

TRACKS

FIELD NOTES

On the Ranch

We spent much of the summer in the field collaborating with ranchers and other partners to prevent livestock-carnivore conflicts through proactive livestock management. Much of it comes down to managing grazing in ways that mirror the patterns of wild prey herds in the presence of their predators, like bison on the plains 150 years ago and prior. We also worked to improve the



Matt Barnes using low stress livestock handling to herd cattle on a project in Wyoming.

ranching environment by developing carcass removal and composting programs to reduce large carnivore attractants. What follows are field project descriptions.



Grizzly bear up to something.

Wind River Range, Wyoming

The Wind River Range in western Wyoming is now grizzly bear habitat again, with some areas also being used for summer grazing. For the second year, we worked with two ranches on their summer grazing allotment. The ranches are keeping the cattle together and on the move so that they don't adversely impact any one area. This approach combines safety in numbers, which is the same anti-predator behavior employed by wild prey species, with the human presence of riders. As of this writing, the allotment has not had any confirmed depredations since the proj-

ect began last year (there were wolf and grizzly bear depredations prior). That means the area carnivores stay wild.

We've found that successful herding and re-training the cattle to stay bunched up requires good stockmanship. This year we partnered with local ranches, the Dubois-Crowheart Conservation District, and the Shoshone National Forest to host a low-stress livestock handling clinic with Whit Hibbard of the Stockmanship Journal. Whit taught methods for handling pressure and release rather than fear and force. By consistently using this approach, riders can increase cattle's herd instinct, which is their natural anti-predator behavior, and deter conflicts with carnivores.

Northern Rocky Mountain Front, Montana

This year we started a new project with a ranch on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, east of Glacier National Park

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PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A few years ago, CNN did a report on names, asking "does your name shape your destiny?" Well, we hope so. We work with and for people and carnivores: carnivores because we have a passion for big critters with big teeth and we want to ensure their future on this landscape, and people because real, lasting, large carnivore and habitat conservation happens through people. Also, "People and Carnivores" reflects the two parties involved in the kind of wildlife conflicts we work to prevent, so it aptly covers our direct constituents.

Many of you have asked why we changed our name from Keystone Conservation to

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STAFF



Lisa Upson - Executive Director
Hannah Rasker - Development Coordinator
Steve Primm - Conservation Director
Matt Barnes - Rangeland Field Director

And our awesome contractors:
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 Graphic Design: **Colin Tuttle**

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends of people and carnivores –

I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of you, so – thank you! You have been patient with us throughout 2015 while we streamlined our corporate status and worked through our merger. We are finally through the bulk of it!

Amazingly, we have been able to stay focused on our conservation projects. I hope you enjoy reading about our many field projects. In addition to those featured in this newsletter, we're excited about development of our "Learning Watersheds" project where we'll focus on bringing tools and practices together in communities to match coexistence work with large carnivore range, rather than working piecemeal on one ranch here, one ranch over there. These valleys are some of the most critical habitat for wildlife connectivity purposes and we want to ensure we are working at the right scale.

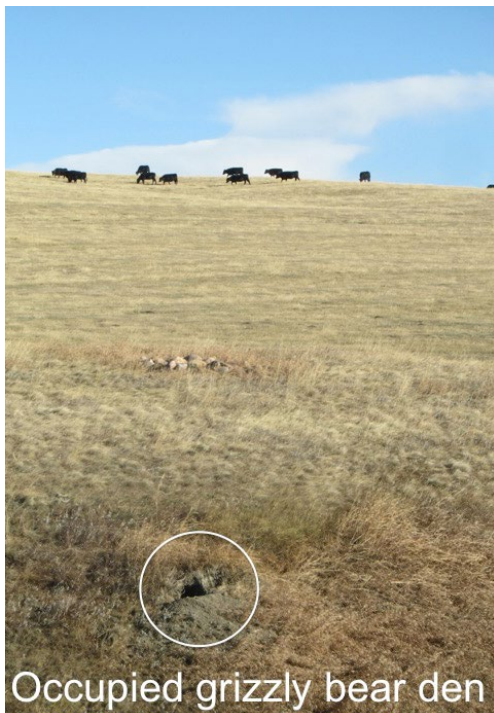
On a different note, as you know, there was a grizzly bear-related fatality in Yellowstone in early August. Unfortunately, both a man and the mother grizzly bear were killed as a result, and two cubs were sent to a zoo. The hiker was not carrying bear spray and was alone off-trail – a deadly trifecta of risk factors. We are currently researching bear attacks and fatalities and we have yet to find a fatality where the person was carrying bear spray (and it was accessible). Look for research results in our next newsletter.

Thank you for your support of all of our work!

Lisa.

lupson@peopleandcarnivores.org

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Occupied grizzly bear den

A grizzly bear den in cattle pasture, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.



A mountain lion roaming through a Reservation pasture.



A Foxlight on a calving pasture fence, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

and the Northern Continental Divide, the largest grizzly bear population in the continental U.S.

Last year the ranch had seven confirmed and eight probable depredations. This year the ranch moved towards a low-stress livestock handling approach, while subdividing existing pastures with fences for rotational grazing, which is better for the land than unmanaged grazing. In a calving pasture, we also set up Foxlights, which flash randomly at night, giving a potential predator the impression of human presence. This year there were no losses to bears or wolves in the calving pasture, or on summer range. Plenty of grizzly bears have moved through the pastures, as we have many trail camera photos of several different bears in different areas. One of our cameras caught a bear crawling in between and under fence wire!

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There is a mother grizzly with three cubs in the project area!



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Paradise Valley, SW Montana

We are in our third year supporting a project located on the edge of Yellowstone. This year we contributed to a cost-share for a range rider to herd and watch cattle in forest and range heavily occupied by grizzly bears and wolves (as well as other wildlife). During calving season, riders also used fladry fencing to keep wolves out of pastures where they had been previously. After the fladry was put up, the wolves stopped going into the cattle herd.

One exciting development on this project has been the formation of a community association, bringing landowners together to collaboratively manage the coexistence project and other issues. This was one of our goals when we got involved in the project three years ago, and we congratulate the rancher-landowners for organizing around the coexistence tools and practices that work for them in their community.



Caught by a trail camera are some wolf pups of the year playing.

Big Hole Valley, MT

With partners the Big Hole Watershed Committee, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the Wildlife Conservation Society, we launched a new carcass management program in the upper Big Hole Valley in southwest Montana. We're in the final stages of siting a carcass composting site in a central location in the watershed. Livestock carcasses attract large carnivores, so by removing them from the range, carcass composting programs reduce potential conflicts.



A cooler hanging over a backcountry bear pole.

FIELD NOTES

In The Backcountry

We are expanding our backcountry programs to keep people safe and bears wild. We now give bear safety presentations and bear spray demonstrations for private businesses, university classes, and for the public such as our monthly REI presentations. We are also developing a backcountry preparedness short film.

We are working with the US Forest Service to maintain and expand backcountry bear poles across Greater Yellowstone and the High Divide. Over the past 15 years, we've built more than 200 of these low-impact structures for backcountry recreationists to hang food, hunting carcasses, or other attractants while in the backcountry.

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Montana State University at Bozeman is experimenting with a new bear safety presentation format for MSU Recreation Department Trip Leaders as well as for the general study body. We are piloting a new bear safety talk and demonstration for the Department, first for Rec Department Trip Leaders and later in the spring for students. MSU's Trip Leaders lead student trips into Yellowstone and other backcountry areas.



Steve shows MSU Recreational Department Trip Leaders the proper way to use bear spray in a recent bear safety talk and demonstration.

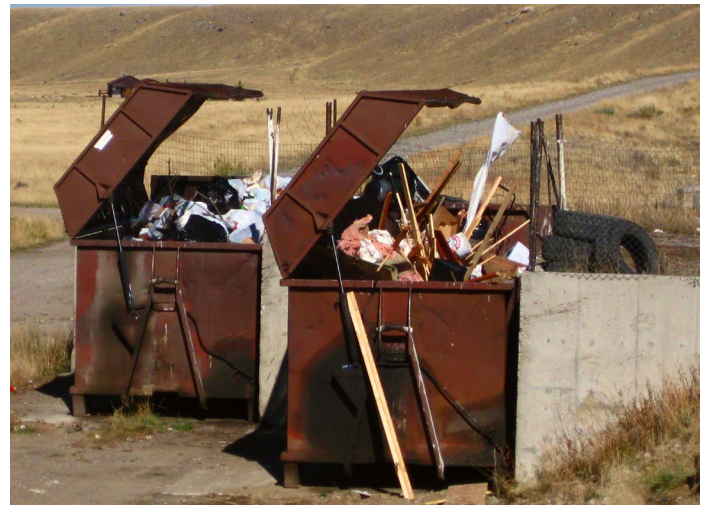


Steve emphasizes "situational awareness" as the most important bear safety practice.

FIELD NOTES

At Home

We're working with Madison County to build and test an innovative new design for excluding bears, birds, and other wildlife from a garbage transfer site in the upper Madison Valley. We believe the new design will make it easier to manage garbage in bear country and hope to take it to other locations.

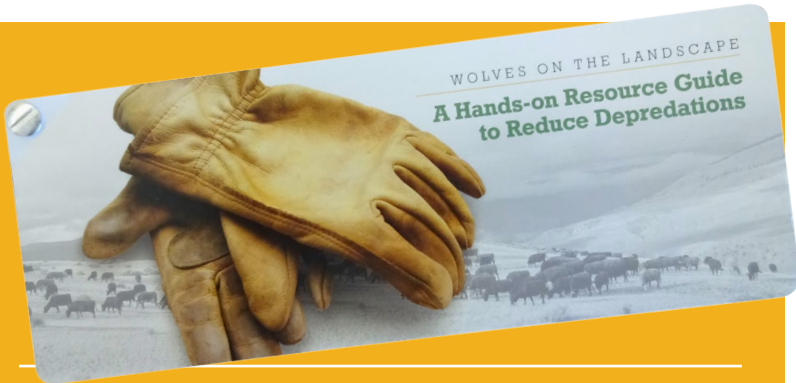


We are making the Palisades dump bear-proof with a new design.

Lastly, this fall and next spring, we have plans to distribute at least 10 bear-resistant residential garbage bins as a part of our "At Home" attractant reduction program. If you are reading this article and need a bear resistance canister, please contact us and we'll get one to you!

We Need Your Input!

If you have something you would like to contribute to our newsletters, we would love to include it. Please send questions, artwork, topics you'd like us to cover, carnivore photos (of the wildlife type), or anything else you think of. **Thank you!**



In partnership with the Brainerd Foundation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and Wildlife Conservation Society, we published "Wolves on the Landscape," a hands-on guide to reducing carnivore-livestock conflicts. Let us know if you would like one! The booklet includes practical guides to using guardian dogs and donkeys, carcass management, riders and herders, fladry fencing, scare devices, and other effective tools and practices.



STAFF STORIES...

What is your favorite experience involving a large carnivore?



MATT BARNES

Long ago, after telemetry but before bear spray, I was working in the field and we had just radio-collared a grizzly bear, and left her in a drugged sleep. My partner went back for a forgotten item, then ran out of the trees, followed by the suddenly awake but still-intoxicated sow. Thanks to her hazy sluggishness, and maybe a little providence, we just barely made it into the truck and drove away, with her almost on the tailgate. In another minute she had decided her lesson was complete and disappeared into the woods. After exchanging expletives, we decided to leave that forgotten item until tomorrow and instead just thank our lucky stars.



HANNAH RASKER

While doing field work with the Zambian Carnivore Programme in Zambia's Kafue National Park I had the most incredible interactions with wild carnivores on a daily basis. From cheetahs, to wild dogs, to majestic lions I was consumed with learning everything possible about these animals and what we can do to help them survive. I loved following the wild dogs hunting, and feeling the lions rumble my tent with their roars at night. There were so many outstanding experiences I can't possibly pick one - although radio collaring my first wild dog stands out!



LISA UPSON

I have seen many wolves and grizzly bears in the wild, but my favorite story involves two black bears. One night during on a solo backpack in the Wind River range of Wyoming I was awoken by a loud crack in the woods. When I pointed my headlamp into some bushes I saw two sets of glowing eyes. To learn who they belonged to, I walked towards them, and two bears, a mom and sub-adult, jumped out. Over the next hour I attempted to haze them away from my camp but they kept trying different angles to get past me to the "kitchen" and where my food was hung. Finally, they sat up on a hill about 50 feet away staring at me. I had only one option left: I unlocked my bear spray, pointed it forward, and ran at them screaming and waving. The sow made some noises when we were about 15 feet apart (probably laughter), but they turned around and ran and didn't come back. Hopefully those bears learned to stay out of that camp and any others nearby.



STEVE PRIMM

On a dreary May afternoon I had been keeping an eye out for a hungry little black bear who I'd heard was getting bold around people. People had thrown rocks at it, but the bear would shrug it off and keep eating clover and dandelions nearby. I was driving back from a trailhead and spotted the bear just a few feet off the gravel road. I pulled up next to it, and it barely moved. I thought, "ok, little guy, you need to be smarter about humans." I dug into my tool chest for bear pepper spray and with sympathy for this soggy little creature in the wet snow. So I put "live" bear spray in one hand, and an "inert" training spray (no pepper) in the other. Thus armed, I ran towards the bear, who let me get within 5 feet. "Hey!" I shouted, and triggered a loud, harmless burst from the inert can. I barely saw the bear leave, it responded so fast. I might have taught it a stronger lesson with a dose of the hot stuff, but the little guy seemed to be having a tough enough day. And, hey, it worked.

Thanks to supporter Richard Leonard for inspiring this Q&A!

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People and Carnivores during our recent merger process. "Keystone" had a nice ring to it, was easy to say, and for those familiar with ecological terms it represented our work on behalf of keystone species we all feel passionate about.

But most people we heard from about our name said they did not know what it meant. Keystone species include many animals in this region other than large carnivores, so the name wasn't an accurate reflection of our work. And the word "keystone" has come to evoke a bad idea related to the transport of oil from Canada to the Gulf Coast. Honorable mentions include a state, cops, a ski area and nonprofits with similar names with which people often confused us.

People and Carnivores, on the other hand, was a well-known and well-respected brand and organization in our field with a catchy logo. So after much discussion, we decided to change our name – a new look for our new stronger organization. We still do all our former Keystone Conservation work, but with the addition of Steve Primm we added a focus on grizzly bear conservation and a new set of tools to our wolf-rangeland work, namely guard dogs, fladry expertise, and a robust set of project partners, which will extend our reach to new geographies.

So – Introducing "People and Carnivores": We hope you like it, or come to love it as we have!

Thanks to supporter Russ Yttri for inspiring this article!

PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES

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CHECK OUT OUR PUBLICATIONS!

See www.peopleandcarnivores.org for our publications and media. This year we were featured in many articles about bear attacks as well as conservation ranching, including National Geographic Online and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. We also published our science paper, a fladry manual, and “Wolves on the landscape.”

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