

TRACKS

CARNIVORES ON THE MOVE

LISA UPSON

Wolves, bears, and big cats have home ranges, but many of them eventually seek new places to roam and live. Some of the most incredible stories of wanderlust involve Northern Rockies carnivores: wolves getting over to western Oregon and down into Northern California; a South Dakota mountain lion to Connecticut; and a grizzly known as Ethyl traveling more than 5,000 miles around Montana and Idaho. It's risky business, and many wild carnivore explorers are killed during their travels. Yet it's often the lone disperser that paves the way for others, leading to expanded territory or new populations, and gene flow between populations.

As this newsletter goes to print, there is exciting news to share on this front. After almost a century without grizzlies, Central Idaho now has one 3-year old male grizzly bear in its mountains.

This is one of the goals we've been working toward together—grizzlies re-establishing themselves in the largest wilderness complex in the West, which is a federal grizzly bear recovery area (the Bitterroot Recovery Zone). The young male travelled all the way from the Cabinet Mountains in northwest Montana. We hope a female is not too far away!



The wandering young grizzly in Idaho.

And there's more good news. In mid-July, the Colorado Department of Parks & Wildlife confirmed the presence of a wolf in northern Colorado, west of Fort Collins. The wolf was part of Wyoming's



Wolf seen in northern Colorado in July, 2019.

Garrett Welling and Idaho Statesman

Snake River pack. There are no current reports on the wolf's status, so we can only hope it has found a good living in the Colorado north country. There have been a couple of other wolves confirmed in Colorado in the past, unfortunately killed in both instances, but it's possible there are wolves in the state that have not been seen. The wandering male is

black in color, making it stand out as a wolf, which could put it at risk or help distinguish it as a protected animal. Either way, Colorado is probably a safer place for him to be. Colorado residents are gearing up to vote on a ballot measure that would approve a wolf reintroduction in the state and reports are that it will pass.

As for mountain lions, the eastern cougar has been declared extinct, but western cougars continue to move east. Recently a mountain lion was confirmed in Des Moines, Iowa. Helping carnivores stay alive and moving is our goal. Last week I toured the Big Hole Valley in southwestern Montana with our High Divide Field Manager, Kim Johnston. Lots of good habitat out there and recent grizzly bear sightings have us hopeful that more grizzlies will be in Central Idaho soon.



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Look for our new short film "Connections" about the importance of connecting carnivore populations, and how we make it happen—coming in October!



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Our fall newsletter is always fun and challenging to put together. So much happens in the preceding six months that it's hard to fit everything in and this year was no exception. So, we added a couple pages to share more. We've redesigned our field reports and added some new features after getting some great suggestions from some of you. For example, we've started spotlighting supporters, and you can "meet" Janice Eckhardt on page 6. Let us know what you think of the new look, and if you have other suggestions, let us know; we love hearing from you.

In other news, we started a social science internship program this spring. Matt Collins, from Maryland, joined us for three months to conduct social science research to help us be more effective in our communications with potential project partners. Matt also worked extensively on our bi-annual science compilation, which we expect to distribute in October. Matt is attending Colorado State University in Fort Collins beginning this fall to study the human dimensions of carnivore conservation work. Part of what we need to do is encourage, cultivate, and assist young people to become conservation leaders, so we will continue hiring an intern each year.

As always, thank you for all your various kinds of support. Have a good fall!

Lisa.

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Thanks for all your efforts managing people and carnivore interactions to the benefit of both. ~ Bryan and Pamela Pule

AND THE WOLF GOES TO...



Pamela and Bryan Pule, winners of P&C's wolf painting raffle

After travelling and backpacking through Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska in the mid-1990's, Pamela (a native of England) and Bryan Pule fell in love with the American West... its beauty, its people, and its wildlife. It was about this time that they began supporting People and Carnivores. They recognize that human and animal interaction is inevitable in an increasing wildland-urban interface, and coexistence is essential. They told us

that they continue to support People and Carnivores because we are working to change attitudes, providing education, and delivering creative solutions that reach many different stakeholders. Growing up in California, Bryan noticed early on that the only grizzly bear in California was on the state flag. We so appreciate their two decades of generosity and look forward to helping grizzlies find their way back to California!

EVENTS AND EDUCATION

Mufasa is a Turkish Boz Shepherd, which are known for their ability to remain calm enough to be handled by children and fierce enough to face determined predators.



(LEFT) A rudimentary but effective protective collar for an LGD.

WHEN DOGS KEEP LIVESTOCK AND CARNIVORES SAFE

MARTHA SELLERS

One of the most important aspects of P&C's work is identifying which conflict management tool is the best fit for a given circumstance, and we are finding that livestock guardian dogs (LGDs) are an essential solution in an increasing number of situations. That's why we partnered with Steve and Billie Skelton of Blackleaf Guardians at two community events this spring to share insights about reducing livestock-carnivore conflicts using LGDs.

A staple of ranching in Europe for generations, LGDs are starting to make inroads in the U.S. as well. Unlike herding dogs that guide livestock movement, LGD's focus on protecting the flock by actively engaging with predators that get too close. Sometimes that means barking, sometimes that means chasing wildlife off. Different breeds are bred for varying levels of aggression, and LGD owners are finding success using multiple dogs in a pattern of concentric rings.

Event attendees in Alder and Dillon, including ranchers, farmers, university students, and agency personnel, learned the differences in breeds and the positive effects of "layering" them for better overall protection of livestock and property. They also got to meet some of the Skelton's guardian dogs—a highlight of the events.

LIVING SAFELY IN GRIZZLY COUNTRY

BRYCE ANDREWS

This August, People and Carnivores partnered with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to hold a series of community meetings on the Flathead Indian Reservation. At these events, local residents had the chance to learn about local grizzly bear presence and movements and strategies for reducing conflict risk. The meetings closed with a presentation on bear spray best practices and a practice session with inert training canisters.

We now hold more than 10 bear safety events each year for people who live in prime grizzly habitat. Participants continue to be amazed at how many bears live and move through their valleys, and how unwieldy bear spray can be until you practice using it.

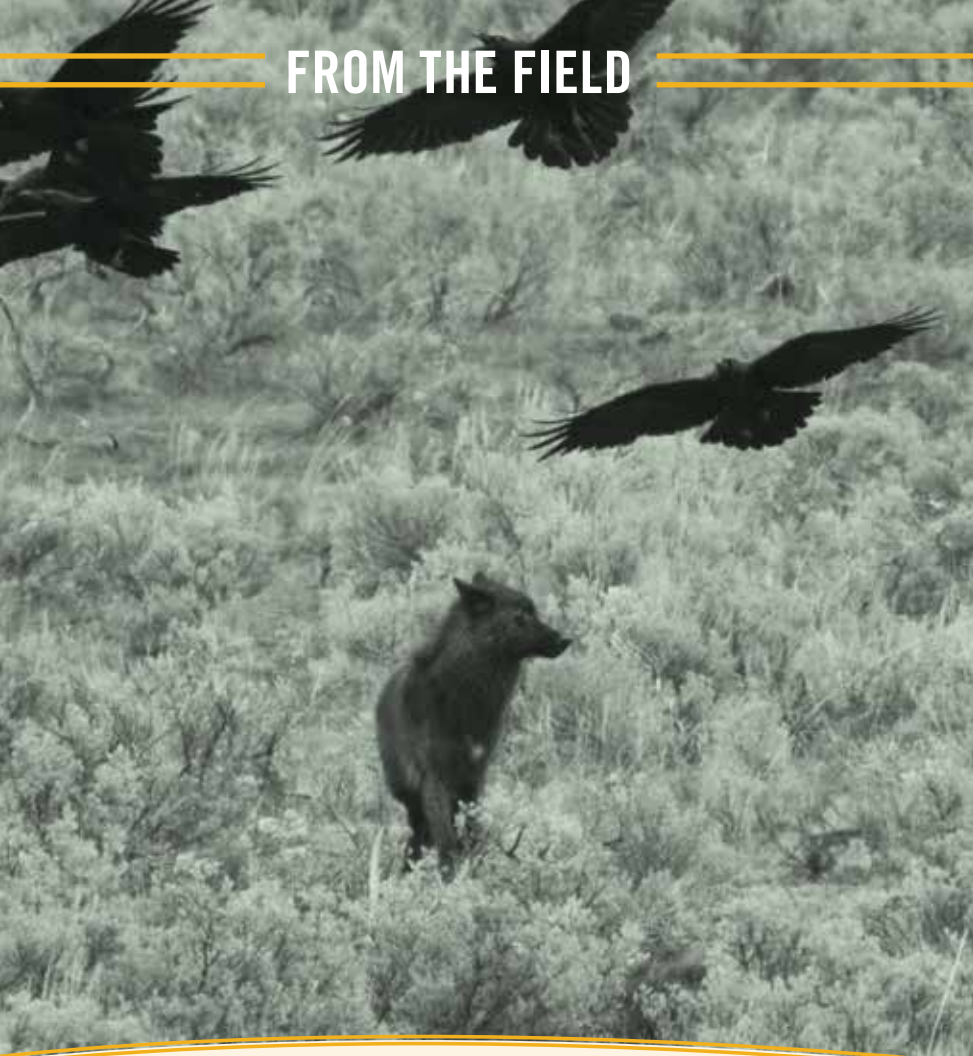
This is also our fourth year as a member of the Montana Bear Education Working Group. P&C works closely with the group's field staff to promote bear awareness and safety practices around



Kim Johnston shares important information about bear behavior and various conflict prevention tools.

the High Divide. We added several events to this year's schedule, including a series of hunter events this fall, as grizzly-hunter encounters are often reported on negatively for bears.

See more **EVENTS AND EDUCATION**, page 7



THE LAND IN BETWEEN

KIM JOHNSTON

The High Divide refers to the “land in between”: the area between the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and the Crown of the Continent (Crown), straddling the Continental Divide from which the Missouri and Columbia rivers flow into different oceans (*High Divide Collaborative, 2019*). In carnivore terms, this land in between is ecologically critical; it serves as connectivity landscape between Yellowstone, the Crown, and Central Idaho. Linking these three ecosystems in the Northern Rockies will provide long-term viability for populations and provide stepping stones for range expansion. This year we



Matt Collins

Map showing the critical Crown of the Continent and High Divide focus areas.

High Divide Collective

As people and attractants increase, we are doubling down on prevention efforts. In the past year, we’ve partnered with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to build food storage structures at recreation areas and campsites across the Flathead Indian Reservation. We’ve also collaborated with the tribes to create their first Living with Carnivores booklet and on a series of bear safety meetings in the Jocko and Mission Valleys. The meetings, which are open to all community members, allow local residents to better understand how bears are using the landscape, and how to avoid conflict.

We’ve worked with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to supply bear-resistant trash bins to loaner programs in the Swan Valley, Blackfoot Valley, and Georgetown Lake areas. The loaner programs are popular with homeowners and other rural residents and they can save the lives of bears by keeping them from becoming habituated to human refuse.

On the agricultural side, we’ve helped place livestock guardian dogs in the Jocko and Bitterroot Valleys, and we’re currently

have been working on a wide variety of projects across the High Divide, with particular focus in a few key areas.

Virginia City is a rural community that sits in the center of a narrow corridor connecting the Gravelly and Tobacco Root mountains. While the Gravelly range to the south is home to grizzlies, wolves, mountain lions, wolverines, and more, the Tobacco Root range has yet to have a confirmed grizzly bear sighting. Yet, it has been identified by research as a key travel point for grizzlies. With sightings just a few miles from this corridor, we are working closely with Virginia City to develop a community-wide prevention program, with a goal of it becoming a “Bear Smart Community” within three years. This summer, the town completed the installation of 14 steel bear-resistant garbage canisters through the town center. We also funded and distributed 20 bear-resistant residential garbage canisters to various businesses and residents throughout the community and are working closely with others to secure attractants. At a nearby RV park we helped the owners monitor the presence of a mountain lion (photo above) that was in the vicinity.



A mountain lion caught on one of our trail cameras



Fencing P&C installed around beehives. We’re working with this landowner on additional tools for livestock as well.

The Big Hole Valley to the west is at the heart of a network of corridors connecting wildlife from all directions. The Big Hole is a linkage point for grizzlies expanding out from the GYE into the Idaho Wilderness and expanding south from the NCDE population, and it continues to support a wide range of other carnivores, including wolverines. We are working on several projects in this area with local agencies, livestock producers and residents. One such project is a partnership with the US Forest Service and the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) to improve food storage on public

lands surrounding the Big Hole Valley. With Y2Y, we recently purchased 13 large food storage order signs for portal roads in the valley in areas with recent grizzly bear observations. We’re also working with a ranch to incorporate livestock guardian dogs into their cattle operation after a series of wolf conflicts and losses in recent years.

In addition, we have focused quite a bit on garbage security this year. To the north, the Georgetown Lake resort has had several black bears in garbage (and grizzlies are close to this area). We gave a dozen bear-resistant garbage canisters to the homeowners’ association, and worked with the Forest Service and local garbage hauling company to raise funds for another 20 cans. With many other projects, from fencing bee yards to bear safety events and trainings, we have dotted the High Divide landscape with prevention projects that will help wolves and bears travel this important corridor.



Bryce Andrews bear-proofing a small garden.

working with a poultry producer on new strategies for electrifying chicken barns. We’ve completed a number of smaller orchard and garden fencing projects, which allow us to further refine our bear-deterrent fencing techniques and repurpose fencing materials from past projects. We’re experimenting on larger properties as well, and have

PROTECTING THE CROWN, continued on page 6



A truckload of bear-resistant canisters ready for delivery in one of our loaner programs.

PROTECTING THE CROWN

BRYCE ANDREWS

The Crown of the Continent is aptly named. It is high, beautiful, and precious—a circler of fertile valleys and sheer mountains around Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. From here, grizzlies and wolves can range freely north to Canada, west/southwest to Idaho, or east to the Rocky Mountain Front.

The Crown’s southwestern edge—the part of the ecosystem where People and Carnivores works most actively—is ecologically critical and poses unique challenges. Here, wilderness checkerboards into the domesticated landscape, with its many towns, houses, roads, and types of livestock. The human population grows steadily with each passing year.

All this adds up to a complex, varied existence for large carnivores. In the Southern Crown, a grizzly bear may den in remote, untraveled mountains but spend its summer dodging traffic and ambling through orchards in the valley below. To survive and thrive here, predator species must learn to coexist with human beings and our property. While the number of grizzlies and wolves in this region has risen over recent decades, the number of human-caused deaths has risen. 2018, for example, was the highest year on record for grizzly deaths.



A grizzly caught on one of our trail cameras

PROTECTING THE CROWN, continued from page 5

partnered with several commercial-scale farms and ranches to monitor carnivore activity and assess depredation risks. We're currently collecting trail camera data, which we will use to tailor conflict reduction strategies to individual ranches.

Diverse as they are, these projects aim at a single important goal: with each bear pole we install and each attractant we

remove from the landscape, we protect carnivores and keep them moving through the Crown of the Continent's southern edge. It's critically important to give predators safe passage over to Central Idaho and down into Southwest Montana where they are expected to connect with Yellowstone populations. Our conflict reduction work will help bears, wolves and other carnivores make and survive that trip in greater numbers in the years to come.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

JANICE ECKHARDT, ARVADA, CO



People and Carnivores: Tell us a little about yourself.

Janice Eckhardt: I may live in urban Colorado now, but I'm a prairie girl at heart. I was born in Beatrice, Nebraska, and lived on a farm until my sophomore year of high school. My sister and I spent every minute outside. In the summertime we would leave in the morning and just play all day. My mom didn't know where we were and she didn't care. I made sure my kids had that same childhood.

P&C: When did you become interested in conservation?

JE: Well, I've loved animals all my life, but my first experience saving something happened when my sons came home one day in tears because their favorite park was being razed for apartments. After a day or two, I realized that I couldn't just let this happen, so I wrote petitions, knocked on doors, made calls, and wouldn't give up. We won the fight and the space stayed

a park; it's still there off I-70 and Kipling, across from Echter's Greenhouse. Soon after that, three board positions opened up with the local park and rec district so I ran. There were 12 of us and I garnered the second largest number of votes.

P&C: Have you been keeping track of the wolf situation in Colorado?

JE: Yes, I went to a hearing at the capitol last spring regarding wolf reintroduction and was struck by how many senators and representatives were against it. Then when the wolf made its way into Colorado this summer, I was so worried someone would find it and kill it. People just don't seem to understand how crucial they are to our world!

P&C: What is it about carnivores that keeps you supporting P&C?

JE: We keep building and building and building. It's got me really worried. The animals have no place left. We have to support the nonprofits who are working their tails off because the government isn't going to do what it should.

P&C: Any last thoughts?

JE: I'm awake at night, wondering what more I can do. If there IS anything I can do? All I know is I can't stop trying. It's too important.

FENCING GRIZZLIES OUT
MARTHA SELLERS

Keeping bears away from livestock, crops, and garbage is critical to their survival. As grizzly and black bears venture more into human-inhabited landscapes, bear-deterrent fencing strategies have had to become more diverse and contextualized, and People and Carnivores has developed and tested several ways to couple strong fencing with a non-injurious jolt so bears move on to natural meals and safer locations.

In late May, P&C gathered fencing practitioners from across the region at a ranch in the Jocko Valley to share experiences, insights, and innovative ideas for keeping bears away from cattle, chickens, apple trees, corn, and other common attractants.

The full-day event began with presentations on grizzly bear movement, electric fence technology and maintenance, and some of P&C's recent



Workshop attendees talk at one of the fencing stations.



P&C's Kim Johnston explains the various types of insulators that can be used for electric fences.

projects. The afternoon was a hands-on field workshop where participants examined and discussed fencing materials, structure, size, height, and electrification at pre-built stations including a chicken coop, large orchard, and small night pen.

MT WILD—GRIZZLY BEAR INSPIRED CLASSROOM CHALLENGE

People and Carnivores joined Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks for a Grizzly-Inspired Classroom Challenge this spring, giving middle and high school students a unique opportunity to develop a plan for how their community and grizzly bears can coexist together on the landscape. Students had to form a team and research grizzly bears characteristics, examine research, and interview stakeholders to understand their various needs, then develop an action plan for their area. This opportunity allowed youth to act as future



wildlife stewards, walking them through the steps of problem-solving in real-world grizzly bear conservation. People and Carnivores' Kim Johnston served as an expert panelist for students to question as well as a stakeholder panelist during the livestream event. Our Tool Resource Guide was also included in their Inspired Classrooms content, along with our short films and blog articles, for teacher and student reference content. More than 500 students participated in the challenge, and the live stakeholder event was broadcast in a live interactive forum to more than 16 schools across Montana.

PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES

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A People of Vision



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P&C worked with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to develop the tribes' first guidebook for living with carnivores.

