

TRACKS

BANDY RANCH **BRYCE ANDREWS**

In April of 2018, People and Carnivores partnered with the University of Montana's College of Forestry to offer an undergraduate course called "The Theory and Practice of Sustainable Ranching." Students spent two weeks working on and living near the university's 3000-acre Bandy Ranch, a cattle operation in the Blackfoot Valley. The course, which was designed by People and Carnivores' Field Director Bryce Andrews and University of Montana graduate student Gillian Thornton, combined hands-on experience with a rigorous curriculum on land management and ethics.



A student connecting fladry to the posts.

In the first week, students focused on the fundamentals of sustainable ranching, such as low-stress herding, pasture management, fencing, and irrigation. The second week centered on carnivore coexistence. The ranch is a perfect site for a coexistence curriculum, as it is bordered on one side by the Bob Marshall Wilderness and on the other by the state's Blackfoot-Clearwater Game Range. Wildlife abounds, and many neighboring ranches have lost cattle to grizzlies and wolves.



PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES

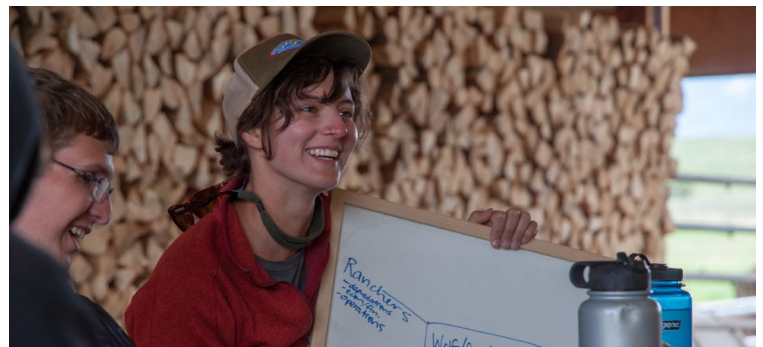
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Students learned about the natural history and habits of wolves and bears, and identified potential conflict sites on the ranch. They then learned and applied conflict prevention tools to keep livestock and wildlife out of trouble. They installed fladry around a pasture full of cows

and calves. They slept out with the herd, listening to the strange night noises of cattle and distant howling. They helped to maintain a bear-proof electric fence around the ranch's calving yard, visited the Blackfoot Valley's carcass composting site, assisted a neighboring rancher in taking down fladry, and discussed the challenges of ranching among carnivores with local wildlife managers from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and USDA Wildlife Services.

To better understand how predators move across the ranch landscape, students made use of motion-activated trail cameras and documented the presence of wildlife near the ranch's herd. Drawing on these experiences, students made recommendations for the ranch's future management.

Partnering with the university to offer the course provided People and Carnivores with a unique opportunity to expose young people to the challenging, rewarding work of large-carnivore coexistence. We hope to build on our success in 2018 and continue working with the university to offer similar opportunities to students in the coming years.



"Lessons" were very lively discussions about coexistence.



The inaugural Bandy Ranch class.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we print this newsletter, the Yellowstone grizzly bear delisting court case is about to be decided. We'll be watching the news with great interest. For our assessment of how delisting and hunting (if it goes ahead) might affect coexistence work, see our blog *Gatepost* on the P&C website under News.

Outside of the Northern Rockies, coexistence work is quickly becoming more relevant. Because I travel often to the northeast, I hear and read about growing pressures on wildlife and emerging responses from community residents that aren't too different from the debates we see in the West. This past April, I was privileged to speak at the Institute for the Study of Human-Animal Relations at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. The Institute has hosted a number of esteemed wildlife advocates, including Jane Goodall and Temple Grandin. My presentation was entitled "Is Coexistence Possible?" and featured the work of People and Carnivores. While P&C will remain focused on western carnivores, we are preparing for more requests to share how coexistence can work in other regions grappling with black bear, coyote, fox and possibly cougar conflicts.

As always, thank you for helping carnivores roam free.

Lisa.

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"THINKING OF YOU FOLKS OUT THERE ON THE LINES AND IN THE TRENCHES TRYING TO HELP OUR WILD FRIENDS' PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL"

-Dave Hamilton

WELCOME KIM JOHNSTON!

People and Carnivores is delighted to welcome Kimberly Johnston as our new Field Project Manager. Kim will lead P&C's conflict prevention efforts in the High Divide of Southwest Montana.

Kim was born in Whitefish, MT, and grew up in various national parks throughout Montana, California, and Arizona, as her mother worked for the National Park Service. From her earliest days she remembers wanting to work with wildlife.

Kim joins us from the eastern Rocky Mountain Front where she was a bear management technician with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Tasked with minimizing conflicts between humans and grizzly bears, Kim worked with landowners, communities, agencies, and recreationists to encourage use of prevention tools such as electric fences, acoustic deterrents, and livestock guardian dogs. Considered a "fencing expert" and "highly innovative" by colleagues, Kim also promoted and taught people how to use bear spray, and gave demonstrations to school, hunting, community, and wilderness groups.

Prior to MT FWP, Kim worked for the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center in West Yellowstone, MT, giving presentations on large carnivore biology, behavior, ecological importance, and conservation efforts.

In addition to her work experience, Kim has traveled on conservation-related visits to Alaska, Canada, South Africa, and South America to observe wildlife and better understand how people in disparate regions are coexisting with carnivores.



We look forward to putting Kim's expertise and innovative nature to good use!



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LEARNING TO LIVE ALONGSIDE BEARS MARTHA SELLERS

The competition for fastest bear sprayer was friendly but fierce at a recent bear safety event, with friends challenging friends, some participants insisting on another shot at it, and two sisters adamant that each had been just a millisecond quicker than the other.

The bear spraying was part of an evening educational event in the Upper Madison Valley in July, where People and Carnivores, the Southwest Montana Bear Education Working Group, and more than 100 attendees discussed and shared concerns, insight, and experiences living alongside bears. The dialogue was on keeping both people and bears safe—with a strong focus on better managing garbage and other attractants.

The growth in the Upper Madison Valley (and many other valleys in the West) includes developments that are home to a mix of permanent, part-time, and vacationing humans, who may not (or, not yet) understand how quickly attractants can impact a community. Just one household failing to secure garbage, pet food, garden produce, and other human foods can put an entire neighborhood, and the local bears, at risk.

Participants also learned how to differentiate between black and grizzly bears, important signs that indicate bear presence, how to avoid bear encounters, and what to do when an encounter is imminent. The event culminated in a practice session where people discharged inert bear spray canisters at a wooden bear that “charged” toward them along a track.

By listening to and discussing concerns, sharing our expertise for mitigating conflicts, and cost-sharing bear-resistant garbage canisters over pizza and lemonade, we were able to add more than 100 likely partners to the coexistence family.

Many thanks to event partner Elk Meadows Ranch for providing the perfect venue. Note: We held another of these events in NW MT after this newsletter went to print; we look forward to sharing it with you in our next newsletter.



Danielle Oyler and Steve Primm laying out the steps for effective bear spray use.



Two participants successfully spraying the “charging” bear.



THANK YOU, STEVE PRIMM!

We say goodbye this month to P&C co-founder and longtime Montana conservationist Steve Primm, who is off to new adventures in Canada. We thank Steve for his years of service, particularly on behalf of grizzly bears. Steve has worked on large carnivore coexistence for more than 20 years and we were fortunate for his contributions to P&C’s work since 2011. We wish Steve the very best in his new venture up north!

Steve Primm secures the cross bar on a bear pole structure.

LIONS AND LIVESTOCK

Living on the edge of the Bitterroot National Forest means stunning views and lots of wildlife. When that wildlife includes mountain lions, conflicts are possible. The Martens family, which raises goats and rare Icelandic chickens in the area, reached out to People and Carnivores recently to discuss ways to coexist with the mountain lions that had taken some of their livestock. They have subsequently adopted several essential coexistence tools. We cost-shared two livestock guardian dog pups, and loaned and installed electric mesh fencing. One added bonus: the fencing is mobile enough that they can practice rotational grazing while utilizing predator-resistant fencing—a win-win for all involved.



Anna Martens welcomes two new guardian dogs to the family.



The Martens have decided to coexist with carnivores like this juvenile mountain lion.

Photo Credit - Louise Johns



Raising our first bear pole in the Mission Valley.

BEAR POLES WITH THE CSK TRIBE

Continuing our long history of raising bear poles in the backcountry, P&C recently launched a food storage/safety project in the southern Crown of the Continent. In collaboration with Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribal members, we built seven bear poles for heavily used campgrounds in the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness area. Tribal members cut, peeled the bark off, and set bear pole logs at the base of trees with which we built the poles. The CSKT is excited about this new partnership and building more bear poles together in the future. We have two more installations planned this year, and more for next year including several on the remote but well-used west slope of the Mission Range. This area is a key corridor for grizzly bears moving west out of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem.

FLADRY AND OTHER FENCING

A recent collaboration with USDA-Wildlife Services has led to another successful fladry installation. A multi-generational cattle ranch near Dixon, MT, had suffered some recent losses from wolves and was looking for a solution during this spring's calving season. We installed fladry around their calving pen and the family reported no lost cattle or calves during that time, which has prevented losses of wolves as well. And an update on a previous fladry project: We provided consultation this summer with the Hansons and partners to install a permanent fence around the pasture that was featured in our fladry film from the spring. The original Hanson fladry film and another film about installing fladry can be found at <https://peopleandcarnivores.org/fladry/>.



Installing fladry for spring calving in Montana can mean working in deep snow.

SECURING GARBAGE AND SAVING BEARS

Two of our most important coexistence tools are garbage security and bear safety. We have extended our program of cost-sharing bear-resistant garbage canisters to include short-term usage. This summer we temporarily loaned three canisters to an RV park near Virginia City to address a quickly developing need. And we were honored to provide fire crews in Montana's Tobacco Root mountains with bear-resistant Kodiak canisters for their field camp. In addition, we expanded our bear spray training by conducting a bear-safety event for the employees at Mountain Sky Guest Ranch along with our usual events at the Bozeman REI.

One of our Kodiak bear-resistant canisters in use at a fire camp in Montana's Tobacco Root mountains.



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

Successful coexistence in the Rocky Mountain West recognizes the long history of ranching alongside carnivores, including its contribution to wildlife habitat. Along with this spring's Bandy Ranch course (see cover story), we collaborated on a range riding project in NW MT by supplying trail cameras for wolf and bear monitoring. And we recently added another film to our growing library, this one on herding from a coexistence perspective. You can view the film at <http://www.peopleandcarnivores.org/herding-as-a-tool-film/>.

Trail cameras are an excellent way to show carnivore presence. This wolf showed up on a cam we provided for a range rider project.

"I APPRECIATE AND COMMEND YOU FOR THE PROGRESS YOU'VE MADE CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD WOLVES."

-Marilyn Robinson

CONTINUING PROJECTS

This year we also continued or expanded several projects, including:

- Completion of another chicken tractor with a landowner. The landowner has plans to build six of these based on our innovation.
- Actively working with partners to get four carcass composting programs sited and developed (Ruby, Centennial, Madison, and Mission valleys).
- We are in our third year of improving and maintaining a custom fence around a corn crop in NW MT. This year our challenge was refining gates and keeping grass from shorting the electrical charge.
- Cost-shared with USFWS and Virginia City, MT, to purchase steel garbage cans for the VC downtown sidewalks, as bears had been getting into this garbage source.
- Again, this year we have created technical manuals such as our tool manual to distribute to community members and practitioners. See <https://peopleandcarnivores.org/publications/manuals-and-guides/>.

MAILING PREFERENCES?

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Many Thanks...

...to the following institutional funders for making these projects possible:

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