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Listing /De-listing the Grizzly

President's Letter

By Dr. Charles Jonkel

Recent Missoulian editorials, news, and Court reports discuss the listing/de-listing of grizzlies under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). This Act (passed in 1973), was about the 5th version, and it is "good, strong government legislation. Used wisely, it protects or aids countless species and extensive habitats. It has made "caring for the land" constant and mandatory at the Federal level. The ESA is something new in American and global government and politics, but it also faces powerful opposition.

The grizzly was listed under the ESA in 1975, amidst extensive debate, study, and controversy. The proposed federal "Rules" (which implement an Act) varied initially from "difficult" to foolish, as some people and groups advocate their own, narrow interests.

At first, even "procedures" had to be invented—how to protect the bear and its habitat, how to relate to other bear "clients," and etc. The involvement of states, tribal interests, even large corporate "habitat owners" had to be clarified, studied, and sometimes set hit or miss. Limits on hunting were needed, but had to be adopted at state levels. This meant breaks in long-term state policy, major changes in public, state, federal, and hunting group expectations, and even setting kill quotas. Native American cultural views, county/city development plans, Canadian interests, all had to be addressed. The Act was powerful and popular, but "getting there" with the grizzly was not easy. One agency, for example, classified "critical habitat" for the grizzlies as all lands

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Photo by Jeff Wohl



This Alaskan brown bear is doing just fine on salmon in Katmai National Park, but its interior grizzly counterparts in the Lower '48 are not always so fortunate

Photo by Jeremy Patrick

The Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem: Next Target for Delisting? *By Brian Peck*

With the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) efforts to prematurely delist Greater Yellowstone (GYE) grizzlies rebuffed by the federal court in 2009 (See the President's Corner), one would think that the Service would focus its attention on solving the problems identified there. Unfortunately, FWS and its federal and state partners in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho remain in total denial that they did anything wrong in the GYE, and seem determined to repeat their mistakes in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) in the near future.

When grizzlies were listed as a Threatened species in 1975, that protection applied to all lower 48 populations as a unit, and conservationists and independent scientists have long maintained that the great bear must be recovered and delisted the same way. Specifically, the best science suggests that a population of perhaps 3000 bears, spanning at least six linked recovery areas in a "metapopulation", is required to achieve and maintain a viable population in the lower 48.

While FWS gives lip service to this concept, they would require far fewer bears, and maintain that grizzlies can be delisted one isolated Distinct Population Segment (DPS) at a time. Greater Yellowstone was their first effort, and it's becoming clear that the NCDE is next in the agency crosshairs.

Unlike Yellowstone, however, where millions of dollars have been spent over the last 40 years studying population, trend, mortality/survivorship, and habitat, the NCDE lags far behind, and the rush is on to fill in the gaps and build the foundation for delisting the largest grizzly population south of Canada. While GBF is always in favor of top notch research and habitat protection, we're concerned that FWS has already decided that the NCDE population is recovered, delisting is overdue, and will "fix the data" around that predetermined conclusion. Here's where the process currently stands:

* In 2004, grizzly researcher Kate Kendall of the U.S. Geological Society (USGS) coordinated the world's first ecosystem-wide DNA population study of grizzlies in the NCDE, covering 12,000 square miles, collecting and analyzing 34,000 hair samples. The result was a mean population estimate of 765 grizzlies (Confidence Interval = 715-833). The study appears to be scientifically sound.

The 2004 study relied on thousands of barbed wire "corrals" with scent lures, as well as hair collection from bear "rub trees", and was time, staff, and dollar intensive. Kendall is now engaged in a companion trend study based solely on the cheaper rub tree option, with results due at the end of 2012.

* Well-known grizzly researcher Rich Mace of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks is several years into an ecosystem-wide Trend Monitoring Survey based on monitoring a radio-collared sample of at least 25 female grizzlies per year. He currently has compiled over 100 bear-years of data (ex. 25 bears X 4 years) and his first population trend estimate is due any day now. When Kendall releases here first rub tree estimate in December 2012, Mace will be finishing his third estimate based on collared bears. Taken together, these studies will give bear managers their first multi-year population & trend estimates – key to the recovery/delisting debate. All of this is well-

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Scientists say B.C. grizzly hunt could hurt recovery efforts in Montana

By Michael Jamison, *The Missoulian* — April 2, 2010

KALISPELL - British Columbia's grizzly bear hunt is too aggressive, and could hurt efforts to recover the species in Montana unless tighter controls are enacted.

That's the word from a group of senior scientists on both sides of the border, who on Thursday sent a letter of warning to provincial leadership.

In the absence of stricter hunting regulations, they wrote, British Columbia's bear population "continues to erode."

Research biologists from both the United States and Canada signed the letter, including Lance Craighead from Montana State University. Their concerns came on the heels of an analysis showing that the number of bears killed in British Columbia consistently exceeds the allowable limit.

The review looked at five years - 2004 through 2008 - and found that the number of grizzlies killed by people repeatedly surpassed the government's quota.

The Canadian Flathead - located north of Glacier National Park - is home to the highest density of inland grizzlies on the continent. In that area, grizzly deaths exceeded the number allowed in four of five years, sometimes by as much as 130 percent.

Provincial records show that between 1977 and 1988, 188 grizzlies were killed in the Flathead, with 157 of those shot by trophy and sport hunters. During that same time, about 11,000 grizzlies were killed throughout the province - 87 percent by hunters.

"What happens on one side of the border certainly affects what happens on the other side," said Chris Servheen, who heads bear recovery for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "We're dependent on our Canadian neighbors for recovery in our populations down here."

Servheen, who did not sign Thursday's letter, said that although "we do have lots of transboundary bears," hunting was only one population pressure, and perhaps not the most important one.

More troubling, he said, is continued fragmentation of habitat on both sides of the border. He called the Canadian Flathead hunt "conservative," and said his office is "in constant contact with the province" on these issues.

Current estimates peg British Columbia's total grizzly population at about 16,000 (perhaps half of Canada's total), although some scientists say that estimate is too high, and a DNA census suggests far fewer bears. Regardless, the population is a fraction of its historic size.

Wildlife managers in the adjacent province of Alberta - where grizzly bear numbers have collapsed to perhaps 600 animals - have enacted a moratorium on grizzly hunting, which has been in place for several years.

In 2001, British Columbia initiated a similar moratorium, but it was lifted later that same year when a new provincial government took

office. Since then, hunters in the province have averaged about 250 bears per year.

Provincial leaders have cut off the hunt in some areas, where the bears are most at risk, and say they now manage a system that "allows wildlife biologists to carefully regulate harvest levels in each area where grizzly bear hunting is allowed."

In addition, the province's own bear management plan notes that "we owe it to ourselves, to our descendants and to the grizzly bears to implement a strategy for the survival of this majestic creature."

But the reality, according to Louisa Wilcox, is falling short of the plan. She works for the Natural Resources Defense Council, which joined the bi-national panel of scientists in calling for tighter hunting controls. She has documented several cases of Montana bears migrating north for a season, only to be killed there by hunters.

"British Columbia's hunt," she said, "is un-

dermining the efforts to protect bears on this side of the border."

South of the border, grizzlies have enjoyed decades of protection, and populations are finally starting to rebound. Recovery, however, is complicated by hunting in northern habitats, Wilcox said.

She supports efforts to end hunting in Canadian parks, saying U.S. research has confirmed the importance of protected parks to the species' survival.

She also supports efforts to make "core habitat" areas off-limits to hunting in British Columbia.

"The bears need secure places of sanctuary," she said. "They need refugia where they're not constantly pressured by people."

Reporter Michael Jamison can be reached at 1-800-366-7186 or at mjamison@missoulian.com.



Updated Edition of Living with Predator Guides

By Patti Sowka

The First Edition of the Living with Predators Resource Guides was published in 2003 to provide information about ways to prevent conflicts with predators, primarily bears. The set now consists of four separate volumes: Techniques and Refuse Management Options for Residential Areas, Campgrounds, and Group-Use Facilities; Recreating in Bear, Wolf and Mountain Lion Country Guide; Recreating in Bear, Wolf and Mountain Lion Country Guide; and, Predator Behavior and Modification Tools.

The first three guides in the series are available to the general public and can be downloaded free of charge from the Living with Wildlife Foundation web site at www.lwwf.org. The fourth guide presents information about techniques and products available to wildlife professionals who are managing predators.

The guides are currently being updated through a joint project between the Living with Wildlife Foundation (LWWF) and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The Techniques and Refuse Management Options for Residential Areas, Campgrounds, and Group-Use Facilities Guide is currently being updated and should be available around the first of the year. This guide contains information about various bear-resistant containers available for storing garbage and other potential bear attractants, the Interagency Grizzly Bear-Resistant Products which tests various bear-resistant products for effectiveness, electric fencing to deter predators and sources of information about this topic.

The Recreation in Bear, Wolf and Mountain Lion Country Guide contains information helpful to people who will be recreating in areas where bears, wolves and mountain lions live. The guide covers bear-resistant backpack products, choosing and using bear-resistant products, and recreating in areas inhabited by predators.

The Electric Fencing Guide explains the basics of how electric fences work and how this effective tool can be used to deter predators and "teach" them to stay away.

The guide focuses on fence designs to deter bears, but some general information about using electric fencing to deter wolves, coyotes and mountain lions is also included. The final guide in the series, Predator Behavior and Modification Tools, contains information about aversive condition techniques, culvert trap designs and other resources available to wildlife professionals. Please visit www.lwwf.org for more information about the guides and links to the updates versions as they become available.



President's Letter, contd.

Continued from Front Page

above 6,000 ft.

We had to address hunting "mystique," land use at all levels, basic research, cooperative agreements, law and rule refinement, and state/corporate precedents. All issues had to be included—even certain hostile threats and insults form the public.

Confusion and problems continue to this day, 35 years later, with lawsuits, judge rulings, and considerable public and corporate opposition to the Act. Limiting land development, subdivision, road and highway building, mining, logging, and livestock uses still elicit strong opposition. In both science and law, differences of opinion continue, especially regarding the recent grizzly bear listing/delisting goals.

The major biological worries center on 1) the loss of the limber pine/whitebark pine nut resource (as mountain pine beetles and blister rust kill trees over vast areas), and 2) the simultaneous loss of the cutthroat trout resource to invading lake trout, in Yellowstone National Park.

To lose both the pine nut and trout food resources had undeniably hurt the bears—they have long been known as very important grizzly foods, but unfortunately the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) says pine nuts and trout are not essential to Yellowstone bears. They state that grizzlies are resourceful and will adapt to the many other foods. But indications are already that Yellowstone grizzlies have turned more to wild ungulates, gut piles (from hunting), and perhaps livestock predation and wolf kills, all foods that will lead to future management problems.

The Great Bear Foundation (GBF) joined in the listing/delisting lawsuit primarily because 3) the cumulative loss of habitat resources continues and is worsening. In GBF's view, this "bottom line habitat loss" should be the main agency concern for keeping the grizzly listed. For over 30 years, personally and repeatedly, I have noted that "if the habitat is going down, the fight is not over, the job is not done."

There are other reasons grizzly bears should remain protected under the ESA, but the main reason is always HABITAT, HABITAT, HABITAT. The counties, the cities, the conservation districts, the states, the developers, the highway departments, the agricultural and logging industries, are still (in total) degrading grizzly habitat at a massive rate. Even yet many "development" activities of government are relentlessly destroying grizzly habitat while those same agencies protect habitat with land deals, development restrictions, rehab plantings, and etc. elsewhere.

Those good agency actions are laudable, but in fact they do not remotely compensate for the habitat they destroy—the forest is not cut, but the ski area goes in, a new driveway is built, another trophy home pops up. The end result—the critical habitat "bottom line" continues DOWN. Grizzlies, backed into a "habitat corner" are not REAL grizzlies—they will forever get into trouble and reap blame they do not deserve.

In short, grizzlies are very expensive animals to keep, if it is done right. Locally, what is happening at the city/county/private

land-owner levels of habitat management is drastic and as bad as ever. This fact MUST be remembered. Corporate lands, many large ranch lands, and conservation districts still almost completely hurt the bears. Some Montana ranches are larger than many countries, and indeed function almost as separate nations, behind the closed gates.

Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks are both ringed with new roads, subdivisions, trophy homes, commercial centers, expanded winter/summer uses, power corridors, and etc. Like "ring around the collar," these "park views for sale," the greater access, and new "local person" voices all hurt the habitat endlessly.

In total, all of these enormous, "habitat loss" reasons are why GBF favors continued listing for the grizzly. GBF appreciates progress made under the ESA, but the loss of 1) the cones, 2) the trout, and 3) a stable or expanding habitat, in our view, require the continued listing of grizzlies under the ESA.

The story doesn't end there, however, because—4) the rising costs of grizzly bear in research, management, law enforcement, habitat protection, land-use planning, buying vital ranges and corridors, and etc. is ENORMOUS.

Currently, the 300 million people of the US pay the costs of having grizzlies, and they want ESA responsibilities met for the bears. Under the ESA, grizzlies belong to all Americans. The key states—Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, have about 2 million people, and a) many of those good people don't value the grizzly. Simply put, the 3 states WILL NOT pay for what grizzlies need. You MUST remember that as a species, grizzlies are very costly to maintain—research, management, law-enforcement, land management, compensation, conflict resolution, dead livestock, garbage disposal, and etc. all don't come cheap.

And b), unless we have at least a 3-year-in-advance spending budget, the states WILL NOT pay the costs. And, of course, states don't fund things in that way. So, with de-listing, I see failed funding at the state level by year 3. The back-thumping, the good intentions, the photo ops, the land-use planning keyed to the bears will all be gone, and so will the money. Re-listing the grizzly as an endangered species will come close behind. So why delist?

And finally, let us not forget that good grizzly habitat is really good people habitat. When we take care of grizzlies, we are forced to take good care of the land. They and the ESA are our best bet for keeping Big Sky country the Big Bear Country as well. The grizzly doesn't fit well with four lane highways, endless sprawl, failed county and city planning, and uncontrolled mine, ski resort, or subdivision development.

Don't ever forget ONLY the grizzly stands between us and the likes of anywhere suburbs. And also don't forget that California is the size of Montana, with 30 million people; Japan, the size of Montana, has 130 million people. The grizzly bears stand for what is Montana—let's stand up for the bears, ok?



BEAR NEWS

Bear News is an educational publication of the Great Bear Foundation, a member-supported non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded by Dr. Charles Jonkel, Frank Ponikvar, Lance Olsen, and Bill Callaghan in 1982 to conserve and educate about the world's eight bear species and their habitats worldwide.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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The Arctic Melting Pot

Brendan P. Kelly, Andrew Whiteley & David Tallmon.

Nature, Volume 468, Page 891, December 16, 2010

In 2006, a white bear with patches of brown fur was shot by hunters in the Arctic. DNA tests confirmed what many suspected — it was a hybrid of a polar bear and a grizzly. A media frenzy quoted biologists as saying that although they knew in theory such cross-breeding could happen, they didn't expect to see it in the wild. In 2010, another hybrid was killed by a hunter in the western Canadian Arctic. This time, the animal was a second-generation cross — its mother was a hybrid and its father a grizzly. More cases are probably out there.

Biologists should not be surprised. There have been hints of Arctic hybrids before. In the late 1980s, a whale thought to be a narwhal-beluga mix was found in west Greenland. In 2009, an apparent bowhead-right-whale hybrid was photographed in the Bering Sea, between Alaska and Russia. Dall's porpoises are known to be mating with harbour porpoises off the coast of British Columbia, and seal hybrids have been identified in museum specimens and in the wild.

These are just the first of many hybridizations that will threaten polar biodiversity. Rapidly melting Arctic sea ice imperils species through interbreeding as well as through habitat loss. As more isolated populations and species come into contact, they will mate, hybrids will form and rare species are likely to go extinct. As the genomes of species become mixed, adaptive gene combinations will be lost.

Researchers have little idea how much hybridization is occurring, let alone how it will affect populations. Plans must be developed immediately to monitor the genetics of Arctic animals and to deal with hybrids before currently discrete populations merge and at-risk species are bred out of existence.

We have counted at least 34 possible hybridizations between discrete populations, species and genera of Arctic and near-Arctic marine mammals (see Supplementary Information).

Of the 22 species involved, 14 are listed — or are candidates for listing — as endangered, threatened or of special concern by one or more nations. Twelve cases are of hybridization between different species — half involving crosses between what are normally classified as distinct genera. Twenty-two cases involve isolated populations at risk of intra-species mixing, nine of which are classified as distinct subspecies.

The Arctic Ocean is predicted to be ice-free in summer before the end of the century, removing a continent-sized barrier to interbreeding. Polar bears are spending more time in the same areas as grizzlies; seals and whales currently isolated by sea ice will soon be likely to share the same waters.

Not all cross-species matings will produce viable — or indeed any — offspring. The chance is enhanced in Arctic marine mammals, because their number of chromosomes has changed little over time. There is evidence of hybridization across species (such as between spotted and harbour seals) as well as across genera (such as harp and hooded seals).

Hybridization is not necessarily a bad thing. It has been an important source of evolutionary novelty. For example, a new species of chub originated in the Colorado River before the presence of humans, from the hybridization of two other species. But hybridization driven by human activities tends to occur quickly and to reduce genomic and species diversity. When mallard ducks were introduced to New Zealand in the 1860s, they began mating with native grey ducks. Now few, if any, pure native populations remain.

Diversity loss may be minor if, say, North Pacific and North Atlantic minke whale subspecies interbreed in an Arctic with diminished ice. Other crosses will be more problematic.

Interbreeding between the North Pacific right whale, of which there are probably fewer than 200, and the more numerous bowhead whale could quickly push the former to extinction. If polar bears survive climate change in secluded refuges — which is far from certain — interbreeding could be the final straw.

Cross-breeding might affect social and ecological interactions. The apparent narwhal-beluga hybrid discovered in Greenland had teeth combining qualities of each species, but lacked the narwhal's tusk — an important determinant of narwhal breeding success. Polar-grizzly hybrid bears in a German zoo exhibited behaviour associated with seal hunting, but not the strong swimming abilities of polar bears. First-generation crosses can have 'hybrid vigour', but later generations are likely to be less fit than their ancestors ('outbreeding depression').

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature should develop a comprehensive policy for managing hybrids, including determining when it is practical to prevent or limit hybridizations. Red wolf and coyote hybrids, for example, have been culled in the United States in the past decade to help preserve distinct species.

Researchers should combine models of sea-ice loss, oceanography and landscape genomics to predict when and where hybridization is most likely, and to monitor the genetics of at-risk populations. National and tribal governments should work together: some indigenous groups actively monitor the harvests of Arctic marine mammals, and they could collect genetic samples in remote areas. The rapid disappearance of sea ice leaves little time to lose.

GBF Comment: Polar bear/brown bear crosses have been known for many years, but their ranges seldom overlap. The coastal British Columbia "spirit bear"—a pure white black bear, may be a parallel mutation at the genus level.

Short sea-ice season threatens Hudson Bay polar bears

December 08, 2010

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Scientists say polar bear moms and their cubs near Churchill in northern Manitoba are suffering the worst effects of a late freeze-up of sea ice on Hudson Bay.

The bears are just now setting out for the sea ice they use as a hunting platform for seals, said University of Alberta researcher Andrew Derocher.

That's weeks later than usual — and comes on top of an early spring thaw that drove the bears off their hunting ground nearly a month sooner than usual.

"This year's been pretty challenging on the population," said Derocher from Inuvik, N.W.T. "They were early off the ice and now they're late getting on."

"Some of these bears have had a very long on-land period. A lot of the bears are just running out of steam."

Polar bears tend not to hunt during the summer, which they spend on the land. They can burn up to a kilogram of fat a day as they wait to return to the sea ice.

Adult males are big enough to make it through

the extended fast. But this summer was tough on mother bears and cubs, Derocher said.

"If you're a mother that's nursing cubs, if you run out of energy you stop producing milk," he said. "Your cubs then have to rely on their own fat stores and because cubs have such low fat stores it eventually means they're going to die."

"One of the things that was observed this year is that in at least some family groups the mothers stopped nursing and the cubs died on land. We don't usually see that."

Derocher said that means fewer cubs that grow to adulthood, further stressing a population that's been in decline for years.

Churchill's bears are frequently visited by tour groups in the fall and operators have reported that the population this year looked good.

But Derocher said the bears that are suffering aren't likely to be nosing up to tundra buggies.

"The bears that are not doing very well typically hunker down and don't move very much," he said. "What we've seen was a lot of the bears were in poor condition."

The worldwide population of polar bears is estimated at between 20,000 and 25,000. Of the 19 populations around the globe, eight are con-

sidered to be declining, three are stable and one is increasing. There isn't enough known about the other seven to assess their status.

The population around Churchill is estimated at about 1,000 bears.



Photo by Jeremy Patrick; cropped and edited by GBF

Kids' Trip to the Arctic: Belugas, Bears, and Berries

By *Christina Sinskichott, Great Bear Foundation Staff*

Last August, the Great Bear Foundation ventured to Churchill, Manitoba with a small group of summer travelers for the Kids' Trip to the Arctic. We studied and engaged with the local ecosystems, cultures, and wildlife of the Hudson Bay area. There was a vast abundance of vegetation abloom during the tundra's summer months, multiple opportunities to observe polar bear interaction, and a chance to ride a boat on the Churchill River to view belugas.

Dr. Frank Tyro, of the Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana, was the lead instructor and shared his knowledge of the area's ecology, biological diversity, geology, and history. He shared stories of the area collected from his 25+ years experience of traveling to Churchill with GBF and also provided tips for photographing wildlife.

We had beautiful weather with sunshine and wildflowers abounding. The wind was enough to keep away the mosquitoes, but not so strong as to interrupt our enjoyment of the outdoors. The berries were just beginning to ripen and we sampled cloudberries, blueberries, low-bush cranberries, crowberries, and currants. The kids enjoyed bouncing between the tidal pools on our many treks across the beach and through the tidal flats. The tidal areas are full of marine life that can best be appreciated during the summer months in Churchill and provide a stark contrast to the wintery tundra scene.

There were several polar bears still hanging around the area this summer. We watched a mom with a pair of this year's cubs as they meandered their way around the tidal flats. We were also able to watch a pair of polar bears engage in some water sparring while feeding on a washed up whale carcass off the point at Fort Prince of Wales.

The belugas and migratory birds offered insight into the diversity of species that call the Hudson Bay home, either full or part time. Beluga calves were numerous and could be seen surfacing within their family pods. The pods were busy feeding on capelin, a favorite food of these carnivorous whales found in the Churchill River. These are the most vocal whales in the world, and we were able to listen by hydrophone as they communicated their song.

Snow Geese could be seen at every turn, a bright white contrast in the green landscape. Arctic terns, a variety of gulls, and other migratory bird species were also in abundance. The Churchill area provides very important summer habitat for thousands of animals.

We were not able to spot any Caribou on this trip, though they are often found in the area during the summer months. We braved a trip to Twin Lakes and suited up in our bug jackets and hats to watch for the beautiful animal in the valley. We did spot a couple of arctic fox, sporting their grey-brown summer coat, in contrast to the thick snowy white seen during the winter.

The kids also took an interest in the geology of the region and we discussed the phenomenon of frost heaves in the granite, and hunted fossils in the sedimentary layers along the tidal flats. We were fortunate to have some very clear nights for viewing the aurora borealis, and enjoyed watching the green lights dance in curtains across the starry sky.

We are making plans for the next Kids' Trip to the Arctic, which will run from August 13-23, and we welcome children of all ages, and adults as well. Participants may travel from either Missoula, Montana, by bus and train with the main group, or entirely by train from Winnipeg, MB. However, we will not have a GBF representative to meet travelers in Winnipeg, so we recommend that children traveling via Winnipeg be accompanied by an adult. If you are interested in participating, or would like more information, please contact the Great Bear Foundation staff at gbf@greatbear.org or (406) 829-9378.

Further information, and instructions for registering can be found at our newly re-designed website at <http://greatbear.org>.

Christina Sinskichott is Great Bear Foundation's Summer Programs Coordinator and contributes to Bear News from her home in Rowlett, Texas.

Upcoming Events

Join us for the following Great Bear Foundation events. For up-to-the minute information, visit our new website at <http://greatbear.org>, subscribe to our blog, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

April 29-May 1: BEAR HONORING

Friday, 4/29: 5:30-8:30 PM, Greenough Park, Missoula. Rattlesnake Creek Bear Walk with Dr. Charles Jonkel, Bear Foods Buffet, Evening Programs

Saturday, 4/30: 9:00 AM -8:30 PM, Tour of Salish Kootenai College Art Department, Kicking Horse Job Corps Powwow with GBF-sponsored Bear Dance, looking for bears in Mission Mountains. Meet at GBF office at 9:00.

Sunday, May 1: 9:00 AM-9:00 PM. Meet at GBF office to ride up to Glacier National Park, or meet at Avalanche Gate in the Park at noon. Bear walk in the Park with natural and cultural history programs

May 7, 12:00: IWFF Wildfest

Wildlife track-making workshop with Chuck and Shannon to kick off the International Wildlife Film Festival. Caras Park, Missoula

August 13-23: Summer Trip to the Arctic

GBF leads a summer arctic ecology field course in Churchill, Manitoba, geared towards children but open to all ages. More info available at our website.

Legislation, Lawsuits, and Polar bears

By *Elissa Chott, Great Bear Staff*

Polar bear habitat has dwindled significantly in recent decades due to the effects of climate change. The protection of natural habitats and other arctic species is critical in ensuring a future for these bears. In 2008, the Bush administration announced that the polar bear would be listed as a "threatened" species, meaning that it is at risk of becoming endangered, due to the loss of sea ice associated with climate change. However, the Department of Interior created a caveat that the Endangered Species Act (ESA) could not be used to regulate greenhouse gases, denying the bears crucial protection needed to improve their chances of persistence.

The motion to give full "endangered" status to polar bears through the Endangered Species Act was recently brought up once more in the Obama administration; however, the motion was denied, leaving polar bears with the lesser protection under their "threatened" status. The federal government acknowledges that polar bear populations are declining because sea ice is melting, but declaring them endangered would set limits for the petroleum industry. The government would also have to assess greenhouse gas emissions in relation to climate change and its effect on polar bears, requiring strict standards and immediate decreases in emissions.

The Department of the Interior set aside

187,000 square miles in November 2010 as critical habitat for polar bears. Located along Alaska's northern coast around the Beaufort and Chukchi seas, this region was also authorized by the Bush administration as an oil lease. Shell Oil is looking to drill as early as this summer inside the Beaufort Sea area. Allowing oil companies access would be detrimental in the event of a spill, as mass clean up is difficult in the conditions of the arctic, and regular traffic would distract polar bears from their natural behaviors.

The State of Alaska is suing the federal government because they believe the designated habitat will inhibit jobs and inflate costs in development projects. Governor Parnell is worried that the state could lose millions in resource-based revenue, but the environmental impact that drilling would have is not worth the economic gain.

Conservation groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, have come together and filed a lawsuit against the federal government to gain endangered status for the polar bears. To truly make a difference in the future of polar bears, full protection of both the bears and their habitat is needed.

Elissa Chott has traveled to Churchill, MB with the Great Bear Foundation several times, and helps out at GBF seasonally.

Photos from our 2010 Arctic



Photo by Bob Mires



Photo by Colette Weintraub



Photo by Frank Tyro

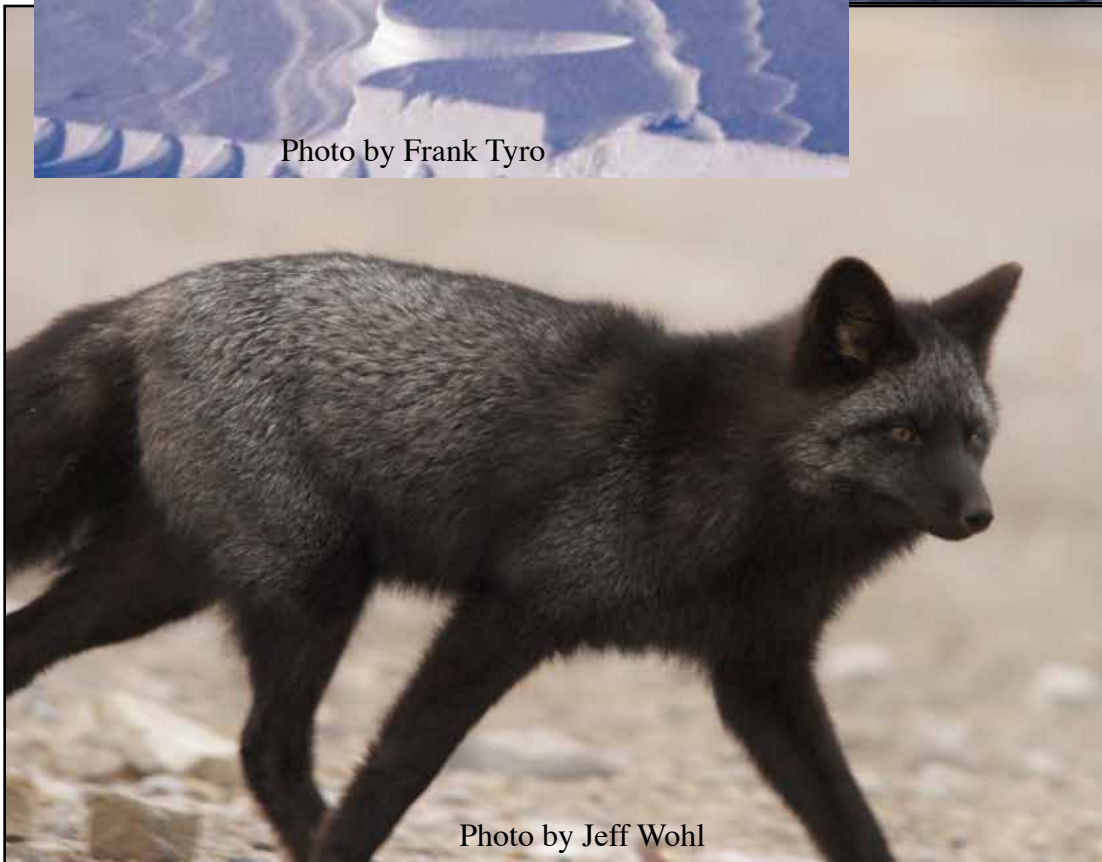


Photo by Jeff Wohl



Arctic Ecology Field Course



Photo by Alan Watson



Photo by Jeff Wohl

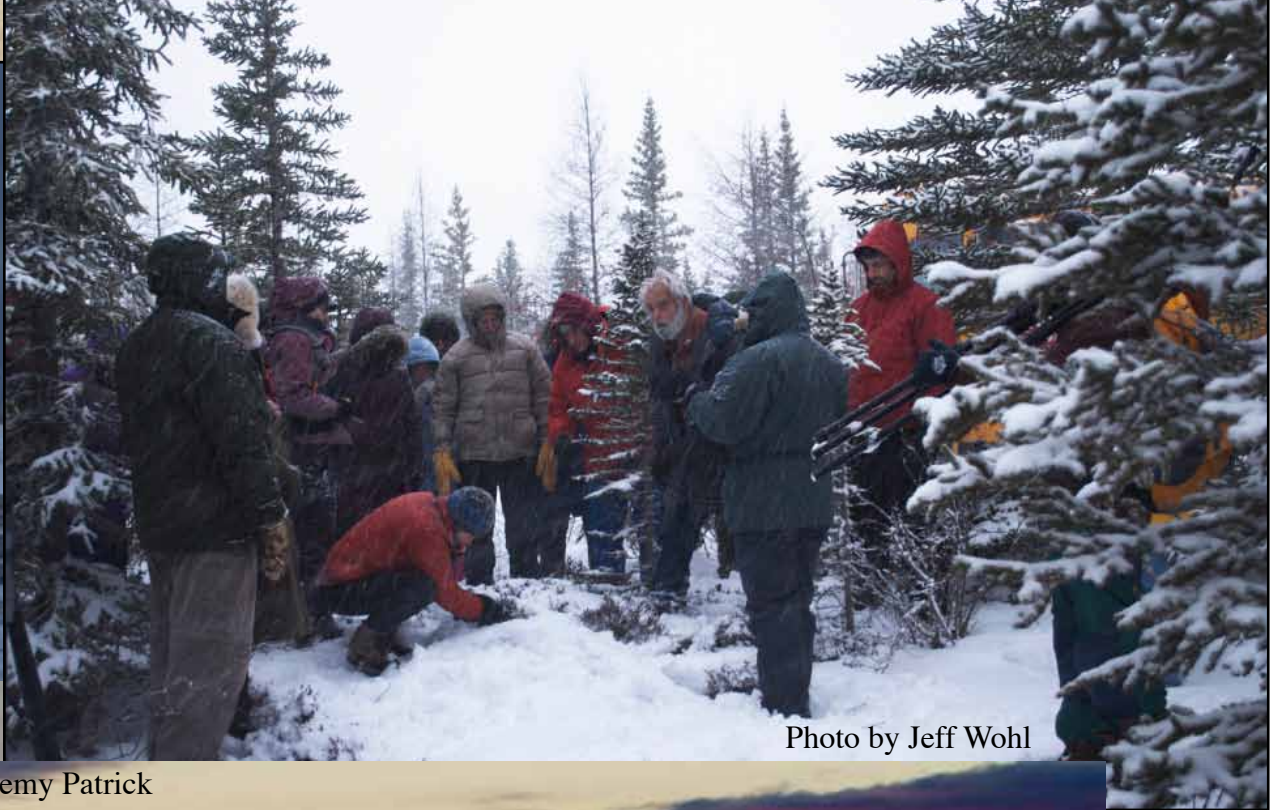


Photo by Jeff Wohl



Photo by Jeremy Patrick

Photo by Jeremy Patrick

Bears Suffer and Die as the Parts Trade Continues

By Jack Tobin

Some of the following may be disturbing to readers.

The ongoing trade in bear parts around the world has been a serious concern to conservationists for more than a decade. Repeatedly the scenario is the same in parts of North America's (N.A.) vast wilderness areas: a hiker or conservation officers come across the mutilated corpse of a young black bear - shot, its paws cut off and, the gall bladder cut out of its abdomen. Many Asian cultures have for centuries used bears for food and medicine, and the practice continues today. For over 3,000 years many cultures such as the Chinese have used bear parts Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). In several countries including China, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, bears are caught and killed to supply the medicine and parts trade. TCM is practiced by more than 2 billion people; at least 1 billion of these are Chinese.

All 8 species of bear around the world have been used to supply the parts. While the blood, bone and paws of bears have been used by consumers, it is the gall bladder that is most sought after and highly prized. The bear's bile or gall is treasured for its purported medicinal properties, and is used in a variety of ways. The digestive fluid contains UrsoDeoxyCholic Acid, which is believed to cure a variety of ailments and is registered as a medicine in several Asian countries. There are at least 40 different companies that sell some form of bear gall extract in their products.

The gall is considered to be an effective treatment for a variety of ailments including heart, lung, liver, blood, spleen, throat, and bladder ailments. It is also used to treat cancer, colic, fevers, hemorrhoids, and cirrhosis and is now found in shampoos.

The extracted gall is prepared in pills, tinctures, tonics and ointments. TCM shops and pharmacies in Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and China supply these various medicines, all purported to contain bear gall. As the wealth of Asian nations increases in the past 20 years so has the consumption of bear gall products. The result has been increased pressure on bear populations both due to overhunting and loss of habitat.

In the past 10 years it has led to increasing concerns about the killing and use of NA bears - particularly black bears to supply the trade. Increasing incidents of bear carcasses stripped of their paws and gall bladders across N.A. has raised concerns among the various government agencies in Canada and the U.S.A., conservation organizations and the wider public. Many have pushed for better legislation, conservation efforts, law enforcement and changes in wildlife protection to help bears.

Many groups have likened the threat to the trade in rhino horn and tiger parts in Asian medicine. Rampant poaching over the last 30 years has pushed these charismatic large mammals to the brink of extinction in most of their remaining habitat in Asia and Africa. Many Asian bear populations are now seriously depleted from increasing human pressure due to habitat loss or being killed directly. Gall bladders and paws from Asiatic black

bears, brown bears, sun bears and sloth bears are all marketed, but the strongest demand is for Asiatic black bears. While other Asian bear species are killed because of safety concerns or to protect crops, Asiatic black bears are killed primarily for their parts. The bears are either killed directly by commercial bear poachers, by hunters looking for other game such as deer, or by farmers protecting crops or property. In areas where guns are largely prohibited devices such as wire snares, pit traps, or crude home-made bombs (which the unfortunate bear triggers by biting) are used for killing. After the bear has died the parts are cut away and sold to the first of perhaps several buyers in the trafficking pipeline (even though this is officially illegal in most of Asia).

In order to reduce the pressure on wild bear populations the Chinese and now the South Korean government have set up 'Bear farms'. In these facilities more than eight thousand Asiatic bears are kept. The term farm is somewhat misleading, given that most of the bears confined within them are not bred in captivity, but were cubs taken from their dead mothers. In them bears are kept in appalling conditions in very small cages for the express purpose of 'milking' the bears gall bladders with surgically implanted tubes. This procedure can often cause painful chronically suppurating wounds in the bears abdomens. At such facilities hundreds of bears are kept in rows of cramped cages only a few feet apart, many can be heard moaning in distress. Despite the availability of this 'farmed' gall many purists still believe in using only the gall from wild bears, and will pay significantly more for it.

Because of depleted Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese bear populations to feed the trade, the pressure has increased on bears from elsewhere. The gall bladders from sloth bears in India have been traded, even polar bear gall bladders from northern Canada have been used for TCM. Campesinos in Peru have also traded in galls using the organs taken from South America's only ursid, the endangered spectacled bear. Because it is difficult to assess the number of bears actually being killed and government agencies in N.A. and elsewhere, will not release those records, just how many die to supply the trade is hard to say.

However, many wildlife agencies and conservation organizations agree that it is a serious concern regarding the poaching of bears and smuggling of contraband. Furthermore with increasing access into areas that were previously unroaded, more underground connections and higher demand, the pressure for parts on wild bear populations will only increase. While the parts trade itself may not be a significant threat to any one large population of bears, its effect combined with loss of habitat, climate change, and loss of food types may significantly affect a specific bear population to the point of causing irreparable damage.

In N.A. and around the world, bears and other wildlife bears are protected under the regulations of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). CITES helps to regulate and control the import and export of animals and plants between member nations. Member countries of the convention meet biennially to discuss which species do or do not need protection. Most of the world's bear

species are protected either under Appendix 1 or Appendix 2. Those bear species which are deemed to be critically threatened such as the panda and the sun bear are protected under Appendix 1.

Over the past 25 years Federal, State, Provincial and Territorial Conservation Officers in N.A., and other law enforcement officials have cracked down on the parts trade. Each agency has been involved in scores of investigations, wildlife sting operations, arrests and trials of both foreign and domestic traffickers in bear parts. Various people have been caught smuggling bear gall bladders in bottles of liquor, boxes of chocolates (with chocolate covered galls) and false bottom luggage. Furthermore, restaurants and other establishments in Chinatowns and Korean districts have been raided and freezers were found to contain bear parts. The paws or gall bladders from scores of both black bears and grizzlies removed from the bodies of both adults and cubs were seized. The paws are used for bear paw soup, which is a highly prized Asian delicacy. One bowl of it may cost the patron one thousand dollars or more. Some connoisseurs believe the flesh of the right paw actually tastes sweeter, since they believe that bears favour using their right forepaw to scoop out honey from the hive with it, and then lick the sweet liquid off the pads.

Bears are slow reproducing animals and cannot suffer serious losses to their populations for long. Therefore if conservation efforts to protect them in N.A. and elsewhere are to succeed then improved legislation, public education, law enforcement and prosecution must all support the protection of bear populations and sound conservation measures. While globalization increases and NA, European and Asian trading blocks become more established with huge amounts of capital fuelling various economic interests' wildlife conservation will likely suffer. As resource consumption is ratcheted up, the protection and conservation of wildlife therefore becomes even more critical in the overall equation.

In an effort to address the trade, conservation organizations such as Animals Asia Foundation have placed public service spots on Asian Television. Among those who have appeared are movie star and martial artist Jackie Chan who has spoken out about the cruelty of the bear bile farms and the trade in tiger parts.

During the current severe economic downturn in N.A. there are severe/increasing budget cuts to enforcement staff in many government agencies. This understandably will decrease their effectiveness of ongoing efforts to monitor and apprehend those who traffic in bear parts. To protect and conserve NA's bears the laws ideally should be consistent in Canada, the US and Mexico with international cooperation to monitor those involved in possible bear parts trading. However a patchwork of different laws of various parts of Canada from provinces or elsewhere in the U.S.A. with various states will not provide a cooperative or consistent effort to protect bears. It is vital that officials from different government agencies address the severity of the problem of the parts trade and then put plans in place to curb it. Because of its enormity, vast areas of NA wilderness are not adequately policed and budget cuts to various

Continued on back page...

Grizzly Bears Captured After Fatal Mauling Near Yellowstone

Published July 29, 2010 | Associated Press

COOKE CITY, Montana -- A mother grizzly and two of her three cubs have been captured after killing a Michigan man and injuring two other people during an overnight rampage through a campground near Yellowstone National Park.

The sow, estimated to weigh 300 to 400 pounds, was lured into a trap fashioned from culvert pipe covered by the dead victim's tent Wednesday evening. The bear tore down the tent again and was caught in the trap, said Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks spokesman Ron Aasheim.

By Thursday morning, two of the year-old bears had been caught and the third could be heard nearby, calling out to its mother.

Montana wildlife officials on Thursday identified the man killed in the mauling as Kevin Kammer, 48, of Grand Rapids, Mich. The bear pulled Kammer out his tent and dragged him 25 feet to where his body was found, Aasheim said.

The other victims, Deb Freele of London, Ontario, and an unidentified male, have been hospitalized in Cody, Wyo.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Warden Capt. Sam Sheppard said he was confident they had captured the killer bear because it came back to the same site where the man was killed early Wednesday.

Sheppard described the rampage -- in which campers in three different tents were mauled as they slept -- as a highly unusual predatory attack.

"She basically targeted the three people and went after them," Sheppard said. "It wasn't like an archery hunter who gets between a sow and her cubs and she responds to protect them."

Officials have said the sow will be killed after DNA evidence confirms it was the same bear that attacked the victims.

"Everything points to it being the offending bear, but we are not going to do anything until we have DNA samples," Aasheim said.

State and federal wildlife officials will determine the fate of the cubs. Sheppard said they are unlikely to be returned to the wild because they could have been learning predatory behavior from their mother.

Freele said Thursday she was bitten on her arm and leg before she instinctively played dead so the animal would leave her alone.

Appearing on network morning shows from a Wyoming hospital, Freele said she woke up just before the bear bit her arm.

"I screamed, he bit harder, I screamed harder, he continued to bite," she said, adding that she could hear her bones breaking. "I told myself, play dead," she said. "I went totally limp. As soon as I went limp, I could feel his jaws get loose and then he let me go."

Freele said the bear was silent.

"This, to me, was just an absolutely freaky thing," she said. "I have to believe that the bear was not normal. It was very quiet, it never made any noise. I felt like it was hunting me."

Freele suffered severe lacerations and crushed bones from bites on her arms. The male survi-

vor, thought to be a teenager, suffered puncture wounds on his calf.

The bear attack was the most brazen in the Yellowstone area since the 1980s, wildlife officials said.

One camper said he heard the screams from two of the attacks, which started around 2 a.m. Wednesday.

Don Wilhelm, a wildlife biologist from Texas, thought the first scream was just teenagers, maybe a domestic dispute in the middle of the night. He tried to go back to sleep, stifling thoughts that a beast might be lurking outside his family's tent.

Minutes later, another scream -- this one coming from the next campsite over, where a bear had torn through a tent and sunk its teeth into Freele's arm.

"First she said, 'No!' Then we heard her say, 'It's a bear! I've been attacked by a bear!'" said Wilhelm's wife, Paige.

By that point, the bear already had ripped into another tent a few campsites away, chomping into the leg of a teenager who had been sleeping with his family. The solo camper who was killed was at the other end of the Soda Butte Campground.

Then, the screams stopped.

After a quick parental back-and-forth over whether to shield their 9- and 12-year-old sons with their bodies or make a break for it, the Wilhelms took advantage of the silence and darted to their SUV.

They drove around the campground, honking their horns and yelling to alert other campers. Along the way, they met with a truck leaving the campground with the teenage victim, who apparently tried in vain to fight off the bear by punching it in the nose.

"It was like a nightmare, couldn't possibly happen," Paige Wilhelm said later.

In 2008 at the same campground, a grizzly bear bit and injured a man sleeping in a tent. A young adult female grizzly was captured in a trap four days later and taken to a bear research center in Washington state.

The latest attack had residents and visitors to Cooke City on edge. Many were carrying bear spray, a pepper-based deterrent more commonly seen in Yellowstone's backcountry than on the streets of the national park satellite community.

"The suspicion among a lot of the residents is that the bear they caught (in 2008) was not the right one," said Gary Vincelette, who has a cabin in nearby Silver Gate.

Sheppard, the warden captain, said there was no truth to that.

The grizzly involved in the latest attack showed no outward signs of sickness or starvation that might have explained its unusual behavior, said Fish Wildlife and Parks spokeswoman Andrea Jones.

About 600 grizzly bears and hundreds of less-aggressive black bears live in the Yellowstone area.

The region is pestered with hundreds of signs warning visitors to keep food out of the bears' reach. Experts say bears who eat human food quickly become habituated to people, increas-

ing the danger of an attack.

Yet in the case of the Wednesday's attack, all the victims had put their food into metal food canisters installed at campsite, Sheppard said.

"They were doing things right," he said.

"It was random. I have no idea why this bear picked these three tents out of all the tents there."

The 10-acre Soda Butte Campground in Gallatin National Forest has 27 sites.

Two other campgrounds were also closed while the attacking bear or bears remained at large.

URL <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/07/29/survivor-montana-bear-rampage-played-dead-mauling/>

GBF Comment: Incidents like this do happen, but very seldom. Mostly, bears avoid or tolerate humans with little problem. In Yellowstone, however, the constant bear/human contact can trigger terrible incidents.

GBF Launches New Website

The Great Bear Foundation is proud to announce our new website, designed by Mark Ratledge of Songdog Tech. Visit the new site at <http://greatbear.org>.

The new site is more in-depth and user-friendly. We now have a news blog with regular news updates: <http://greatbear.org/blog/>.

Bear News will soon be available online, and we are scanning back issue of Bear News for the web, too: <http://greatbear.org/bear-news/>

We have new Project pages, and a trailer and updates on the in-progress documentary on Chuck Jonkel and his 50+ years work with bears: <http://greatbear.org/projects/>

The Field Course section has been expanded with slide shows from Churchill, and there are more educational resources on bear species and new details on our Bear Basics program: <http://greatbear.org/field-courses/>

We now have retail affiliate relationships with Patagonia, Moosejaw, REI and Amazon.com, so you can shop securely online and Great Bear will receive a small percentage from each store. And we still have our T-shirts from Cafe Press. See <http://greatbear.org/shop/>

You can also donate through JustGive and Network for Good and become a Great Bear member through Google Checkout: <http://greatbear.org/membership/>

And because our web logs have always shown visitors from around the world, our site can be translated on demand into almost 50 languages.

You can follow, share and recommend us on:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Great-Bear-Foundation/311490966369>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/greatbearfnd>

Watch our YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/greatbearfoundation>

Subscribe to our RSS news feed at <http://greatbear.org/feed/>

Thanks for visiting!

Apple trees draw bears into Missoula urban areas, research shows

By **ROB CHANEY** of the *Missoulian* | Posted: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 6:15 am

The bears are coming, Missoulians, and they want our apples.

Two years of radio-collar research on the black bears that surround, and sometimes invade, the Missoula Valley have given wildlife managers some tips on how to handle the challenge.

University of Montana wildlife biology graduate student Jerod Merkle found that while the urban bruins like garbage and birdseed too, apple-ripening coincides with the biggest spike in bear activity.

"We have to be ready with gleanings programs the minute they're ripe, or better, the week before," Merkle told members of City Club Missoula on Monday.

In his project, Merkle caught about 30 bears living on Missoula's fringes and radio-collared 16 of them. The collars sent satellite updates on each bear's location every three hours.

Merkle plotted that travel against the locations of homes from Evaro Hill to East Missoula, as well as Pattee Canyon and Blue Mountain.

He found the bears start to creep into town with steadily increasing frequency from March until mid-June. Then activity breaks off a bit in July and August. That somewhat matches the period when backcountry berry crops and other forage are at their peak.

But when apple season comes on in early

September, the bear incidents spike. Merkle sorted the statistics to predict the odds of triggering a bear encounter. On any given day, a home along Missoula's northern fringe has a 60 percent chance of being visited by a bear.

He found garbage days increase those odds by 24 percent. And when apples are available, the odds increase by 269 percent.

The garbage figures are a little shaky, Merkle said, because some people leave trash out all week. But they're still important, because of garbage's power to turn bears into urban foragers. That in turn changes their behavior, making them less scared of people or dogs - and more likely to risk trouble.

While there's no reliable population estimate for how many black bears live in the woods around Missoula, there have been as many as nine in the Rattlesnake Valley alone in a single day. Some come in and retreat, while others more or less settle in for the summer.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks bear management coordinator Jamie Jonkel said Missoulians could take heart in regulations already on the books to confront bear problems. That includes city ordinances prohibiting feeding wildlife or putting out garbage before 5 a.m. on the day of scheduled pick-up unless it's in a bear-resistant container.

That will make a difference when Missoula

catches up with its northern neighbors, and their considerably bigger problems.

"Places like Whitefish, Kalispell and the Swan Valley are already dealing with grizzlies," Jonkel said. "Ordinances like these mean we won't get blind-sided when they show up. We're way ahead of other areas."

Getting people to follow those rules is almost as hard as keeping bears out of the apples. Merkle said he doubted he could convince Missoulians to cut down their fruit trees, but he hopes they might become less popular to plant.

In the meantime, a number of organizations have set up programs to help. The Great Bear Foundation and Garden City Harvest have volunteers who will pick apples off trees, and the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project loans apple cider presses to make use of the results. Jonkel said some Girl Scout troops are also volunteering the use of a big cider press.

The problem period could last well into November or longer, Merkle said. While mature female bears tend to hibernate as early as mid-October, some young males have been tracked wandering around deep into December.

"So your safe window is basically January to February," Merkle said. "It's not very long." More resources for keeping homes bear-proof are available on the Internet at www.missoula-bears.org.

Reporter Rob Chaney can be reached at 523-5382 or at rchaney@missoulian.com.

The Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, contd.

Continued from Front Page

multi-year population & trend estimates – key to the recovery/delisting debate. All of this is welcomed by GBF – as long as it isn't misused in the FWS "Spin Cycle."

* Chris Servheen, Grizzly Recovery Coordinator for FWS, announced in 2009 that the Service, in cooperation with its state and federal partners, would begin a long overdue update and revision of the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. This will presumably take a comprehensive look at recovery standards by ecosystem, incorporate new science and methodology, and lay out new recovery timelines and requirements. This is fine, if the goal is an objective, science-based look at what grizzlies need, but if it becomes another politically driven effort to push premature delisting, the consequences for grizzlies will be significant.

* Before NCDE grizzlies can be declared recovered and ready for delisting, the federal and state agencies, in cooperation with FWS, must develop a Conservation Strategy (CS) to guide grizzly management post-delisting; Habitat-Based Recovery Criteria (HBRC) to lay out the quantity, quality, and arrangement of habitat needed; and ecosystem-wide, grizzly-specific, Forest Plan Amendments determining U.S. Forest Service land management policy post-delisting; and a new methodology for calculating total allowable grizzly mortality. All of the above would be complete and appended to the new Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan by December 31, 2010.

If all of these were truly based on the scientifically demonstrated needs of grizzly bears that would be great, but in Greater Yellowstone, the agencies simply "spun" the data to say

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met all grizzly requirements, even though agency "wants" frequently trumped grizzly bear "needs." To make matters worse, the Conservation Strategy and its attached HBRC and Forest Plan Amendments, would have been agreed to by all state and federal agencies in the form of a legally unenforceable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

In striking down grizzly delisting in Greater Yellowstone, the District clearly stated that such MOU's were not the "Adequate Regulatory Mechanisms" required by the Endangered Species Act. Undeterred, the Service's Grizzly Recovery Coordinator recently told the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) that he intends to use the same process in the NCDE.

If you noticed that all of the pieces of the NCDE delisting puzzle seem to be coming together around December 31, 2010, you would be right on target. If the agencies intended to use the next three years to aggressively push science-based grizzly recovery in all six Recovery Areas, while connecting them with landscape scale linkage zones, that would be exactly what's called for.

However, from FWS statements over the last six months it's clear that they intend to either appeal the Yellowstone ruling, or find a way to slip around it, so they can duplicate the same mistakes in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. The Great Bear Foundation and our conservation partners will be watching the agencies like a hawk to make sure that does not happen.

Brian Peck writes for Bear News from his home in Kalispell, Montana

Polar bears gain 187,000 square miles of critical habitat

By *MATTHEW DALY*
The Associated Press

(11/24/10 22:42:07)

WASHINGTON -- The Obama administration is setting aside 187,000 square miles in Alaska as a "critical habitat" for polar bears, an action that could add restrictions to future offshore drilling for oil and gas.

The total, which includes large areas of sea ice off the Alaska coast, is about 13,000 square miles, or 8.3 million acres, less than in a preliminary plan released last year.

Tom Strickland, Interior assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks, said the designation would help polar bears stave off extinction, recognizing that the greatest threat is the melting of Arctic sea ice caused by climate change.

"This critical habitat designation enables us to work with federal partners to ensure their actions within its boundaries do not harm polar bear populations," Strickland said. "We will continue to work toward comprehensive strategies for the long-term survival of this iconic species."

Designation of critical habitat does not in itself block economic activity or other development, but requires federal officials to consider whether a proposed action would adversely

affect the polar bear's habitat and interfere with its recovery.

Nearly 95 percent of the designated habitat is sea ice in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas off Alaska's northern coast. Polar bears spend most of their lives on frozen ocean where they hunt seals, breed and travel.

Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell and the state's oil and gas industry had complained that the preliminary plan released last year was too large and dramatically underestimated the potential economic impact. The designation could result in hundreds of millions of dollars in lost economic activity and tax revenue, they said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said reductions included in the final rule were mostly due to corrections that more accurately reflect the U.S. border in the Arctic Ocean. Five U.S. Air Force radar sites were exempted from the final rule, as were Native Alaskan communities in Barrow and Kaktovik, Alaska.

The Interior Department has declared polar bears "threatened," or likely to become endangered, citing a dramatic loss of sea ice. Officials face a Dec. 23 deadline to explain why the bears were listed as threatened instead of the more protective "endangered."

Kassie Siegel, a lawyer for the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group that has filed a lawsuit to increase protections for

the polar bear, hailed the designation of critical habitat.

"Now we need the Obama administration to actually make it mean something so we can write the bear's recovery plan -- not its obituary," she said.

Siegel called for the administration to impose a moratorium on oil and gas drilling in bear habitat areas. "An oil spill there would be a catastrophe," she said. "That seems like an understatement."

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Photo by Shannon Donahue

Great Bear Foundation Awarded Grant to Address Urban Bear Attractants

Bears & Apples Program Will Benefit

By *Shannon Donahue, Great Bear Foundation Staff*

On April 15, 2011, the Great Bear Foundation was awarded a Partner Grant from the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) in the amount of \$3,000 to fund the Bears & Apples Program.

The Bears & Apples program has been in operation for over a decade, addressing what UM graduate student, Jerod Merkle, and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks identify as the largest urban bear attractant in Missoula: domestic fruit trees.

Each late summer and fall, domestic fruit trees ripen throughout the Missoula area, drawing bears and deer into residential areas just as wild seasonal foods start to decline, and as bears need to consume inordinate amounts of calories in preparation for their winter sleep. The flood of bears into Missoula contributes to increased human-wildlife conflicts, property damage, and human-related bear mortality. The influx of deer attracts mountain lions into residential areas at the same time. Merkle's thesis found that domestic fruit trees in Missoula's Rattlesnake Valley pose a stronger bear attractant than garbage.

To address this problem, GBF coordinates volunteers to help local residents harvest their fruit and identify other bear attractants around their homes. Some residents choose to keep some of the fruit, but most donate it to the Great Bear Foundation to distribute to local people in need. We sort and grade the fruit, bringing high

quality fruit to the Missoula Food Bank and the Poverello Center, and pressing bruised and lower quality fruit into juice and cider with the two manual cider presses at our office in Missoula.

The program addresses multiple problems simultaneously, managing urban bear attractants, taking advantage of a healthy, local food source that would otherwise go unused, providing locally grown fruit and juice to people in need, and giving us opportunities to further build support in the community, raising awareness of urban bear attractants and allowing us to communicate our educational messages to local residents, while also providing them a free service.

GBF also demonstrates proper containment of bear attractants with an electric fence that protects our compost and gleaned fruit outside our office. The fence both deters bears and serves as a demonstration of attractant management for the community. Local residents can come to us to learn about solutions for containing and managing bear attractants around their homes.

The Bears & Apples program has served as a model for similar projects in other communities, and GBF has advised people on starting their own fruit gleaning programs from Colorado to Alaska. Locally, other organizations, such as Missoula Urban Demonstration Project (MUD) and the University of Montana/Garden City Harvest's PEAS Farm have joined in the efforts with their own gleaning and cider pressing activities.

Y2Y is an international, transboundary organization dedicating to promoting biodiversity and ecological integrity while preserving the

rural lifestyle, from the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem to the Yukon. Y2Y's vision reads, "combining science and stewardship, we seek to ensure that the world-renowned wilderness, wildlife, native plants and natural processes of the Yellowstone to Yukon region continue to function as an interconnected web of life, capable of supporting all of its natural and human communities, for now and for future generations."

Y2Y funds projects that promote conservation and habitat connectivity focusing on designated priority areas within the region, coordinating a network of cooperative efforts across the continent.

Y2Y's Partner Grant will help to further the Bears & Apples program tremendously, but we need your help too. The Great Bear Foundation accepts monetary donations towards this program, but we can also use donations of ladders, plastic totes for collecting apples, parts for our cider presses, and fruit-picking tools.

If you live locally, you can help out with our efforts, too! Come apple season, we welcome volunteers to pick fruit and press cider. You can help prevent human-bear conflicts while having fun outside, and then go home with fresh fruit and cider.

If you live in the Missoula and need help managing your fruit trees, or if you live elsewhere and would like to start your own fruit-gleaning program, please contact the Great Bear Foundation office.

Shannon Donahue is GBF's Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator and writes for Bear News from Potomac, Montana and Haines, Alaska.

Bear Parts Trade, Contd.

Continued from Page 8

departments have meant fewer conservation officers.

In an effort to address the hodgepodge of U.S. jurisdictions and inconsistent laws regarding bear conservation, Bill 3480, the Bear Protection Act of 2009, is currently before the House of Representatives. Bill 3480 is an amended version of a piece of legislation proposed by Kentucky's Senator Mitch McConnell who raised concerns about the killing of bears for parts, several years ago. Among those who spoke before the House was Dr. Dave Garshelis of the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources, and President of the International Bear Association. Dr. Garshelis has studied bear conservation issues for more than 25 years, and his testimony has been critical in getting state and federal representatives to recognize the gravity of the parts trade and better legislation. Hopefully with its eventual passage, the incidents of bear poaching and gall bladders being smuggled and sold to buyers in the U.S. will be significantly reduced.

To find out more about the Bear Parts Trade and Bill 3480 please look at the following websites on the internet:

Animals Asia Foundation:
www.animalsasia.org

Animal Law Coalition:
www.animallawcoalition.com

Born Free Foundation
www.bornfree.com

Defenders of Wildlife
www.defenders.org

Great Bear Foundation
www.greatbear.org

World Society for the Protection of Animals-
WSPA
wspca-international.org

The Petition Site
thepetitionsite.com

Jack Tobin serves on the Great Bear Foundation's board of directors and contributes to Bear News from his home in Toronto, Ontario.

Photo by Shannon Donahue



\$1M aimed at preventing grizzly bear deaths in Banff

By Kelly Cryderman, Calgary Herald — Oct 13, 2010

Canadian Pacific has put \$1 million toward research to prevent grizzly bears from being hit and killed on train tracks under the auspices of a new partnership between the company and the federal government.

Ten grizzly bears have died after being hit by trains inside Banff National Park in the last decade. Another six grizzly cubs have died after their mothers were killed and they were left on their own.

The \$1-million research project, along with a joint "action plan," have won the support of vocal critics, who have long said Canadian Pacific should be taking further actions to protect grizzly bears.

"We're in a position to do something proactive," said federal Environment Minister Jim Prentice, speaking at press conference this morning.

The company will also take immediate actions to further reduce grain spills on the tracks and look at fencing off some stretches of track.

The move comes as Canadian Pacific faces very increasing scrutiny over its operations inside the national park.

Many animals are thought to be attracted to grain left on the tracks spilling by leaking train cars. Canadian Pacific has initiated a number of

costly programs to reduce the allure to bears, including upgrading hopper gates holding back the grain and operating vacuum trucks to capture any food that managed to escape.

However, it hasn't prevented all deaths. Trains have killed more grizzlies - including mothers and cubs - than any other human activity, according to park statistics.

This June, a young adult male was killed roughly seven kilometres west of Banff. Grain was found on the tracks and in the bear's feces. For instance, in May 2009, an extremely large 272-kilogram male grizzly bear was struck and killed by a train. The male was an astounding physical presence, in his prime of life with "excellent genetics," said park officials.

The animals might also be attracted to the ease with which they can travel down railway lines.

It's estimated there's about 60 grizzlies in Banff National Park.

GBF Comment: In the U.S., the Highline Train officials have greatly reduced random grain loss and wrecks along Glacier National Park. The attractants continue, however, and each major wreck, spill renews the problem.

Great Bear Foundation Special Appeal

The Great Bear Foundation (GBF) is a member supported organization providing educational resources about bears and other wildlife, and working hard to conserve the eight bear species and their habitats around the world. Since our founding in 1982, we've maintained a membership base of extraordinary loyalty and generosity. Without that support, we could not carry on the work that we do.

Each year, we reach thousands of children with our Bear Basics educational programs that we offer free of charge to schools, youth, and community groups. GBF believes strongly that education is the foundation of conservation, and we work hard to provide accurate, sensitive information on wildlife with the goal of fostering the next generation of stewards.

As school budgets face severe cuts, and other organizations filling a similar niche lose important funding sources, the need for these educational programs increases. GBF rises to task, filling the gaps where teachers need help, and at the same time extending our educational message to a wider audience. In addition to reaching the school children, they in turn teach their parents about respecting and conserving wildlife and the habitat we share.

Now, more than ever, we need your support to keep this important educational program in operation. Rising costs make our projects more challenging to run, and contribute to a greater demand for free programs for schools and the community. At the same time, conservation efforts are allowing bears to recolonize areas they were driven from in the past, and a growing human population results in more human-bear interactions every year. We are constantly stepping up our efforts to provide education and information, address problems like bear attractants in residential

areas, and advocate for habitat conservation, linkage corridors, and adequate, responsible wildlife management practices.

In addition to our Bear Basics program, GBF actively combats the problem of urban bear attractants with our Bears & Apples program, helping people to manage domestic fruit and other bear attractants around their homes, and distributing unwanted fruit to people in need. We also review books, film, and other wildlife media for ethics, accuracy, and appropriateness, and advise authors and journalists on their content.

We are currently finishing work on a documentary film on GBF president, scientific advisor, and co-founder, Chuck Jonkel, and his lifelong work on behalf of bears. We offer bear ecology field courses through GBF and partnerships with other organizations, including a one-of-a-kind Kids Trip to the Arctic in August. In 2010, we set up the Cody Montana Memorial Scholarship program, with the help of our generous supporters, to help bring kids to the Arctic.

Through our field courses and our advocacy efforts, we work to promote high standards for ethical, low-impact, ecologically and culturally sensitive wildlife tourism, in the face of rapidly growing and largely unregulated "industrial eco-tourism" that is anything but eco-friendly. We do this both by setting a positive example with our own practices, and by monitoring wildlife-related tourism practices throughout North America.

To continue our work, we need your support. Please help us to further our message and our work with your financial contributions. The Great Bear Foundation is a 501(C)3 organization, and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.