



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

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 our first winter storm rolls in, grizzlies continue to bulk up in preparation for the famine ahead. Predictably, conflicts are escalating – many avoidable.

NEW BLOG:

Exorcizing Wendigo to Save Grizzlies, Ourselves

By Louisa Willcox

Louisa's blog this week (which follows below) features the monster "Wendigo" that, in Algonquin culture, is considered "the evil spirit that devours mankind." She uses Wendigo metaphorically to describe any person, idea, or movement infected by a corrosive drive toward self-aggrandizing greed and excessive consumption. In the tale, the monster must be dispatched to restore the health and well-being of society.

A recent push by farmers and ranchers to boost federal budgets to support killing more grizzlies, even though they are legally protected under the Endangered Species Act, prompted the comparison.

She concludes this way: "We must purge the Wendigos lurking in our institutions and in ourselves if we are to ensure that future generations will have anything approximating a healthy planet, let alone the chance to see the Great Bear in the wild."

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2019/09/23/Exorcizing-Wendigo-to-Save-Grizzlies-Ourselves>

IN THE NEWS:

Nominee for Director of Fish and Wildlife Service Predictably Supports Delisting

In recent testimony, the Trump administration's nominee for Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Aurelia Skipwith, called last year's court decision that reinstated ESA protections for Yellowstone grizzly bears a waste of resources. Senate confirmation proceedings are underway for Skipwith, a former lawyer for the agrochemical and animal feed industries. <https://www.powelltribune.com/stories/grizzlies-fully-recovered-top-wildlife-service-nominee-says,21153>

Endangered Species Act Champions Fight Back

This week, California and 16 other states filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration's weakening of the Endangered Species Act. California's Attorney General Xavier Becerra has sued the Trump administration more than 60 times over its dismantling of Obama-era environmental and public health regulations. Though most of those cases haven't been decided yet, judges have so far [sided with California](#) and environmental groups in cases concerning air pollution, pesticides, and royalties that the government receives from companies that extract oil, gas and coal from public land.

<https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2019-09-25/california-sues-trump-over-endangered-species-act>

Meanwhile, Representative Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Senator Tom Udall (D-N.M.), lead Democrats on Natural Resources committees in the House and Senate, introduced legislation to repeal all three of the Trump administration's final rules changing implementation of the Endangered Species Act which, taken together, would severely weaken protections of threatened and endangered species.

Under Trump's rules, the administration can ignore long-term threats to wildlife from climate change and remove guaranteed protections for threatened species listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, essentially nullifying the protective value of a threatened as opposed to endangered listing.

The full text of the bill, H.R. 4348, is available at <https://bit.ly/2mjHB65>.

Grizzly Bear Recovery Debated in the North Cascades

A recent article in the Revelator features the prospects for recovering grizzlies in the North Cascades of Washington state, where only a handful remain. Jack Oelfke, Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources for North Cascades National Park says: "Reintroduction might be easier with some species — none of them are easy... But if we want to honor the ethic of the Endangered Species Act, we need to reintroduce the grizzly."

Park Ranger Marissa Bluestein explains the need to recover grizzlies there in the context of climate change, asking: "What would *you* do if your home kept shrinking?"

<https://therevelator.org/grizzly-reintroduction-cascades/>

Please act! The Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service are accepting public comments on the proposed reintroduction until October 24:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome>

For more on the reintroduction proposal, listen to the Grizzly Times podcast with Jack Oelfke:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_KsGGh3iQI

The Drumbeat of Conflicts and Bear Deaths

Conflicts have been dominating headlines again, as more grizzlies die from run-ins with livestock operators, hunters, and after becoming conditioned to human foods.

One recent tragedy in the Swan Valley involved the removal of a grizzly bear family of four after the food-conditioned mom, dubbed Windfall, was killed by state wildlife agents. Two of her cubs were sent to the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center in West Yellowstone, but one could not be captured.

Local resident Suzanne Vernon wrote a powerful eulogy in the Missoulian, saying: “Last week, behind bars, this shining example of creation died a quiet, sobering death — not because she had failed, but because this gracious and now grieving community had failed her....

“We have rules about keeping our properties clean, but nobody holds us accountable... Our bear resistant garbage cans weren’t locked...What were we thinking?”

- https://www.leaderadvertiser.com/local_news/20190919/grizzly_bear_euthanized_in_seeley-swan_valley
- <https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/swan-valley-residents-mourn-loss-of-grizzly-bear-family>

A recent CBS story eloquently describes the impact of climate change on Yellowstone grizzlies, with a special focus on the killing last year of Tom Miner Basin’s famous “orphan twins” by Montana wildlife managers. Although the bears had been accommodated by local ranchers and loved by local fans, they got hooked on garbage when they wandered north into a subdivision and were killed as a result.

Author Judy Lehmborg writes: “As rapidly as global warming has decimated whitebark pine trees [formerly a staple of Yellowstone grizzlies] there may no way to save them. But it isn't too late for grizzly bears. With more bear-proof trash cans, education and maybe even some conservation easements, we should be able to live successfully with at least a few thousand of them.”

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nature-up-close-how-an-insect-is-key-to-grizzly-bears-survival/>

Elk hunters were mauled by grizzlies on three occasions during recent weeks, all in the Gravelly Range just west of Yellowstone National Park. Here and elsewhere in the ecosystem, grizzlies are turning increasingly to eating meat to compensate for catastrophic losses of whitebark pine.

- <https://www.postregister.com/news/local/hunters-injured-in-grizzly-attacks-in-southwestern-montana>
- <https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/another-hunter-attacked-by-grizzly-bear-in-gravelly-mountains>

In another incident in North Idaho, a hunter killed a female grizzly bear that he mistook for a black bear. This loss is especially costly for the Selkirk population given that only 50 or so grizzlies remain. The hunter has been charged in state court.

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2019/sep/20/hunter-accidentally-kills-grizzly-in-idaho/>

Coexistence Headway

On a positive note, Teton County, Wyoming, commissioners are calling for better compliance with county rules requiring bear resistant trash and recycling containers in high conflict areas. “Many folks out in the community could do a little better in terms of preventing bear encounters that lead, often enough, to euthanizing the bear,” said Teton County Commissioner Mark Newcomb.

<https://buckrail.com/bear-proof-trash-can/>

And near Nelson, British Columbia, a group of volunteers is picking fruit in the West Kootenays for the dual purpose of keeping grizzly bears away and feeding families in need. The program is funded through Grizzly Bear Solutions. Cool idea!

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bear-prevention-harvest-1.5283611>

A new report commissioned by Raincoast Conservation Foundation and produced by the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre calls for the province of British Columbia to prevent the unnecessary killing of wildlife, including grizzlies, by adopting a more restrained approach to the use of lethal force. The report outlines a series of law and policy reforms that would enhance wildlife management by increasing the accountability of the provincial wildlife agency. Similar measures would improve management in the Lower 48 too.

- <https://www.straight.com/news/1304896/kelly-firth-and-chris-genovali-bcs-human-wildlife-conflict-response-needs-reform>
- https://www.raincoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Managing-Human-Wildlife-Conflict-in-BC_Mar2019.pdf

GOOD NEWS:

Crowdsource Campaign Saves Key Grizzly Habitat

In an unusual crowdsourcing campaign, more than 1,000 students, philanthropists, sailors, businesspeople and others raised 3 million Canadian dollars, or \$2.3 million in American currency, that the British Columbia Parks Foundation needed to buy nearly 2,000 acres in Princess Louisa Inlet. Known as the "Yosemite of the North," the stunning glacier-carved gorge had been eyed by logging companies this year. This sets a new bar internationally for a crowdsourcing campaign to purchase private property to convert into public parkland.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/10/world/americas/princess-louisa-inlet-crowdfunding.html>

Clearwater Grizzly Stays Put

The 3-year-old bear that moved into Idaho's Clearwater country last spring seems to be staying put. Conservation groups have filed suit to stop the use of bait by black bear hunters to attract black bears, which can lead to accidental killing of grizzlies.

<https://dnews.com/local/wandering-grizzly-still-exploring-selway-bitterroot-forests>

Grizzly Bear Champion Barrie Gilbert Shares Memoir Excerpt

Dr. Barrie Gilbert shares with Mountain Journal an excerpt of his new memoir *One of Us* and recounts his attack by a grizzly during 1977 in Yellowstone – and why he is so passionate about protecting grizzlies and the wild. He says "Our modern relationship with the grizzly bear reflects either an appreciation for or apathy toward nature. Is it still possible to find a path back, to watch a grizzly with wonder in untrammelled lands? What are the waypoints on this journey that guide the grizzly's future?"

If we hope to slow and reverse the grizzly's slide into extinction, change is essential in our cultural tradition of domination, hatred, and apathy..."

<https://mountainjournal.org/in-new-book-bear-biologist-recounts-his-mauling-by-a-grizzly>

Frank Craighead's Papers Donated to Montana State University

The family of noted wildlife researcher and conservationist Frank Cooper Craighead Jr. recently donated his papers to Montana State University's Library. Frank and his twin brother John conducted pioneering research on grizzlies and other species in Yellowstone.

Frank's son Charlie said: "Dad was the kind of scientist that made a note of everything that interested him or caught his attention... Over the years he filled notebook after notebook with his observations — some of these turned into scientific papers, others into books. And some notations were obviously meant only for himself, reminders of the world he saw and hoped to understand. Maybe some future scholar can figure those out."

Frank founded the Craighead Research Institute, which is now located in Bozeman and is run by his son and daughter-in-law, Lance and April. More information about the Craighead Institute is available at craigheadresearch.org/.

<https://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/noted-grizzly-bear-researcher-conservationist-frank-craighead-s-papers-provided>

COOL VIDEOS:

A momma grizzly gives her cubs a ride across Lake Clark in Alaska:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7492035/Bear-cubs-cling-mothers-carries-safely-lake-Alaska.html>



Cari McGillivray was on the Stewart Cassiar Highway in BC when she saw two grizzlies fighting and shot this amazing video: <https://www.ndtv.com/offbeat/grizzly-bear-fight-caught-on-camera-a-million-views-for-video-2105606>

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: <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