David Schindler called the mine proposals short-sighted and foolhardy, saying: “The best example of why you shouldn’t mine in mountain watersheds comes from Appalachia where mountaintops have been pushed into streams, aquifers have been destroyed and selenium and other toxic trace metals contaminate the watershed.”

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2020/10/09/Australian-Invasion-Big-Coal-Plans-Alberta/?fbclid=Iw>

### **Killing of “The Matriarch” Highlights Road Risks**

One of the most beloved grizzlies in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, a 25 year old female known as “The Matriarch,” was recently killed by a vehicle on Highway 93 near the Ninepipes Wildlife Refuges of the Mission Valley in Montana. An experienced mother, she raised 9 offspring – and her daughters in turn have so far successfully reared 11 cubs. Managers considered her a “trend bear,” meaning her physical condition, travels and reproductive success shed light on how NCDE grizzlies are doing.

This tragedy occurred in a highway corridor that has benefitted from one of the most extensive arrays of wildlife crossing structures in North America – proving that more needs to be done.

The Matriarch is the third grizzly to be killed this year on a highway in the NCDE, where car and train related grizzly deaths have been mounting during recent years.

David’s report on train impacts also discusses the problem with

vehicles: <https://ac0c4080-191f-4917-bc0f-9e80bf3a3892.filesusr.com>

- <https://mtstandard.com/print-specific/grizzly-death-highlights-risk-of-roads/article>
- <http://www.charkoosta.com/news/hwy-93-claims-the-life-of-a-true-matriarch-grizzly-bear>

### **Former Fish and Wildlife Service Director Speaks Out Against the Trump Administration’s Slashing of Endangered Species Protections**

Jamie Rappaport Clark, president of Defenders of Wildlife and previous Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, recently challenged false claims by Interior Secretary David Bernhardt that this administration has overseen the recovery of more endangered and threatened species than any previous administration. As with so many of the Trump administration’s claims, the facts bely the assertions.

Among her many examples of how the Trump Administration is abdicating its duty to protect endangered species, Clark features the Fish and Wildlife Service's broken promises to recover grizzlies in the North Cascades.

Jamie concludes with this:

*"From ocelots to polar bears, to the Endangered Species Act itself, Interior has done more in the last four years to hurt wildlife and undermine the laws to protect them from any other recent administration. Downlisting and delisting species to suggest that the Interior Department is improving the conservation of wildlife and its habitats is in stark contrast to the realities of science and the policies it has approved and promoted. We aren't fooled, and neither is the American public."*

<https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/519452-5-major-ways-that-interior-slashed-protections-for-wildlife>

### **GOOD NEWS:**

#### **More Grizzlies in the Bitterroot: Get Ready**

More grizzlies are being seen in the vast Selway-Bitterroot of central and north-central Idaho, including in the nearby area of Lolo Hot Springs, in Montana's Miller Creek south of Missoula, and in the remote Big Hole Valley of southwestern Montana. And recently a Montana bowhunter had a close encounter with what he was certain was a grizzly in the Bitterroot Mountains, within miles of the Idaho border. He shot at the ground to deter a bear that experts believe was a grizzly based on his description.

Thankfully, a new grassroots effort has begun in the Bitterroot Valley to boost coexistence with black and grizzly bears. Supporting this work are Montana's grizzly bear expert, Jamie Jonkel, and famous biologist, Carrie Hunt, who lives in the valley. Carrie founded the Wind River Bear Institute that uses Karelian bear dogs to reduce bear conflicts.

For more on the story of grizzly bears in the Selway-Bitterroot, see this four-part narrated PowerPoint presentation by David:

- Grizzly Bears in Central Idaho: Beyond the Great Divide <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF3U2S74asE>
- Why Don't We Have Lots of Grizzlies Beyond the Great Divide? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpDle37gDZ0>
- There is Still Lots of Potential Beyond the Great Divide <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QM1XmulcQtQ>
- Bridging the Great Divide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvr9n-uo7iY>



[https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/bowhunter-encounters-grizzly-in-bitterroot-mountains/article\\_f89ed](https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/bowhunter-encounters-grizzly-in-bitterroot-mountains/article_f89ed)



*Grizzly Near Lolo Hot Springs, Montana*

### **More on Bear Dogs**

Here is a lovely story about Japan's Picchio Wildlife Research Center Bear Conservation Team that uses Karelian bear dogs, initially acquired from Carrie, who also helped train the group's staff. Early on, many locals were skeptical. But now many townsfolk wave at the Picchio dogs riding shotgun in staff trucks – and demand is building in Nagano Prefecture and spreading across Japan.

<https://thebark.com/content/bear-dogs-rescue?>

Here is a sweet video featuring Carrie and her dogs: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LO3Maw\\_DIW8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LO3Maw_DIW8)



*Bear Experts Carrie Hunt and her Karelian*

**COOL VIDEOS:**

**Wolf Pack Surrounds Grizzly and 'Escorts' it Away From Kill**

This encounter between wolves and a grizzly was captured by Yellowstone tour operator Adam Brubaker.



The grizzly in this video was innocently foraging when wolves crossed his path. When the grizzly stood up on his hind legs to get a better view of what was happening, the wolves escorted him into the bushes. A white wolf had blood on her face, suggesting they were guarding a nearby meal.

<https://kyrnews.com/yellowstone-grizzly-bear-vs-pack-of-wolves-filmed-in-as-soon-as-in-a-lifetime-sighting/>

**Amazing Footage of Grizzly Killing Bull Elk in Yellowstone River**

This footage by B.E. Judson shows a rarely seen lethal encounter between a mature bull elk and a grizzly bear. The grizzly chased the elk into the Yellowstone River and killed it. The video caught what appears to be a leg injury on the elk, most likely incurred during the rut.

<https://www.outdoorhub.com/news/2020/09/22/video-grizzly-bear-chases-kills-bull-elk-yellowstone-river/>



**The Saga Continues as Grizzlies Fight Over Carcass**

Xanterra employee Dave Angelescu caught this epic fight between grizzlies over the elk carcass referenced above. Needless to say, these were males and thus more inclined to go after meat than females. The reason is that eating meat is a particular boon for males, who need protein to put on lean body mass, more so than females, who prefer to avoid these barroom brawls especially when they have cubs to protect. The key scene starts at 4:15. <https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/right-place-right-time-grizzly-fight-captured-on-video-in-yellowstone/article>

For more on the relationship between grizzlies and ungulates, see this by David: <https://www.mostlynaturalgrizzlies.org/ungulates>  
And for more on trends in meat consumption see this by David: <https://www.mostlynaturalgrizzlies.org/trends-1>

**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*

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