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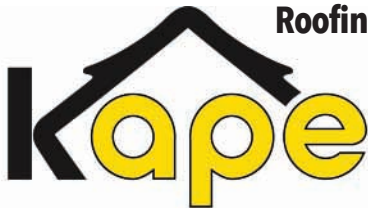


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# Black Bears - They're Waking Up

From CO Parks & Wildlife

Black Bear - Scientific Name *Ursus americanus*

## Description

Black bears are familiar to everyone, and with the demise of the grizzly bear they are the largest of Colorado's carnivores. Although called black bears, they can be honey-colored, blond, brown, cinnamon or black. They may have a tan muzzle or white spot on the chest. Although brown or cinnamon-colored bears are sometimes mistaken for grizzly bears, there are no known grizzlies living in Colorado. Adult females are called sows, adult males are called boars, and youngsters are called cubs.

Adult males weigh from 275 pounds. Females weigh about 175 pounds. Depending on the season, food supply and gender, black bears may weigh anywhere from 100 to 450 pounds. Black bears measure about 3 feet high when on all four feet. They can be 5 feet tall when standing on their back legs.

Cubs stay with the mother bear for their first year, denning with the mother and littermates over the winter. By the time of their second

spring, they will be self-reliant and will separate from their mother by the second autumn.

## Range

In Colorado, the largest populations of black bears live in areas where there are Gambel's oak and aspen, near open areas of chokecherry and serviceberry bushes. A black bear may have a range from 10 to 250 square miles.

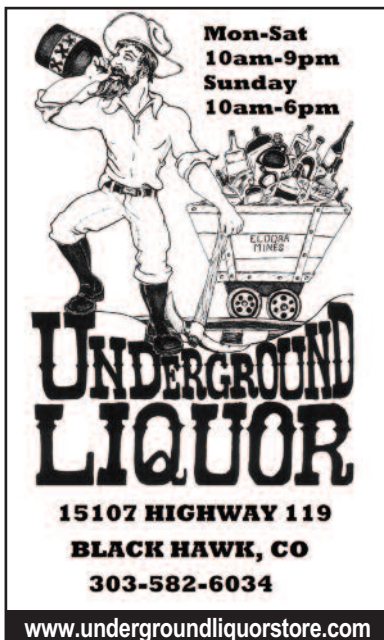
## Diet

Black bears learn to eat natural foods, such as berries, nuts and insects, as they are taught to forage by mother bears. People who live or camp in bear country need to be sure they don't teach bears to become 'garbage' bears by careless handling of food, scraps and garbage. Bears who find human food, even once, can change their habits to seek food from human residences and trash cans. Most bears seen in residential areas near or within bear habitat do not cause any damage. If a bear doesn't find abundant food, it will move on.

## Reproduction

Male bears are capable of breeding when they are 3 years old. Some female bears breed as early as 3 or 4 years of age, but 5 years is more common. After a 2-3 months of gestation, 1 to 3 tiny cubs are born mid-winter, typically while the mother is still in the den. Newborn cubs weighing less than a pound at birth — are blind, toothless and covered with very fine hair. When they emerge from the den in early or mid-May, they will weigh 10 to 15 pounds.

*(Continued on next page.)*



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**Highlander Wildlife**  
**Human-Bear Conflict Reduction**  
**Community Grant**

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is pleased to announce a unique funding opportunity in 2022 for communities working to reduce human-bear conflict. Local governments, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to develop projects that will reduce human-bear conflict and apply for funding.

Human-bear conflicts have increased in recent years, resulting in property damage and increased demands on time and effort to respond to the conflicts by CPW and local government personnel. Expanding existing conflict reduction efforts or developing new approaches will help reduce the impact on bear populations and improve public safety.

Read the full Community-Grant Program Plan, including timeline, requirements, when funds need to be used by at our website.

**Who is eligible?**

Local governments, NGOs, HOAs, community groups, businesses, tribes, universities and individuals are all eligible to receive funding. Applicants can apply for grants between \$50,000 and \$500,000.

Projects should have local support, be designed to prevent conflict with bears, and have tangible outcomes with realistic timelines. Local support can be demonstrated through cost sharing, in kind contributions, letters of support, participation in public meetings, membership in local organizations, and partnerships.

Highly desirable projects will model solutions to reduce conflict and are replicable by other communities, involve multiple partners, fill a need in an area with high conflict, and be innovative.

You may download the Application - Submit the forms by May 6 at 5 pm at [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us) Need help applying or/questions Contact Kristin Cannon, [kristin.cannon@state.co.us](mailto:kristin.cannon@state.co.us) or 303-291-7313. In an effort to help communities co-exist with bears, Colorado Parks and Wildlife is pleased to announce a unique funding opportunity aimed at reducing human-bear conflicts.

CPW will be offering up to \$1 million that it will distribute through a grant process this spring to be used on projects that reduce conflicts. "This is an huge opportunity for local governments and partners to work with Parks and Wildlife to reduce human-bear conflicts to keep communities and property safer and better protect Colorado's iconic black bear populations," said Colorado Governor Jared Polis. "I look forward to seeing positive impact from the innovative solutions that are developed through these new projects." From 2019-21, CPW received over 14,000 reports of sightings and conflicts with bears.

**Nearly one-third of those involved trash cans and dumpsters as an attractant.**

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# Animals At Risk Due To Selfie Addicts

By Staci-lee Sherwood February 14, 2022 - HCN

It wasn't that long ago that if a person wanted to take a photograph of a wild animal, travel was involved along with long periods of quiet standing or sitting. This was no guarantee of a great photo, it just increased the chances of one. Back then photography was either an exciting career for the lucky few or an expensive hobby if you could afford it. The digital camera changed all that.

With the advent of digital cameras combined with the internet and photography software a new craze was born. Getting that NatGeo photo was still a challenge but many of the obstacles were gone. The digital era began and a new craze emerged called the selfie. Suddenly everyone with a camera wanted their picture taken. With digital cameras they could have it printed or downloaded in minutes, this created the phenomenon of the selfie addict. This trend may be new but over the past few years several articles and studies have been written warning of the negative impacts of selfies. The emotional toll the endless game of trying to one up each other can become dangerous.

Over the years bizarre stories would tell a tale of people dying while attempting to take a selfie. Insanity seemed to grab hold as people would try to take a selfie while standing on the edge of a mountain or skydiving. Even worse was the seemingly endless competition to out do people they see online with more outrageous feats. The selfie addict ignored some inherent danger with the risk taking. The inevitable followed involving selfies with animals. They now ventured out in search of that amazing shot that brings instant internet fame and that meant up close and personal.

Putting oneself at risk is one thing but to put an animal at risk of injury and death is another. On rare occasions the animals fight back which has been the case in Yellowstone National Park and their bison herds. While these gentle giants look docile, they can be more deadly than sharks when threatened. On more than one occasion a person has been gored by a bison

who became aggressive toward a person getting too close. This has become so bad in the park they have put up extra warning signs. Accidents still occur due to people choosing to ignore the warning signs in search of that potential viral photo op.

Having been to Yellowstone several times I have seen countless tourists chasing after herds of bison. One time I witnessed a car chase between a driver of a small car in pursuit of a bison following the herd off road and on the grass. Finally the bison became so agitated he charged the car nearly destroying it. Watching from the sidelines were dozens of onlookers who cheered on the bison and gave no sympathy to the driver. Park rangers were called in to escort this person and their car out of the park after fining them for harassing the animals. That was back in the 1990s and seems relatively tame compared to what animals now endure for photographs.



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# Failing Rangelands Thanks To BLM

By Kylie Mohr Mar. 14, 2022 High Country News

Data released today reveals that 54 million acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management fail to meet the agency's own "land-health standards." While standards vary between states and bioregions, they generally measure biological conditions, including soil health, water quality, plant species diversity and the quality of habitat for threatened and endangered species. The standards define the minimum benchmarks land managers need to achieve and maintain in order for landscapes to function and be used sustainably.

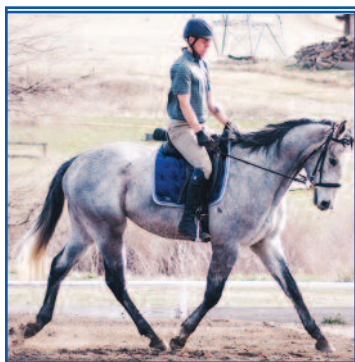
The BLM oversees 246 million acres of land, the vast majority of it in the Western U.S. The agency's mission is to "sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations," but according to records obtained by bipartisan watchdog organization Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), it is failing to do so on nearly a quarter of the land that's leased for grazing. "We must all work together to improve conservation

practices on public lands," said Chandra Rosenthal, PEER's Rocky Mountain Office director. "This is a wakeup call for the BLM to not only improve and modernize their data collection and efforts, but also to take action to address the vast amounts of degraded lands."

PEER obtained 78,000 records spanning three decades through Freedom of Information Act requests. The data, which covers 13 Western states from 1997 to 2019 and holds information from every BLM field office in those states, plots 21,000 allotments on one interactive map. "This map is useful for individuals to be able to see what's going on around them, become active and really work to hold the BLM accountable in the areas that are important to them," Rosenthal told High Country News. "It's really empowering for people to be aware of what's going on on their public lands."

The data shows that vast areas of the land are degraded. Some acreage isn't assessed at all, and of the roughly 109,000 million acres that are, half fail to meet rangeland health standards. Struggling allotments, while documented across

the West, are predominantly found in cold desert ecoregions, often in the rain shadow of mountain ranges. These areas are characterized by lack of moisture and extreme temperature swings. In six states, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Wyoming more than 40% of assessed lands are failing land-health standards. In Nevada, 83% of assessed allotments do not



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meet standards, while data from Idaho recorded that 78% of assessed allotments failed rangeland health standards. In New Mexico, however, only 2% of assessed allotments are failing.

High Country News reached out to the BLM with questions prior to publication, and the agency responded with a written statement after the story originally went to press: *“While we disagree with some of PEER’s conclusions as the analysis was at a large scale and missed some on the ground improvements, we acknowledge there is work to be done in the face of a changing climate and other challenges,” according to the statement. “The BLM will prioritize assessments for areas where land health standards have never been evaluated or where standards are not being met and is also working to improve how it reports land health data.”*

Flourishing landscapes are integral to the public and economic health of the West’s communities and Indigenous nations, particularly those whose ancestral lands are involved. Research by Headwaters Economics and the Center for Western Priorities extensively documents the tremendous value that public lands hold for nearby gateway communities. But a prolonged megadrought in the Western U.S. poses an ongoing threat to already stressed landscapes and the communities that depend on them, as do overlapping issues, including climate change, the spread of invasive species like cheatgrass, and the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires.

**PEER’s analysis finds that livestock grazing is the primary culprit behind land degradation.** The BLM leases more than half of its acreage to ranchers as grazing allotments for cattle, sheep and other livestock. Although everything from drought and wildfire to off-road vehicles can impact rangeland health, livestock grazing is a significant cause of the failing land-health standards of 72% of the public land. That’s about 40 million acres.

This finding is consistent throughout the West, sometimes at a large scale: A massive, over 950,000-acre allotment in the Rock Springs area of Wyoming is just one of the areas that identifies livestock grazing as a significant cause for declining land health. Other stressors such as invasive species and

extreme stream

degradation account for the poor health of an additional fifteen million acres.

BLM grazing lands that fail to meet standards overlap substantially with greater sage grouse breeding areas and habitat. Ecoregions like the Wyoming Basin, Northern Basin and Range and Snake River Plains owe their failure to the presence of livestock on more than 40% of the lands assessed to date. Other animal species are implicated too; for example, some allotments in the home of the threatened desert tortoise are also failing to meet standards.

PEER shared its findings in a meeting in early January with top agency officials, including BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning and Deputy Director of Policy and Programs Nada Culver. “It was surprising to us that a lot of them didn’t even know there was grazing within wilderness areas,” Rosenthal said. “I feel like there’s a lot of unfamiliarity with the rangeland health standards data.” But Rosenthal also categorized the meeting as a “positive step” and said that she felt the leaders were “curious and interested in making change.”

*Kylie Mohr is an editorial intern for High Country News writing from Montana.*

**Editor’s Note:** This new data released is proof that our BLM is so Pro-Livestock Industry, and illegally removing our public resource of wild horses by saying the rangeland can’t support the herds. With cruel and inhumane helicopter roundups where 100’s of horses die or get injured yearly this is in violation of the 1971 Law passed to protect Wild Horse Populations.

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# Helios The Hawk

Story & Photograph by Valerie Wedel

Once upon a time, a baby hawk hatched out of a pretty, very pale blue, patterned egg his mother laid. After Mom laid four eggs, she and Dad took turns nesting on them to keep them warm. Mostly Mom guarded the eggs, and Dad hunted for the family. The family lived together in a big nest, high in a tree, here in Colorado.

After about 32-33 days of incubation, that first tiny chick pecked his way bravely out of his shell. At first, he was all wet and very hungry. But then after a while his baby feathers dried, and he learned to eat from his mom. Soon the other eggs hatched also.

In their nest high above the ground, the little nestlings lived while they grew bigger and stronger. Their parents hunted for them, and they ate lots of yummy mice, voles, rabbits, snakes, and sometimes prairie dogs. As the nestlings grew bigger, they like to practice flapping their wings and making hop jumps, right there in the nest.

Time passed and the nestlings all grew much bigger and stronger. After about 40 days, the two brothers were ready to try their first flight! About ten days later, the two sisters, who grew bigger than their brothers, flew also! Now they were all much bigger. Their feathers had changed also. They were fledglings.

Except, something went wrong. One of the fledgling brothers fell all the way to the ground. One of his wings did not work like his brother and sister's wings. His tiny shoulder got too tired too soon. After only a few wing beats, he still lay on the ground. His shoulder was too tired... he was not able to make it back to the nest.

There his life might have ended. However, our fledgling Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo Regalis*) met a human being! He was taken far away from his nest, to a raptor recovery center. At the center the little Ferruginous Hawk became known as Helios. Helios lived, grew bigger, and practiced flying.

But still Helios' shoulder got too tired too fast. Then humans discovered something wrong with the bones in his shoulder. One wing would never be strong enough to soar over the grasslands, to hover on the wind above prairie dog holes... to dance on the summer winds high above the grasslands... Helios could not live on his own in the wild. Instead, Helios became an ambassador for his hawk fellows to our two legged people.

This winter, I had the very great pleasure of meeting Helios, while playing harp for an event for the Platte River Park District, in Littleton, CO. The many dedicated volunteers who help run the Nature Center were treated to a dinner party, with harp music and the company of some ambassador hawks. Helios kept the guests

company for the first hour that I played. Helios sang along with the harp I had a sense he was dancing on his person's glove also.

Occasionally he let out his Kreeee-ah call, but mostly I heard a series of clicks and chirps. He seemed to especially like medieval Spanish music. That has a sweet and catchy rhythm. Helios also seemed to like some of the ancient melodies. During a break after the first set finished, I went to say hello. Helios is quite a handsome fellow. He weighs three pounds, and has a lovely big wingspan. His two legged person held him on a special falconer's glove. This is a leather gauntlet that covers the arm most of the way to the elbow. Helios also wore jesses. These are leather straps on his ankles with a tether to the falconer glove. This

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kept him from leaping off the glove, trying to fly too far, and falling. Mostly Helios liked to dance around on his person's gloved fist. And then he would sit quietly, turning his intense golden hawk eyes upon us. If he felt warm from all the hopping around, he would open his beak, taste the air with his tongue, and then click his beak shut again.

In the wild, Helios might stalk through grass on the high prairie, and snatch rodents from their burrows! He might also fly high in the sky in lazy circles, until he spotted a rodent or rabbit. Then swoop down, arrow over the ground in low level flight, just a few feet above the grass, and at the last moment snatch the small animal.

Helios and all other Ferruginous Hawks (*Buteo Regalis*) have feathers all the way down their legs to their talons. This is quite rare for hawks. They have a light morph or dark morph coloring. Helios is a light morph color. (See picture). The juvenile hawks have golden eyes. As they grow into adult hawks, their eyes turn brown. It can take years for the eyes to fully change color.

Ferruginous hawks have lived here in Colorado and other parts of the West since the pleistocene era. Their fossils can be found all over the west. They are also known as Busardo Herrumbroso in Spanish, and Buse rouilleuse in French (2). And, they are sometimes trained by falconers! They are amazing and aggressive hunters.

Some Ferruginous hawks make small migrations with the seasons. Here in Colorado, it is said that Dinosaur Ridge is a good place to spot migrating Ferruginous Hawks in the fall. According to *All About Birds* (2), Helios and his kin are the largest of the North



## Highlander Wildlife

American Buteo (broadwing) hawks. These hawks are sometimes spotted sitting on fence posts and studying burrows nearby, in our grasslands. They can also be seen circling high above the grasslands, their wings more pointed than Red Tail Hawks, their bellies mostly appearing white, and a dark V by their legs.

Meeting Helios in person was an amazing experience. I had never been so close to a wild hawk before! Playing harp music, while he sang, was altogether wonderful. I have noticed wild songbirds often join my harp when I play. Helios' voice is considerably deeper and more powerful than the little songbirds. It is a very good

thing he was found that day, as he lay on the ground, by someone who knew how to care for him.

References 1. <https://ebird.org/species/ferhaw>  
 2. [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ferruginous\\_Hawk/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ferruginous_Hawk/overview)  
 3. <https://hawkwatch.org/learn/factsheets/item/638-ferruginous-hawk>  
 4. <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/ferruginous-hawk>  
 5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferruginous\\_hawk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferruginous_hawk)

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# Finding Free Fun

Article and photograph by  
Diane Bergstrom

Gas is going up, food prices are going up, interest rates are going up, international strife and subsequent worry are going up, stress is going up. Finding fun might not be in the top five on your priority list. Finding fun might not be realistic to your budget. Feeling fun might seem futile or frivolous. But we need to take breaks. A break from the news, a break from worry, a break from stress.

Christopher Beams Edrington wrote, "A big misconception is that you need to be motivated to get rolling. You don't. Research: motivation often follows action, not the other way around. In practice: you don't need to feel good to get going; you need to get going to give yourself a chance at feeling good." I think he's right. Here are some timely free, or almost free, ideas to consider in pursuit of fun.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keenesburg is offering free day passes on April 22, 9 am-7:30 pm, for supporters who bring select potted trees or shrubs to be planted in and around the Sanctuary habitats. Day passes normally range from \$20-\$50 depending on visitor ages. This is a great way to contribute to the Sanctuary and experience their mission of rescuing and caring for animals while educating people about the Captive Wildlife Crisis. Recently, they have rescued and rehabilitated numerous compromised tigers from the Tiger King. Animals in ample habitats are undisturbed by visitors who view them from an elevated walkway that is over 1.5



miles long. The best plant choices include Cottonwood trees, Eastern Red Cedar, lilac bushes and Sand Cherry bushes. Please check their website for more information on Wild Earth Day at [www.wildearthday.org](http://www.wildearthday.org). To email questions, send them to [www.information@wildanimalsanctuary.org](mailto:www.information@wildanimalsanctuary.org). You can also read my past article on the Sanctuary on our website, [www.highlanderdermo.com](http://www.highlanderdermo.com), and click on the Archives tab. Scroll to the

March 2016 issue. It is the first article, titled, "Happy Endings at the Wild Animal Sanctuary."

The Golden History Museum always offers free admission and is open Wednesdays through Saturdays, [www.goldenhistory.org](http://www.goldenhistory.org); 923 10th Street, Golden. If you're interested in rocks, minerals, fossils and even moon rocks, visit the School of Mines: Mines Museum of Earth Sciences at 1310 Maple Street, Golden. It is open 7 days a week and admission is free; [www.mines.edu/museumofearthsciences](http://www.mines.edu/museumofearthsciences). The University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, depicting natural and human history, is also open and free 7 days a week; 15th Street and Broadway, Boulder, [www.colorado.edu/cumuseum](http://www.colorado.edu/cumuseum). Upcoming free days at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science are May 1st and May 23, at 2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver, [www.dmnns.org](http://www.dmnns.org). The Denver Art Museum is offering free admission on April 12, April 24 and May 10, at 100 W. 14th Ave. Pkwy, Denver, [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org). The Four Mile Historic Park in Denver, 715 S. Forest St., is offering free admission on April 8 and May 13, [www.fourmilepark.org](http://www.fourmilepark.org).

The Denver Botanic Gardens offer free admission on April 21 and June 7 at the York Street location, Denver, and Chatfield Farms, Littleton. You must pre-register on their website: [www.botanicgardens.org/events](http://www.botanicgardens.org/events). The Denver Zoo offers occasional limited free admissions through an online lottery system. It's a little tricky but if you win, you can request up to 5 vouchers per visit. There is a 5 day registration window, starting from March 29 through April 2, to register for entrance on April 10. Go to [www.denver](http://www.denver) (Con't on page 14.)

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**Highlander Events** [zoo.org/free-days](http://zoo.org/free-days) register. Winners are notified by email on April 3 and must promptly return an acceptance notice. The next free day will be offered in October. Good luck!

The National Park Service is offering four more free days through the end of the year: April 16, August 4, September 24, and November 11. NOTE: the entrance fee is waived but you will still need to purchase a timed entry permit reservation for visits starting May 27 through October. With more than 4.4 million visitors last year, Rocky Mountain National Park experienced significant competition for time slots. Plan ahead to obtain the desired time and day of your entry. A small percentage of permits will be made available each day for only that day and are often gone 5 minutes after being posted. Yes, five minutes. Go to [www.recreation.gov/romo](http://www.recreation.gov/romo) to familiarize yourself with the procedures and to proactively create your account. If you have a child currently in the fourth grade, she/he/they can request a free entrance pass valid through August at [www.everykidinapark.org](http://www.everykidinapark.org). They are required to answer a few kid-friendly questions, then you can download the form and bring it to a park entrance fee station to receive the pass. It's good for the whole family!

Hopa Mountain is a non-profit organization which invests in the future of rural and tribal communities by making sustained improvements in economic, environmental, and social health through education and supporting tribal citizen leaders. They focus on the Northern Rocky

Mountains and Great Plains, fostering local people's strengths and their relationships with each other and the land. They are offering \$2,500 in travel grants to indigenous youth and elders to visit a national park and connect to their homelands. Applications must be received by April 15 at [www.hopamountain.org](http://www.hopamountain.org).

When finding free fun simply isn't a priority because your current focus is on meeting the basic needs for you and your family, please consult this free service that reaches into all 64 Colorado counties. "2-1-1Colorado" was developed by seven non-profit organizations to create a centralized referral call center to provide information and connect people with resources in their community. They can inform residents of available shelter, childcare, rent assistance, and food programs including children's summer food service, emergency food, clearinghouses, pantries, and food vouchers. Go to [www.211colorado.org](http://www.211colorado.org) and click on "application page" within the content paragraph, or call (406)586-2455.

On a recent return trip, I handed my ID to a Southwest Airlines counter agent who looked at my ticket destination and quietly commented, "Colorado had a rough year." My throat tightened at this unexpected show of sympathy from out of state. "Yes," I replied, "yes, we have." From massacres to devastating fires to layered losses of loved ones, pets, homes, businesses and belongings, the losses have become layered so that we don't have time to fully grieve one loss before the next one occurs. I have found comfort in the words of Howard

Zinn, "To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, and kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives...the future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory." I wish everyone warm hugs, accessible safety nets, lightness through fun, and as Edrington said, "...to give yourself a chance at feeling good."

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*Calico dog.*  
Bottom left: *From Natural World Cat.*  
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*From Animals are Family.*  
Page 17 Top Left -  
*Lincoln.*  
Right: *Cowboy & Tiger from Cindy.*  
Bottom: *We Love Horses Paint.*  
This page Top:  
*The gang hangin' & a Sweet Meeting, both from Pam.*  
Bottom:  
*Claudia Groves.*

# How Much Car Insurance Do I Need?

From Jim Plane – State Farm Insurance

## Learn about coverage limits, collision & comprehensive, deductibles

It's a common question: How much car insurance do I need? Unfortunately, there's no black and white answer. It depends a lot on what coverages you need and the amount of deductible you feel comfortable with.

How much liability insurance do you need? Liability covers expenses when you're at fault in a crash. The coverages extend to the vehicle and persons impacted by the crash but not the individuals in your car. Most states require you to carry a minimum amount of liability coverage on your vehicle.

No one can predict exactly how much you'd have to pay if you cause a crash. But the key question to ask is: Can you afford to cover any damages exceeding your coverage limits? The higher your liability coverage limits, the more damages your policy might cover.

To get an idea of how much liability coverage you might need, add up the value of your home, cars, savings, and investments. Then subtract your debts (what you owe). For example, if the total "net worth" was \$220,000, you could consider \$250,000 liability for injuries per accident. If you feel you need additional coverage, you can increase it typically in \$50,000 increments up to \$500,000. If you feel you need coverage beyond that, consider an umbrella policy.

Do you need comprehensive and/or collision insurance on an old car? Collision coverage covers repairs to your car if you're in an accident.

Comprehensive coverage covers your car if it's stolen or damaged outside of an accident. You might not have a choice to carry this coverage if your car is leased or financed; most lenders will require you to carry enough coverage to cover the cost of repairs to your car.

If you own the vehicle, you could consider whether the savings from dropping collision and/or comprehensive coverage is enough to offset the risk of having to pay the entire cost of repairing or replacing your car. For example, if your car is totaled from an accident in which the other driver is at fault and has no insurance, hit in a parking lot while you were in the store shopping, or stolen from while you were hiking at a park, do you have the means to replace it without any help from the insurance company?

If your car is older, it might be time to drop the collision and comprehensive coverage and put that money into *(Continued on next page.)*



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**Highlander Tips** savings. You can take the cost of collision and comprehensive coverage and see if the insurance

policy cost more or the same as the worth of your vehicle. If so, it might be time to drop the coverage. For example, if your car is worth \$1,000 and your coverage costs \$500 a year plus a \$500 deductible, you're not really getting anything for your money.

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**How much should my collision & comprehensive deductibles be?**

This is a balancing act. Higher deductibles typically lower your premium, but will increase your out-of-pocket costs if a loss occurs. Ask yourself how much you're willing and able to pay directly, often on short notice, to potentially save on your premium. If you want to lower the amount you have to pay when a crash occurs, you might want to opt for a lower deductible. If saving money on your insurance is your motivating factor behind removing your collision and raising your deductible, consider these other car insurance money savings tips.

**Multiline**

Check with your insurance company about combining the purchase of your home insurance or renters insurance with your auto insurance.

**Insurance Ratings**

When purchasing your vehicle, consider how the insurance company will rate them. Some cars cost more to insure than others.

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# How Earth Stores Records Of The Past

Jonathan Thompson March 16, 2022 HCN

**When human data doesn't go back far enough, researchers turn to natural archives.**

When researchers want to understand the history of the environment, they extrapolate data from oral histories or peruse digitized weather observations, aging diaries and farmers' journals. But these records are spotty, subjective and only go back a few centuries. So scientists also look to the Earth itself and the vast timeline hidden therein — the natural archive.

These storehouses of earthly data — ice cores, seafloor sediments, oyster shells, even road cuts through layers of rock — offer a far deeper look back in time than human records. A researcher can extrapolate water-quality data by examining river sediment, or determine forest fire frequency and magnitude through the rings of a tree.

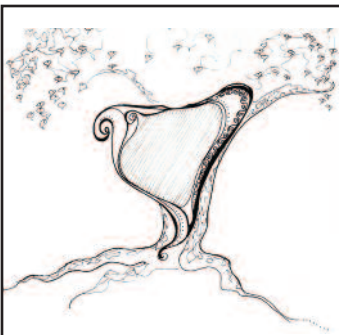
As with any archive, scientists must learn to read the natural archive's language in order to understand what it is saying. Translations constantly evolve, meaning interpretations do as

well. And like other archives, the natural archive is fragile: Just as a library can be destroyed by fire, so too can the massive museum of arboreal memories that essentially comprises a forest.

## ARBOREAL MEMORIES

In 1922, when federal and state officials divvied up the Colorado River, they based their negotiations on a few decades' worth of streamflow gauge records. They estimated that 15 million acre-feet of water flowed each year past the "fulcrum point" of Lees Ferry, just below the current location of Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona. But when drought gripped the region in the 1930s and streamflows dropped, some wondered whether it was a reliable number. To find out, University of Arizona graduate student Edmund Schulman turned to the trees. Scientists have long known that a tree grew a new ring about every year, and that those rings provided a record of environmental conditions. The rings' width corresponds with precipitation levels and temperature, while blackened scars reveal past fires. By correlating recent years' growth with

*(Continued on next page.)*



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weather observations, researchers can “calibrate” tree rings, enabling them to reconstruct past climate.

Using conifer core samples taken throughout the Colorado River watershed, Schulman roughly reconstructed several centuries of climate, and found the first two decades of the 20th century — the baseline for the Colorado River Compact — were far wetter than the 600-year average. Water managers weren’t too worried because the states were nowhere close to using up the existing supplies. Eventually, however, as the region’s population and water consumption increased, the river no longer reliably delivered its 15 million acre-feet, and folks took notice. University of Arizona researchers again sampled tree cores to reconstruct past flows. Their findings were alarming: The average flow at Lee’s Ferry for the past four centuries was as much as 3 million acre-feet — hundreds of

billions of gallons — lower than the amount allotted to the seven Colorado River Basin states and Mexico.

### PACKRAT MEMORIALS

Anyone who has opened the hood of their car in the morning and found a massive pile of twigs and chunks of rubber, plastic and wire where, only hours ago, a functioning engine sat knows that packrats are extremely efficient — and occasionally unwelcome — collectors of stuff. But the little cuties are also some of nature’s most effective archivists, though instead of using climate-controlled vaults, they preserve the historical record with their pee.

If you found your car disabled and occupied by a packrat and decided to just surrender, close the hood and wait a few thousand years, you might return to discover an engine-compartment-sized, lumpy, charcoal-brown chunk of dried packrat urine and poop, studded with all the little hoarder’s treasures. If you were to excavate the chunk of said urine — also known as a midden — you would find the parts of your car, along with bones, twigs and those candy bar wrappers you guiltily stashed under the seat, all of it remarkably well-preserved.

By carbon-dating preserved plant debris and fecal matter from packrat middens, scientists have been able to determine, for example, that the flora in Joshua Tree National Park hasn’t changed dramatically in the last 15,000 years. The University of New Mexico researchers who traced pollen dispersal in radiocarbon-dated packrat middens found that ponderosa pine forest gave way to piñon in the Chaco Canyon region some 8,000 years ago, courtesy of a climatic shift. Middens even preserve DNA and provide a detailed window into communities of plants, animals, bacteria and fungi present millennia ago.

### SILT REMEMBRANCE

When Glen Canyon Dam began backing up the Colorado River in 1963, it also began compiling a massive storehouse of water-quality data for the 100,000 square-mile upper watershed. This archive is not the water in Lake Powell, but rather the silt, which is piling up at a rate of about 1.6 billion cubic feet — enough to fill nearly 19,000 Olympic-size swimming pools — per year.

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Because silt accumulates at a fairly consistent rate, core samples of it provide a sort of timeline of upstream water chemistry. Some events, such as large tailings-pile breaches, are even visible to the naked eye, appearing as yellowish-gray strata.

In 2018, U.S. Geological Survey scientists set out to unearth Lake Powell's sedimentary memories, with a special focus on the San Juan River Delta, since that's where a portion of the 540 tons of metal spewed by the 2015 Gold King Mine spill residue would have settled after a nearly 300-mile river journey from southwestern Colorado. And, indeed, about 10 feet down, scientists conducting the chemical analysis found a spike in zinc and other metals. But some 35 feet deeper, they discovered an even bigger spike, likely correlating with tailings pond spills and other mining pollution from the 1970 and '80s. We may not remember, but the silt never forgets.

### DUST DEVELOPMENTS

Every spring, when the winds kick up and the mercury climbs, the glittering white snow blanketing the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado takes on a reddish-brown hue. This is dust, snatched by spring winds from cattle-trampled pastures and public lands to the west, and carried to the steep slopes of the high country, where it's deposited with the snow, or, in its absence, on the ground.

When dark-colored dust (or ash, or carbon or what have you) coats the snow, it reduces the albedo, causing the snow surface to absorb more solar energy and melt more quickly. That throws off the natural calendar that tells plants when to sprout and bloom and pushes spring runoff earlier into the year. Reduced albedo enhances evapotranspiration and snow sublimation — meaning the snow melts and vaporizes in one fell

### Highlander Environmental

swoop — reducing the total volume of runoff and depleting rivers of their flow.

While anecdotal accounts of these aeolian dust events can be found throughout history, researchers only began systematically recording them a few decades ago. In order to get a better grasp on dust trends over time, University of Colorado researchers in 2008 examined the sediment that had built up over nearly six millennia at the bottom of lakes high in the San Juan Mountains. They concluded that most of the dust deposited there comes from the Colorado Plateau, that dust picked up at about the same time as white settler-colonists arrived in the mid-1800s, and that volumes and frequency peaked in the first few decades of the 20th century. This seems to leave little doubt about the cause: It's the results of the newcomers' land-disturbing ways — all that mining, development, tilling, logging, and, perhaps most dust-raising of all, cattle grazing.

### ICE CORE RECALL

Between 1950 and 2011, weather observations showed that a pattern known as the Aleutian Low had strengthened, causing precipitation at several Alaska coastal weather stations to rise significantly. *(Continued on next page.)*

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Scientists thought it might indicate a changing climate. But the Aleutian Low has been known to shift for decades at a time, and the six decades of observations weren't enough to show whether the change was caused by natural variability or a long-term climatic shift.

So, in 2017, Dartmouth researchers headed to Denali National Park and the Mount Hunter summit plateau, where snow piles up at mind-blowing rates — an average of more than one meter of water per year — and doesn't melt. They drilled more than 200 meters into the ice and snow and extracted long cylindrical cores.

By tracking seasonal chemical oscillations, they could delineate each annual layer in the core, creating a timeline, analogous to a tree's rings, from which they could estimate precipitation levels for each year.

The findings were striking: The precipitation increase that showed up on the observed records after 1950 actually began more than a century earlier, in 1840. And while there had been multi-decadal variations in precipitation over the previous 1,100 years, the ice core confirmed that the 1840-2011 increase marked a distinct and unprecedented shift in the climate.

Ice cores were first drilled for research purposes in 1955 in Greenland. Since then, hundreds of cores — including one nearly two miles long — have been drilled in Greenland and Antarctica. Some go back as far as 800,000 years and can be used to track atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations, dust or carbon and temperature shifts over time.

*Jonathan Thompson is a contributing editor at High Country News.*



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# Spring Into The Growing Season

By Melinda Myers

Spring flowering bulbs and perennials are filling our landscapes with color. Make sure your plants receive sufficient moisture. It is easy to overlook watering during the cool and often wet spring months. A rain gauge can help you monitor the rainfall in your yard. Plants benefit from thorough watering that encourages deep, drought and pest resistant roots. Check the soil moisture and water when the top four to six inches are crumbly and starting to dry. Established drought tolerant plants tolerate drier soil.

Start pulling weeds as they appear. Removing them when small makes removal easier and prevents them from flowering and producing seeds. That means fewer weeds to pull next year.

Disease and pest-free leaves, pine needles and other organic mulch covering the soil surface help suppress weeds, conserve moisture, and improve the soil as they break down.

Leave perennials stand until daytime temperatures are consistently 50 degrees. This allows overwintering eggs to hatch and insects to exit their winter homes. If waiting is not an option, cut most stems back to the ground and stack them out of the way. This allows the insects to exit their winter homes when the time is right. Leave some stems standing 8 to 12" above ground so insects can form new homes. Chop up the removed plant material in mid-summer or fall to use as mulch in the garden or the compost pile.

Watch for animal damage and protect your plantings as needed. Fresh new growth in the spring garden makes a tasty treat for rabbits, deer, and other wildlife.

Many gardeners enlist the help of repellents to protect their landscape plants. Research has proven that odor-based repellents like rain and snow resistant *Plantskydd* ([plantskydd.com](http://plantskydd.com)) are more effective than other types of repellents. Plus, this will cause wildlife to avoid plants rather than taking a bite before they discover they don't like the taste.

Treat pathways used to access your landscape as well as key plants before the animals begin



(Korean Spice Viburnum flowering plant above.)

feeding. It is easier to keep them away before they find all the delicious plants growing in your garden.

Then take time to enjoy the beauty of your landscape. Find a comfortable spot to sit, relax, listen to the birds, and take in all the wonders spring has to offer.

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## Highlander Wildlife

# Update: [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org](http://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org)

Headquarters Report - West Yellowstone MT  
We anticipate a slow patrol week, where we have been grateful for the diminished severity of winter. The lack of snowpack lessens migration pressure on the buffalo. With this lack of large Bison movements out of Yellowstone, we are seeing the blessings with few being taken compared to the Park Service's stated goal to have 900 to 1100 captured and killed this season. We imagine the spring populations rebounding and gaining ground for the

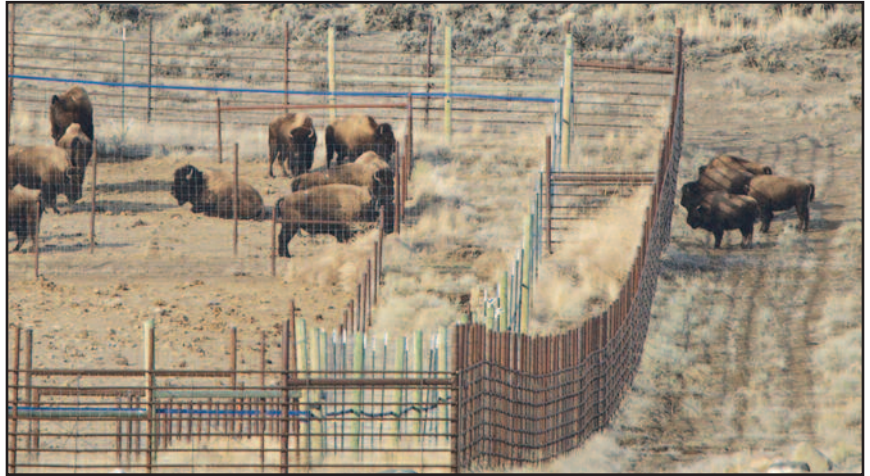
decimated Central herd. Buffalo still number half the stated population carrying capacity based on Yellowstone's figures of around 10,000 individuals. We pray in the years to come we will see the restoration of adequate populations where the return of these Wild Bison to roam and migrate freely as other Wildlife upon our National Forests and beyond.

Continued unstable weather patterns with a lack of normal snowpack regionally and in the high country persists with continued dissipation on south-facing aspects. Our field patrols worked through bitter winds and cold that brought slight accumulations of blowing snow. Conversely, we also had a few days of uncommon temperatures well above normal for this time of year.

The result of the continuing weather pattern has kept large migrations from occurring when the hostile winter conditions in the Park force animals to seek traditional wintering grounds searching out forage at lower elevations. This combined with artificially reduced numbers of free-ranging Wild Bison has kept Montana State and Treaty Buffalo hunters from opportunities to harvest.

Field patrols have seen little action as we continue with

unseasonal temperature fluctuations, small accumulations of snow, and little movement from wildlife at the West end of the park. While



Montana State Hunt season regulations have expired, field patrols continue as we keep an eye on unfolding threats.

## Field Report - Gardiner MT

As wildlife winter this time of the year, the ungulates have been able to conserve their precious last energy through the harsh winter, extinguishing their fat reserves and holding the unborn in utero awaiting the change in spring weather.

Conditions have been favorable for wildlife wintering, the lack of migration has also led to problems arising out of the mandated capture facility at Stevens Creek, where the migrating bison are baited, harassed, captured, and imprisoned as we have reported in the past weeks. The conditions have led to little natural environmental pressures that traditionally drive Buffalo out of Yellowstone National Parks high country into Montana at the North Gate. Weeks earlier instinct and ancestral memory provided for a family group to migrate into the Gardiner Basin, the first to journey downrange where they met their fate at the YNP Stephens Creek Capture Facility.

Of the group, 38 buffalo were lured into the facility with hay, 27 animals of the 38 captured

were sent to Slaughter. This after the remainder of the Buffalo had escaped to safety and returned to the mountains from harm's way.

This operation left 4 adolescent bison on the outside of the capture pen (3 of last year's calves approx. 11 mo. old and 1 Yearling approx. 1yr 11mo. in age) as the weeks have gone by we note that these youngsters were hanging around attempting to be with the captives inside the facility. We have continued to see them on our patrols as they have been separated or worse (mothers sent to slaughter) and remain searching for a way to reunite. (See Photo here.)

As a result of interagency management policies and the continued pressures facing our National Mammal, we have seen injustice and inhumane treatment of these sacred beings. We have eyes to see the irrational and inhumane operations that are creating this outdated and absurd management practice. We acknowledge that human presence in hunting and subsistence has

always been a part of **Highlander Wildlife** the natural regulation of Buffalo numbers before near extinction.

Buffalo are not domesticated livestock, they are Wildlife existing in the last ecosystem that we as a people have set aside for this purpose for generations to come. The continued misrepresentation of our deep desires to keep one last place for wildlife continue to show as the conflicts in multi-jurisdictional boundaries continue to bring competing interests at the degradation of both the genetic diversity and restoration efforts of this most important of keystone species. The survival and existence as a right have always remained as an ideal to all who would honor preservation through conservation. We are eternally grateful for your continued support in sharing, supporting, honoring, and holding faith for all that is with the Buffalo.

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## **Guide: Hybrid/Elec.**

*By Joe Dyton*

Light duty gasoline vehicles like hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid electric and all-electric have seen a steady sales climb since they became available in 1999. Just 9,400 hybrid electric vehicles were sold in 2000, compared to more than 340,000 in 2018, according to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation.

There are a few reasons for the sales spike. Hybrid and electric vehicles are deemed more energy efficient, produce few emissions and can reduce fuel costs. If you're looking to potentially make your commute more eco-friendly by purchasing a hybrid or electric vehicle, be sure to gather as much information as you can. This guide will explain the difference between the various "green" vehicles, the pluses and minuses of each and the types of vehicles available to you.

### **Hybrid electric vehicles**

Definition: Hybrid electric vehicles combine an electric motor and gasoline engine (hence the term, "hybrid"). The vehicle offers a "best of both worlds" solution because electric motors are three times as efficient as gasoline engines. Meanwhile, gas possesses more energy and runs less expensively than batteries. However, when a gas engine and electric motor work in tandem, hybrids can run on the latter when it is most efficient without wasting the gasoline engine's efficiency, and vice versa.

There are two types of hybrids—mild and full. Mild (also called micro) hybrids use a battery and electric motor to help power the car. The vehicle's engine can also turn off when the vehicle stops to allow for even better fuel economy. The mild hybrid cannot run on just electricity, however.

Full hybrids meanwhile have bigger batteries, more powerful electric motors and are gas-powered. This combination can power the vehicle for short distances and slow speeds. Full hybrid vehicles also have a rechargeable battery and are more fuel-efficient.

Pros: Hybrids use both gas and electricity, offering superior energy efficiency. Cons: The cost—hybrid technology makes the vehicles more expensive than conventional cars. Fuel

savings and state incentives could offset some of those costs, however. Check out the U.S. Department of Energy's "Can a Hybrid Save Me Money?" tool to do a side-by-side comparison between a hybrid and its conventional counterpart.

Examples: Toyota Corolla LE, Ford Fusion, Honda Accord and Toyota Highlander. Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) Definition: Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles also run on gasoline and batteries to power their electric motor. These vehicles can also be charged from a wall outlet, however. PHEVs typically use their electric-only range (10 to 50 miles) first, then switch to standard hybrid functionality and rely on gasoline for longer trips.

Pros: PHEVs are great for shorter trips. If your ride is within the vehicle's electric-only range, you won't have to use as much gas.

Cons: The "electric only" mileage range is limited. You'll have to recharge your PHEV often if you want to maximize the electric only option. Otherwise, gasoline is fueling most of your miles, which defeats the purpose of having a hybrid in the first place.

Examples: The Subaru Crosstrek Plug-In Hybrid and Toyota Prius Prime are traditional PHEVs. The BMW i3 and Chevrolet Volt meanwhile are "range extenders," meaning they are more like all-electric vehicles and have an onboard generator that works like an engine. This engine kicks in after the vehicle's rechargeable battery runs out in order to produce electricity.

All-electric vehicles Definition: All-electric vehicles rely solely on battery packs to store the electric energy needed to power the car's motor. The batteries are also charged with an electric power source—most drivers can use a 110-volt outlet to recharge their vehicle every few days (versus buying and installing a 240-volt charger).

Pros: All-electric vehicles are eco-

friendly—they cause less pollution and have lower emissions than conventional vehicles. They are also good for short trips, especially for drivers who travel less than 40 miles per day. That average daily mileage will keep drivers from having to recharge their vehicle as often.

Cons: These vehicles can cost thousands more than traditional vehicles. Much like hybrids however, federal and state incentives as well as lower fuel and maintenance costs can help lower the money paid upfront for the vehicle. The other downside is drivers with longer commutes may find themselves recharging their vehicle more often since it does not have the gasoline backup that hybrids do.

## Highlander Issues

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# Power Update

April  
2022

## Electrical Safety this Spring

The arrival of spring is just around the corner. When you return to working or playing outside, be aware of the electrical safety risks you may encounter.

Here are few quick spring electrical safety tips from Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S):

- Always keep power cords and electrical equipment away from water or other wet areas. Water and electricity don't mix, and can cause serious injury if not careful. It's important to check wiring that could have become exposed during the winter, especially when it's near a water source.
  - Look up and look out for power lines. Make sure you're aware of nearby power cords when working outside. As a general rule, keep your body and all tools and materials at least 15 feet from any overhead power lines at all times. Don't let kids play near power lines, especially with kites or drones.
  - Call before you dig. Perhaps this is the summer you're finally putting up the new fence around your yard or property. Calling 8-1-1 before you dig can save you from digging into underground utility lines.
- As trees bud, they can grow into power lines. Keep your trees trimmed to avoid contact with power lines. If you are unsure of how and when to remove tree limbs or if you need to report a tree limb in contact with a power line, call United Power at 303-637-1300.
  - Before every use, inspect power tools and electric lawn equipment for frayed power cords, broken plugs and weathered or damaged housings. Don't use damaged equipment until it has been repaired properly. Keep tools unplugged and stored in a dry area when not in use.

Spring is also a good time to have an electrical inspection done on your home. In the winter, homeowners are more likely to overload circuits. An overloaded circuit occurs when there are too many devices plugged into a particular circuit, exceeding its safety rating. When using space heaters, for example, nothing else should be plugged into the circuit because they alone draw the recommended safety rating.

Overloaded circuits can cause damage to wiring, especially in older homes with electrical systems that weren't designed to handle today's typical load, creating a potential fire hazard.



## Update Your Email with United Power

Update your email with United Power to receive important notifications electronically. Electronic notifications allow us to contact you more quickly with emergency updates, notice of scheduled outages and other important information that affects the cooperative and our members.

It's important to make sure the contact information on your account is up to date because that information is used when sending any communications.

You can check your contact information and make necessary updates using the free online payment portal, SmartHub. To set up an online account, go to [www.unitedpower.com/myaccount](http://www.unitedpower.com/myaccount).

You can also quickly update your email by filling out a short form on our website at [www.unitedpower.com/update-email](http://www.unitedpower.com/update-email).

## 2022 Annual Meeting & Director Election

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 | 4:30 p.m. Registration | 6:30 p.m. Meeting

### ATTENDING THE MEETING

The 2022 Annual Meeting will be held as a hybrid event members may attend either online or in person. All members are invited to attend and engage with cooperative leadership and connect with fellow members.

The in-person meeting will be held at Riverdale Regional Park on April 13 and the livestream will be posted on United Power's website. The virtual stream will begin at 6:30 p.m. on the website at [www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting](http://www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting).

### VOTING YOUR BALLOT

Three positions on United Power's board are up for election – one seat in the East, South, and West Districts. **This year, members may vote in the director election electronically through their online account or return ballots by mail.** Voting online is a fast, secure way to submit your ballots and avoid delays in mail handling. **Online balloting closes at noon on April 12, 2022. Mail ballots must also arrive at the P.O. Box by this time.**

Find more information at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).

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# Easter Eggstravaganza

Saturday April 9th, 12:00PM - 2:00PM

CCCIA Hall

31528 Hwy 72



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**133 Linn Lane**

Wonderful Log Home - .89 Acre  
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**33492 Coal Creek Canyon Drive**

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**32077 Sylvan Road**

Lovely Home on Sunny 1 Acre  
3 BD/ 2 BA 1,627 sq.ft. **\$475,000**



**SOLD!**

**126 Signal Rock**

Lovely Landscaping/Divide Views  
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**SOLD!**

**1.74 Acres**

**11965 Vonnie Claire**

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**NEW LISTING**

**Under Contract**

**31040 Hwy 72**

Sweet Mountain Cottage  
2 BD/ 1 BA 1,007 sq.ft. **\$425,000**



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**968 Divide View**

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