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About the Cover: Sierra & Denae

Photography by

Kristina Wienczkowski

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PUBLISHER, EDITOR, ADVERTISING SALES,
COPY EDITOR, PRODUCTION & DESIGN
Anita M. Wilks
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Buffalo Field Campaign
EarthTalk.org
Emily H. Freeman-Writers on the Range
Pat Ford - Writers on the Range - HCN
Jody Knauss-Center for Media & Democracy
Keith Penner-Writers on the Range - HCN
Daniel Person - HCN
Jim Plane - State Farm Insurance
Elizabeth Shogren - High Country News
Jonathan Thompson - HCN
Kathryn Wilder - Writers on the Range-HCN
Ted Williams - Writers on the Range - HCN
A.M. Wilks
Frosty Wooldridge
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS/ARTISTS
Kristina Wienczkowski- IShootHappy.com
Eco Flight
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A Woman & A Horse

Some say it was meant to be while others might say it was a situation created by necessity. Either way it turned out in the long run to be lifesaving for both and a beautiful pairing. Ill equipped to start a young horse and yet starving for the equine spirit for many years, I took on a two year old Appaloosa my cousin had to give up. It is fair to say we raised and broke each other. In the old Native American tradition at the side of an experienced local gelding (*thanks Tequila*), the filly was led onto the trails she would be expected to brave by me off of another horse.

I had ridden and been around horses all my life: both of my grandmothers had horses. Summers were spent riding creek beds, bluffs and the flint hills – without adult supervision many transferable skills were honed and tuned that would end up benefitting both horse and rider. The major life lesson was just to acknowledge the need for the equine spirit in my life. Having a horse that lives with you is a lifestyle choice. Years ago folks had horses as modes of transportation, beasts of burden, horsepower for cultivating fields and also companionship.

These days the closest most people get to the horse is at a rodeo, stock show or parade. They require a commitment more than having a dog or cat so fewer of them are kept for merely pleasure riding. The fortunate of us that decide to make that commitment and follow through with the best lives we can give them get it back in so much more than just companionship. The equine spirit is pure, gentle, real and awe inspiring. Granted they don't always know their own strength or capability to hurt us, but since we got the bigger brains it is our job to protect ourselves to the best of our abilities.

My experience at teaching a young filly to be ridden was fraught with mishaps, mistakes and miracles. The one saving grace was that we formed a bond and fairness along with consistency gave way to respect and true love. I learned hard lessons and patience. She learned who had to be boss with no exceptions and that life could be good with fun thrown in for good measure. Many thanks to Julia Clavette of Star Peak Stables for your help, encouragement, dressage lessons and lending out Tikki to pony a filly. I can look back now and realize I was growing up at the same time the filly was, with thirty years of difference in age. Both spirited by nature, we appreciated that character trait in each other and literally rode out the waves of inexperience and immaturity.

So many good times, a few frustrating and frightful but all in all we both survived into a rhythm with patterns that fed our souls down to the marrow of our bones. There is little in life to compare with a gentle walk down a perfect bridle path on your best equine friend: with the cottonwoods, aspens and pines bowing over you as if in reverence to the quietude of nature and our spirits

delighting in the harmony with each other. Listening to the trickle of water over the rocks in the creek with birds twittering on the branches or singing songs overhead.

Squeezing your legs to encourage a trot to canter while maneuvering through the forest so the wind whips tears from your eyes as you duck and sway to avoid low hanging branches and you feel the powerful muscles working under you as your horse runs up an overgrown and pine needle softened trail to come to a stop at an overlook that gives you a view of snowcapped mountain peaks is breathtaking in so many ways. Joy that you're alive, the magnificence of the animal and its power, the true beauty of the panoramic continental divide peaks, the wonder of nature and your place in it – all so beautiful to behold and be aware of its positive affects on your life.

I wasn't just lucky I was more than fortunate that my hard work and my horse's good nature worked together to give us both so many wonderful years of happy trails together. I feel hard pressed to try and repeat that great experience, as a golden bay gelding stands by, keeping the miniature horse company and awaiting my next attempts to help him see; with fairness and consistency - that my way is the only way.

By A.M. Wilks

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PZP - Where Science & Mustangs Meet

By Kathryn Wilder

The longtime mustang advocate, TJ Holmes, and I head into southwestern Colorado's Spring Creek Basin Herd Management Area, searching for mustangs. We do this regularly. TJ has documented these mustangs for eight years, working in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management. A big part of her work is administering PZP, the fertility-control vaccine (porcine zona pellucida), to the mares.

The air is heavy and smoke-filled from recent fires. Topping a rise, we see mustangs silhouetted against the hazy gray sky: three bands, each comprised of a stallion, his mares and grown offspring; and a group of young bachelor stallions. TJ recognizes each horse on sight and knows the roles each plays within the herd. I'm learning, and I see that something is missing - foals, the fillies and colts of springtime.

Spring Creek Basin has a BLM-allotted carrying capacity of 35 to 65 adult horses, and is at about 60 right now. Yet there could be 20 foals on the ground, and there are only two, one before us napping with his mama in the heat, the second far across the range. More could come this

year, but even with the expected three to five foals, this herd management area will not reach maximum capacity. That means no wild horses will be removed in 2016 or 2017, and no mustangs will head toward the overcrowded, short-term holding facility at East Cañon Correctional Complex near Cañon City.

The last BLM roundup in Spring Creek Basin took place in 2011, when 82 mustangs resided in this herd management area, including 13 surviving foals (eight had died). The agency removed 40 horses, and for the next four years, TJ darted mares with PZP. Trained by Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick, senior scientist at the Science and Conservation Center in Billings, Montana, TJ used PZP on 10 mares the first two years, which dropped foal numbers to eight in 2013, and seven in 2014. The BLM then permitted TJ to dart more than 20 mares, and what we see before us - just one colt nuzzling his dozing dam - is the result of her successful PZP program.

PZP does not harm mare, fetus or nursing foal in any way, though a mare might buck or jump from the sting of a dart in her rump. Mares are not vaccinated every year; a BLM selection process based on genetics, age and herd health indicates which horses get the dart. PZP, which is reversible, causes eggs to reject sperm, though mares continue to cycle normally, with no disruption to herd dynamics or psychology. Stop the darting, and the mare can conceive again.



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Still, some folks oppose PZP, seeing it as human meddling. But let's face it: We've already meddled - digging ponds in desert soils to catch water, erecting fences to prevent mustangs from accessing natural water sources used for generations, ending "free roaming." Solutions presented by the public are opposing and dramatic: Reinstate slaughter practices, or do nothing at all. Both are equally terminal ideas: death in the slaughterhouse, or death by starvation. Introducing PZP into a herd area is the wisest action BLM can take for horses, habitat and the American public. With fewer horses born, fewer roundups happen, more years pass before removal is necessary, and fewer horses are taken to holding facilities. All this saves taxpayer dollars, and for the horses, fewer are traumatized and die unnecessary deaths.

Taxpayers pay about \$49,000 for each mustang removed from the range and not adopted. PZP costs about \$27 per darted horse per year, and often the darters are volunteers like TJ, who works for mustangs, not wages. PZP has effectively slowed herd reproduction in Spring Creek Basin, as it has in Colorado's Little Book Cliffs and Sand Wash Basin, and in additional herd management areas across the West.

"The McCullough Peaks area in Wyoming reached zero-population growth in just three years," Dr. Kirkpatrick told me, adding that the potential taxpayer savings was \$7 million. "The Challis (Idaho) Herd Management Area is just getting started and estimates they have already saved more than \$350,000." **Why, then, is the BLM not using**

PZP in every herd management area? That is the question the public needs to ask the BLM.

Horses, reintroduced to the Americas in 1493, are here, just like the rest of us. They have reoccupied this land for 500 years. We don't have the wherewithal to control human

population, homelessness and hunger, but with a \$27 injection, we could make a huge difference in life on the range.

Kathryn Wilder is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). She has mustangs and cows and lives in Dolores and Disappointment Valley, Colorado.



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BLM's Inconsistent Against Rule Breakers

By Jonathan Thompson

One of the reasons Ammon and Ryan Bundy and their armed friends are holed up at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, deep in the frigid sage plains of Oregon, is to protest what they see as an unjust punishment of a father-son pair of local ranchers, Dwight and Steven Hammond.

In October, a judge ordered each of the Hammonds to finish a five year required minimum sentence for lighting fires on public land back in 2001 and 2006. Critics say that's far too harsh. And, indeed, it is a much greater punishment than the Bundys' father, Cliven, has so far received for grazing his cattle illegally and without paying fees on a Bureau of Land Management allotment for decades. In fact, Bundy has yet to be punished at all, either for that or for his role in inciting supporters to threaten federal agents at gunpoint back in May of 2014.

Former federal officials blame the Bureau of Land Management's inaction in the Bundy case for the debacle that's unfolding in Oregon today. "At the end of the day, most people have a common respect for the law, and with Mr. Bundy, he just believes differently, that he's above the law," Bob Abbey, former director of the BLM, told High Country News recently. "The fact that their trespass hasn't been dealt with in a timely matter reinforced beliefs."

HCN took a look at a handful of similar cases involving BLM land, and at the punishment for whatever transgressions might have occurred in order to see how consistent, or otherwise, the agency has been.

Tim DeChristopher -

The Crime: In an act of civil disobedience, the 27-year-old DeChristopher bid \$1.8 million in 2008 for Bureau of Land Management oil and gas leases, without intending to pay for them, in an effort to block the sale to drillers. He was charged with violations of the Federal On-Shore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act and of making false statements.

The Verdict: DeChristopher was found guilty on both felony counts.

The Sentence: He was given two years in jail and three years of probation and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine.

Phil Lyman and Monte Wells

The Crime: San Juan County, Utah, Commissioner Lyman organized and participated in an ATV ride on BLM land closed to motorized vehicles in Recapture Canyon in order to protest the "jurisdictional creep of the federal government." Lyman and Wells, a local blogger who publicized Lyman's calls for the protest and participated in the ride, were each charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States, and for violating federal regulations by riding past the closure.

The Verdict: Lyman and Wells were found guilty of both federal misdemeanor counts.

The Punishment: Lyman was sentenced to 10 days in jail and three years of probation and fined \$1,000. Wells got 5 days in jail and three months of probation along with a \$500 fine. The two must together pay a total of \$96,000 in restitution for damage done to resources during the ride. Ironically, the damage occurred on a portion of trail on which Lyman didn't even ride. It was Ryan Bundy, in fact, who led a renegade group of protesters onto the more sensitive area, against Lyman's wishes.

Carrie and Mary Dann

The Crime: Beginning in 1973, the two Western Shoshone elders grazed their cattle on federal land, refusing to pay grazing fees because they said the land was never legally ceded to the feds. In 1974, the BLM charged them with unauthorized livestock grazing and for making improvements on public land.

The Verdict: The Dann case wended its way through the courts throughout the 1970s and '80s, and focused on whether the federal government had properly paid the tribes for the land in question. The Supreme Court ultimately decided that there had been a legal transfer of



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land to the feds. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, on the other hand, ruled in favor of the Danns. Still, in 1998, an administrative judge shot down the Danns' appeal.

The Punishment: In 1992, the BLM rounded up 250 of the Danns' horses, and, after a standoff, arrested their brother, Clifford, after he tried to set himself on fire. In 1998, the BLM ordered the Danns to pay \$354,916; the Danns themselves said that overdue grazing fees added up to far more than that. After they refused to pay, the BLM rounded up more than 500 head of the Danns' cattle and horses and auctioned them off.

Steven Dwight Hammond and Dwight Lincoln Hammond, Jr.

The Crime: The two were charged and indicted by a grand jury on nine counts, including conspiracy, arson, creating risk of injury and tampering with a witness in connection with four different fires they allegedly set on public lands near their Harney County, Oregon, ranch in 2001 and 2006.

The Verdict: Each was found guilty of one count of using fire to damage property of the United States, related to the 2001 fire, and Steven Hammond was also found guilty of the same charge relating to one of the 2006 fires. The government dismissed two of the counts as part of a deal with the defendants, and the two were found not guilty on all other charges.

The Punishment: They were originally sentenced to three months (Dwight) and 12 months (Steven) and, in a separate deal, fined \$400,000. But the jail sentences were far less than the minimum required by the statute under which they were prosecuted. So federal attorneys appealed the sentencing. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals sent them back for re-sentencing last October, where each got five year sentences (with credit for time served). They reported to federal prison Jan. 4, 2016.

Cliven Bundy

The Crime: The southern Nevada rancher has defiantly refused to pay federal grazing fees since at least 1993, and continued to put his cattle on land that had been

permanently closed to grazing. In 2014, the situation came to a head when heavily armed, self-described patriots converged on the Bundy Ranch to fend off BLM officers who had come to confiscate Bundy's cattle.

The Verdict: First the BLM and then no fewer than three federal judges found that Bundy was trespassing and ordered him to remove his cows. They also determined that he owes anywhere from \$300,000 to \$1 million in back grazing fees.

The Punishment: After Bundy's continual refusal to remove his cows or pay the money owed, BLM contractors showed up to confiscate his cattle, as they had done with the Danns. But a heavily armed group of supporters converged on the ranch, threatening the federal officers at gunpoint. The BLM backed down, returned the cattle and left. Bundy — and those "defending" him — have yet to be prosecuted. The cattle yet roam free.

Jonathan Thompson is a senior editor of High Country News.

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Contest To Create Electrical Safety Posters

United Power Looking for Kids to Create Electrical Safety Posters

United Power is enlisting the **help of local children** to create electrical safety posters that will be displayed for National Electrical Safety Month in May. **Kids in grades kindergarten through fifth** are invited to submit their creative ideas that incorporate electrical safety concepts or safety tips to illustrate for the community the importance of electrical safety. Posters will be used in May to commemorate **National Electrical Safety Month**—an annual, nationwide campaign to raise awareness about electrical hazards. **Six winning designs will be selected, one from each grade.** Winning posters will be displayed throughout the United Power service territory—in print, online and on select bus benches. The winner from each grade will also be awarded a \$50 cash prize.

The deadline for Electrical Safety Poster Contest entries is Friday, March 18, 2016. Posters must be submitted on the official coloring contest entry form, which is available at any United Power office, online at www.unitedpower.com and will be included in the February United Newslines, United Power's monthly

newsletter mailed directly to members. United Power employees will judge posters based on creativity and illustration of a key electrical safety concept.

Winners will be announced on Monday, March 28, 2016.

Contest Details

- **Child must be a dependent of a United Power member.**
- **Winners will receive \$50 cash awards.**
- **Six winners will be chosen. One from each grade K-5.**
- **Winning posters will appear online, in print and on bus benches for the month May.**
- **Entries must be submitted on the official contest entry form.**
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Electrical Safety Tips

- **Stay away from powerlines & electrical equipment.**
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Electrical Safety Poster Contest details and entry form:

<http://www.unitedpower.com/coloring-contest/>

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The Other NRA - Lower Wages Cost Taxpayers

By Jody Knauss - Center for Media and Democracy

Recently, a cook for a contractor serving the U.S. Senate went on strike to draw attention to the struggle of low-wage restaurant workers to lift themselves out of poverty. Bertrand Olotara, a single father, has to work two jobs, 70 hours a week, and still has trouble paying his monthly bills and relies on foodstamps.

Olotara serves some of the most powerful people in the country, and a number of Presidential hopefuls and warns in an op-ed for *The Guardian*: "American voters should ask themselves: if presidential candidates won't help the workers who serve them every day, will they really help the millions of low-wage American workers who they don't know or see?"

Olotara's surprising story highlights the fact that McDonald's and other fast food chains aren't the only restaurant companies whose low-paid workers need food stamps and Medicaid to get by. According to a new report *The Public Cost of Low Wages in the Full-Service Restaurant Industry* from the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC), the giant corporations operating or franchising full-service restaurants also cost taxpayers billions in public assistance for workers who are not paid enough to make ends meet.

The biggest offenders: DineEquity, which owns the IHOP and Applebee's franchises, and Darden Restaurants, owner and operator of Olive Garden and six smaller chains. A single Olive Garden restaurant cost taxpayers almost

\$200,000 a year in public assistance subsidies to the workers who staff it, the report estimates.

Meanwhile, former Darden CEO Clarence Otis pulled in a cool \$7 million in salary and other compensation in fiscal year 2014 (before he was forcibly retired). DineEquity CEO Julia Stewart made \$6.6 million in 2014, a staggering sum but barely a quarter of the mind-boggling \$24 million she raked in in 2012.

The Other NRA - Working with these giant corporations to keep profits and executive salaries up by keeping wages for frontline restaurant workers down, is the National Restaurant Association, "the other NRA," a lobbying powerhouse that has successfully **kept the federal minimum wage for tipped workers at \$2.13 an hour** since 1991 and continues to oppose paid sick leave laws and the Affordable Care Act.

Full-service restaurant servers use public assistance at three times the rate of the rest of the workforce, says ROC founder Saru Jayaraman. With tips covering the vast majority of wages paid, and so many workers having to rely on public assistance to get by, **restaurant corporations have succeeded in dumping a good portion of their labor costs onto customers and taxpayers.**

Hoping to keep things that way, NRA lobbyists and restaurateurs flown in by the group from around the country took to Capitol Hill last April 15 for the industry's annual "grassroots" lobbying effort. They were there to pressure Congress to leave both (Continued next page.)

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Highlander Issues

regular and tipped-worker minimum wages untouched, head off momentum for federal paid sick days legislation, and curtail the ability of the National Labor Relations Board to enforce existing labor law.

On their way to The Hill, they were met by a spirited protest (youtube) from a number of organizations fighting for fair wages, including ROC, Jobs With Justice, Corporate Accountability International, and Food Chain Workers Alliance. Restaurant workers and advocates later testified at the Progressive Caucus forum: A Good Jobs Strategy For The Low Wage Economy (youtube).

Low Wages Cost Taxpayers \$9.4 Billion

More than four million people work in full-service restaurants in the U.S., more than in fast food. Nearly half are enrolled in at least one public-assistance program. More than one full-service restaurant worker in five lives in poverty. According to the ROC report, public assistance to families of workers in the full-service restaurant industry costs taxpayers \$9.4 billion a year. DineEquity, owner and franchisor of the IHOP and Applebee's brands, was estimated to benefit from \$450 million in taxpayer subsidies to the low-paid workers of its franchisees. Darden, which directly employs workers in its restaurants, benefitted to the tune of \$340 million. In 2013, Darden admitted that a full 20% of its 150,000 strong workforce was paid just \$2.13 an hour.

For just the top five full-service restaurant companies, low worker wages and benefits cost U.S. taxpayers an estimated \$1.4 billion a year. Yet these five — DineEquity, Darden Restaurants, Bloomin' Brands (Outback Steakhouse and three smaller chains), Brinker

contributions since 2011, according to the report. Darden is particularly aggressive on the lobbying front, spending \$6.8 million on federal lobbying alone just since 2011.

The NRA is of course a lobbying colossus with a \$70 million annual budget, 45 lobbyists and 200 staffers.

Low-wage Restaurant Jobs Weaken Local Economies

Low-wage restaurant jobs not only cost taxpayers money. They do nothing to boost local economies. In Oregon and six other states, the minimum wage for tipped restaurant workers is the same as it is for other workers. As Portland restaurateur Ron Toms points out, this means his staff makes enough to actually eat out sometimes, helping support the local restaurant economy.

Toms, a member of the Main Street Alliance of Oregon, a statewide network of local, independent small business owners, says, "When workers don't earn enough to pay for the basics — to pay rent, to pay for child care, and yes, to go out for dinner once in a while — that's bad for the whole economy."

"If jobs pay so little that people can work a full eight-hour shift and still walk away without enough money to buy a dinner out, those jobs are not going to bring more customers into my business," he adds.

California is another state with no separate, lower minimum wage for tipped workers, and home to some of the highest minimum wages in the country. Yet the NRA's own data shows that restaurant jobs grew faster in California in 2014 than anywhere else in the nation. NRA chief economist Bruce Grindy reports California's restaurant workforce has grown by more than 11% over just the last two years.

Toms and other restaurateurs are supporting ROC's *One Fair Wage* campaign, to get rid of the separate tipped worker minimum wage. Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, another state with a thriving restaurant industry and no lower minimum wage for tipped workers, is expected to introduce legislation shortly.

As Toms notes, "We're not going to turn the national tide for economy-boosting jobs one business at a time. **We need public policies that speed the creation of economy-boosting jobs across the economy, including a shared minimum wage that applies to both tipped and non-tipped workers.**" *Reprinted with permission from the publisher of Center for Media and Democracy -*

PRWatch.org, ALECexposed.org, SourceWatch.org, You may donate to the cause at their website! Learn more about the "Other NRA's" long fight to keep wages low at Sourcewatch.org. CMD salutes Kathleen Kingsbury of the Boston Globe who won a 2015 Pulitzer this week for her coverage of restaurant workers fighting for a fair wage. Pulitzer judges lauded her for exposing "the real price of inexpensive menu items and the human costs of income inequality."



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Buffalo Field Update ~ buffalofieldcampaign.org

Choices Based on Lies Are Not Choices

Based on what we witness in the field everyday, the killing taking place near Gardiner could more accurately be described as a slaughter than a hunt. The tribal game wardens we have spoken with agree, and they recognize that Montana's livestock interests have organized the circumstances to shift blame away from themselves to the tribes. There is obviously something terribly wrong when every last buffalo to migrate through Beattie Gulch ends up dead, or when hunters feel so desperate to kill every buffalo they see.

Whether or not tribal hunters view their hunts as supporting the larger management scheme, the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) government agencies and affiliated tribal entities certainly do. There is no moral or scientific justification to the idea, perpetuated by the management agencies, of "surplus buffalo" and safeguards allowing buffalo safe passage between Yellowstone and Montana are sorely needed. We have never and will never stand against treaty rights, but we maintain a steadfast opposition to the current management that uses hunting as a means to eradicate the buffalo. As currently practiced, the hunt is an extermination plan set up by livestock interests to ensure that buffalo never reclaim the lands that are their ancestral home and birthright. It is fundamentally wrong and immoral for hunters to be led to believe that if they don't kill the buffalo in this way, that they will just be slaughtered anyway.

So long as buffalo die, the livestock industry and the governments don't care who does the killing or how. Contrast this to the tens of thousands of elk in the region who have been implicated in the transmission of brucellosis, and yet no one is claiming that there are "surplus" elk and no one is targeting them for transmitting disease to cattle. The welfare ranchers don't want to lose their foothold on control of the grass, so the buffalo, whom they view as competitors, must die. Hunters are in fact serving livestock interests no matter an individual hunter's intentions.

The buffalo death toll is quickly rising. More than fifty of the country's last wild buffalo have been killed by hunters since this January. Mid-week, over five-hundred buffalo migrated into Montana, nearly all at once, through Beattie Gulch at Yellowstone's north boundary. Being in the midst of this ancient phenomenon is at once one of the most beautiful and most heartbreaking experiences. The

migration of hundreds of buffalo is such a beautiful sight, a flow that has purpose and integrity, so simple in its power, timeless and perfect, seemingly unstoppable; but this ancient march is also heartbreaking because it leads so many buffalo straight to their deaths. As we expected, word of this migration spread quickly, and hunters arrived en



masse that night, the following day, and through the weekend. We expected a massacre, but through the course of days, the majority of the buffalo threatened to cross various lines, edging towards areas where they could be hunted, only to retreat in the nick of time. Frustrated hunters were driving all over the Basin, even through the Park, following us, glaring at us, wanting to blame us, looking for buffalo that they could kill, but finding few. Those few were gunned down rapidly at the Park boundary, in acts of haste and desperation. Many have been shot and wounded, fleeing into Yellowstone where hunters cannot pursue them, left to die slowly or walk forever with bullets in their flesh. By Sunday, frustrated and determined to get their buffalo meat, hunters in pick-ups and on foot crowded around the park boundary, watching a family group of about thirty buffalo slowly make their way towards Beattie Gulch. The firefight that ensued that morning ended life for twenty-eight of those buffalo; the eight survivors, two of them shot and wounded, fled up the mountain and away with their lives. Make no mistake: BFC fully supports treaty rights and tribal sovereignty, yet our first priority is to the buffalo. What is taking place here is an extermination plan, and hunters are being used. We have to work in solidarity to demonstrate this, to end livestock control, and to get the buffalo — through migration — back on the landscape, in great numbers so that the proper, respectful relationships can be

(Continued next page.)

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Highlander Wildlife

restored, with a viable gene pool.

Buffalo will take care of the people, but the people need to take care of them first. They need our help. This whole Plan — which treaty hunting is certainly a part of from the government's viewpoint, and all the discussions and decisions that happen within the IBMP — is in place to harm the buffalo and to keep them from restoring themselves across the landscape. We need to put our collective energy into fighting the IBMP and the law that places the Montana Dept. of Livestock in charge of buffalo in Montana. We must acknowledge that wild buffalo are ecologically extinct, and the IBMP is using hunting as well as slaughter and hazing to facilitate their destruction, to prevent their restoration.

The same can be said of quarantine, which is a management tool for livestock, not wildlife. Again, livestock interests present "choices": dead buffalo or buffalo behind fences. Yellowstone National Park is aiming to develop a fifty-year plan for operational quarantine, making the process of domesticating wild, migratory buffalo an entrenched aspect of bison management. To be free or caged in is not an option in the wild world, it is a human option. Quarantine is something to satisfy the human; an easy way out, a toxic mimic of true wildlife restoration. It is a means to control what should be free.

Quarantine is also part of the brucellosis lie, the premise being that bison pose a brucellosis threat, which we know to be untrue. Should elk be quarantined also? Elk have brucellosis but roam free. The quarantine process begins with buffalo families being torn apart, adults shipped to slaughter, calves orphaned and raised in domestication. Then, those who survive the human-handling and testing of the quarantine process will live behind fences for the rest of their lives. We have seen the buffalo who suffered "living" in quarantine; they were not happy, they looked to get out of those pens. They were humiliated and afraid. Many of them have died horrible deaths because they could not escape their enclosures. Quarantine is part of the culture of death, this "civilized" system that systematically destroys life on the planet. Quarantine asks us to accept an "easy fix" that will give the human ego gratification.

Migration is free and alive; it is having the ability to make choices, being self-willed. Buffalo behind fences to be food for humans is a view that reduces them to meat.



They have strong relationships with more than humans. The compromise should be in standing aside and respecting how a creature places one foot in front of the other — and we fight those things that get in the way of that.

Quarantine removes the buffalo from their natural community, from life and their gift to life. Who is asking the buffalo's perspective, asking them what they want? The buffalo will tell you that migration is the key to restoration.

They know the way.

So many feel stuck in the "choices" that the government and industry have put before us. People believe that they are doing the buffalo a "favor" by hunting them, or by supporting quarantine, because by supporting quarantine, they would otherwise they would be captured and shipped to slaughter. They are shipped to slaughter anyway. Having to pick hunt, quarantine, or slaughter is being forced to make artificial and unnecessary choices. So long as this Plan is in place, so long as Montana is in control, so long as wild buffalo numbers are driven down to serve livestock industry politics, and so long as wild buffalo are prevented from restoring themselves on the landscape, the problems will persist. We must fight this Plan and livestock control in all its guises. We must demand an end to livestock control, demand that wild buffalo walk the earth, demand an end to this management scheme.

One industry's intolerance is driving a national treasure towards the brink of extinction. **We must put an end to livestock industry control over wild buffalo, and to do so we must repeal the law — MCA 81-2-120 — that places them in charge.** As evidenced by his decision to grant year-round habitat on Horse Butte, Montana Governor Steve Bullock is listening, but the livestock industry is trying to undermine his citizen-supported decision. He must hear from us all, frequently. Please contact Governor Bullock today, even if you have already, thank him for granting year-round habitat on Horse Butte and **urge him to help repeal MCA 81-2-120.** With endless pressure, endlessly applied, we can end livestock industry control and gain more of the buffalo's Montana home for them to roam. Thank you so very much for being with us for wild buffalo! Wild is the Way ~ Roam Free!~Stephany

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A Place Where Bears Own The Right Of Way

By Keith Penner/Writers on the Range

A few months ago, I found myself in a remote area of Alaska, watching pink and chum salmon splash through the shallows of an unnamed stream.

The sounds of the salmon, the breeze coming off the ocean, the breakers on the beach, and the continuous calls of gulls made for an Alaskan symphony. A bush plane wasn't due to pick us up for four more days, and we were settling in to the rhythm of the Alaskan coastal bush.

I walked to the top of a narrow sandy ridge behind the stream to survey my surroundings. Ahead of me, the ocean rolled onto the shore and islands were just visible through the mist, miles off in the distance. Behind me lay the stream, then a stretch of alders and then, on the horizon, peaks holding last winter's snows.

As I stood there, taking in all this scenery, I caught movement to my left. Turning, I saw a female brown bear about 60 yards away, walking the ridge-top in a direct line to where I stood. A cub followed her closely. She moved with a determined stride, and her cub had to trot to keep up. She was looking right at me, and I assumed she would veer from her path and go around the obstacle that I presented.

At 50 yards, though, neither her pace, direction or stare had changed. When the mother bear had closed the gap between us to 40 yards, a quick inventory of my possessions revealed nothing but a camera and a Leatherman.

Still counting on Plan A, that the bears would yield, I held tight. I could now see clearly the mother bear's dinner-plate sized front paws: 10 long claws, flipping forward in slow motion that settled deep into the sand, moving closer to me with each step in that swinging, pigeon-toed gait of the great bears. When she was about 30 yards away, I decided that if she came 10 steps closer, I would execute Plan B, which was to take 10 calm steps and then slide discreetly down the side of the ridge. That was the entirety of my Plan B.

Ten of her steps later, I executed Plan B, sliding down the sandy ridge. I stopped and turned just in time to see the bears walking right over where I had just been standing. They continued their unhurried way to the stream. The mother bear didn't even look down at me as she passed, maybe judging me inconsequential, the clear loser of this ridge-top standoff. Her cub slowed, gave me a quick glance, and then trotted to catch up to mom. I began to breathe again.

I remember seeing a Curt Gowdy hunting documentary back in my youth. A guide and hunter crept over a ridge, somewhere in the wilds of Alaska, to look for caribou in the valley below. It was a damp, heavy, quiet day, and mist obscured the far side of the valley. As they glassed the valley, they saw no caribou, but spotted two brown bears, foraging in the bush. To my youthful imagination, it seemed as if time had gone back a thousand years, and the entirety of the world consisted of only this immense clouded Pleistocene valley, the two bears and the two men.

They watched the bears for a while, then the guide whispered, "This is the bears' valley; it is their wild place, we will leave them alone." And with that, they backed down from the ridge, and the bears never saw them.

It was difficult for me, a Midwestern kid, to imagine a

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place so wild, immense and so pristine that it could hold the great brown bear. How I yearned to someday experience such a place for myself.

Looking back, that is how I felt about the bears on the ridge that day. It was their wild place, not mine, and of course I had to back down. They could travel a hundred miles without seeing a human being. Their land was still the way it existed before humans crossed the land bridge from Asia, not far from where we stood that day.

I came away from the ridge that morning knowing I had seen the wild place I had imagined years ago. And as the bears walked by me, I captured that moment with close-up photographs of a mother and cub brown bear, silhouetted against the sky.

Keith Penner is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). He writes in Green River, Wyoming.



(Highlander File Photo of a Brown bear with cubs courtesy of USFS.)

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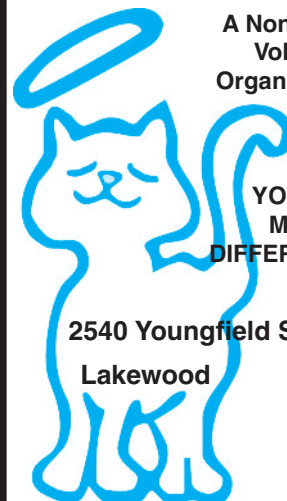


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(Some Stock Show Photos)

Previous Page:

*Left: Alpaca in petting zoo,
below - baby goats.*

*Right: Cover Girl, Denae
with Blackjack.*

*This page: Top - Belgian horse.
Right: Competition Goat.*

Bottom Left: Sheep try to sleep.

Right: Pony grabs a snack.

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Coal Lease Moratorium

By Elizabeth Shogren

The Interior Department announced recently an immediate moratorium on new federal coal leases, as it undertakes a multi-year review of a program that provides about 40% of the coal used for electricity nationwide. The announcement came just days after President Barack Obama said in his State of the Union address that he was going to push to change the way the country manages its oil and coal “so that they better reflect the costs they impose on taxpayers and our planet.”

Until now, the Obama administration largely managed federal coal as if climate change did not exist. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell conceded as much in a conference call with reporters Friday, saying the program “was really about getting as much coal out of the ground as possible” and had been that way for 30 years. Now she and White House officials say the program should be updated to reflect the impact that coal-burning has on the climate and to ensure that taxpayers and local communities near the mines get a fair share from that public coal.

This announcement comes after the countries of the world agreed in Paris in December to work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Coal is the dirtiest source of electricity in terms of greenhouse gases and other air pollution. Jewell in March put the industry on notice, saying she was considering updating the federal coal program with climate change in mind. She held five listening sessions this summer, including one in Washington, DC and another in Gillette, Wyoming.

Coal industry representatives say the administration was ignoring them if it concluded that the right thing to do was to make it even more costly and cumbersome to mine federal coal. “It is stunning that the administration believes a process that already pushes the development of coal projects beyond a decade needs more red tape and delays,” says Hal Quinn, the president and CEO the National Mining Association.

“This is yet another salvo in the president’s efforts to kill the coal industry. He and his allies in the extreme environmental movement know full well that this measure will make federal coal uneconomical to mine, thereby locking up America’s most abundant and reliable source of electricity generation,” Wyoming Mining Association Executive Director Jonathan Downing says.

Jewell and others in the administration said that companies already have access to plenty of coal through leases they already hold and predicted that the moratorium should have no impact on production. Exceptions will be made, for instance, if mines are close to running out of coal. Independent experts confirmed that there is enough coal already leased to keep operations busy for at least 10 years in Wyoming, where the vast majority of federal coal is mined. “The real issue here is that no coal company is

really in a position to buy more leases right now, given the market,” says Robert Godby, an economist at the University of Wyoming. On the other hand, the outcome of the review could be very consequential to the coal industry, in a process Jewell says would take three years. Among other issues, the review will consider whether royalty rates should be changed. Concerns about taxpayers not getting enough return on federal coal were raised in reports in recent years by the Government Accountability Office and the Interior Department’s Inspector General.



Aerial view of Black Thunder Coal Mine in Wyoming. One of the biggest producers of federal coal. EcoFlight

Environmentalists and former administration officials argue it should be raised to reflect the cost to society of burning coal. Local citizens near the mines argued against raising royalties for fear of losing jobs. Some from the mining industry say the royalties already are above market rates and increases could drive them out of business and threaten the reliable supply of coal. The review also will consider the agency’s practice of discounting royalties in response to companies’ requests.

Another issue to be addressed by the review is whether the companies pay too little for coal leases because there is only one bidder for about 90% of lease sales. With only a year to go in the Obama administration, the next president and his or her appointees will have sway over the outcome. Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton has suggested that she would put new fees on coal and help retrain coal workers. Republicans generally support the coal rules as they are and accuse Obama of conducting a war against the industry with air pollution regulations and the Clean Power Plan.

Environmentalists, who increasingly have put pressure on the administration to fight climate change by stopping the extraction of fossil fuels, exalted in the news of the moratorium and the review. “It’s time to keep our publicly owned coal in the ground and stop letting coal companies

profit off the destruction of our planet,” said Jeremy Nichols of WildEarth Guardians, who has repeatedly sued the federal government over its coal leasing program.

These actions were not unprecedented. Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan launched moratoria on coal leasing when they reviewed the federal coal program in the 1960s and 1980s. The leasing moratorium and uncertainty sparked by the review further vex a beleaguered industry. Two of the biggest U.S. coal companies, both big players in federal coal, have filed for bankruptcy protection in

recent months, swamped in debt from bad investments and hampered by the low price of natural gas and by state and federal air pollution regulations. So, despite their protests, Godby says, “The cost impacts of this decision will not really be felt for years, and coal has all the trouble it can handle with market conditions right now.”

Elizabeth Shogren is HCN’s DC Correspondent. Follow @shogrene

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Folly - Take Back West

By Ted Williams

Do 700 million acres of national parks, national monuments, national forests, national wildlife refuges and Bureau of Land Management units belong to you and your fellow Americans? No, according to the increasingly popular notion in the West that it's time for states to 'take back' federal land.

'Taking back' property of Alaskans and Floridians and everyone between is even a plank in the GOP platform. A resolution, entitled "In Support of Western States Taking Back Public Lands" reads: "The Republican National Committee calls upon all national and state leaders and representatives to exert their utmost power and influence to urge the imminent transfer of public lands to all willing Western states."

Taking back something that never belonged to you presents multiple problems, not the least of which is semantics. But this has never discouraged proponents whose first order of business is to ignore constitutional law. Here's a fact they don't want you to know: As a condition for entering the union, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and Nevada disclaimed all legal right and title to unappropriated public lands.

Nevertheless, in 2015 state lawmakers in the West introduced 37 grossly unconstitutional bills promoting seizure of lands belonging to all Americans. Utah's Legislature has gone so far as to appropriate \$2 million supposedly to oversee the land grab. And a commission of Utah legislators has voted to spend \$14 million suing the federal government for control of public lands.

The bills and litigation can't possibly succeed, but that's not their intent. They're designed as messages to the U.S. Congress. That's where the danger lies.

The messages are getting through. Last February Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., introduced the 'Federal Land Freedom Act of 2015,' which would transfer to the states management of energy production on millions of U.S. acres.

In March the House and Senate passed a joint nonbinding resolution to help states seize and sell America's public lands. The same month Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., introduced a bill that would authorize his state to sell your land.

Presidential candidate Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, introduced legislation in 2014 that would have prohibited the federal government from owning more than half the land within one state.

On the stump in Nevada last June, presidential candidate Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., drew thunderous applause when he declared: "I'd either sell or turn over all the land

management to the states.”

Leading the ovation, and granted a private audience by Paul, was take-back-the-West folk hero Cliven Bundy, who has intentionally trespassed his cattle on BLM range for more than two decades, amassing \$1 million in unpaid grazing fees (almost four times more than the 16,000 other BLM grazing leasers combined). In March 2014, when BLM agents finally mustered the resolve to impound Bundy’s cattle, he summoned a 300-man ‘militia’ that ran them off at gunpoint. They then returned the cattle. Neither Bundy nor his militia has been prosecuted.

The Department of Homeland Security had it right when it warned that Bundy’s ‘perceived success likely will embolden other militia extremists.’ Jerad and Amanda Miller attended Bundy’s felonious standoff and spewed support for his cause on Facebook and YouTube (getting ‘likes’ from the National Rifle Association, Rand Paul and Ron Paul). Three months later the couple shot to death two cops and a civilian in Las Vegas. Then, on Jan. 2, 2016, an armed militia, led by Bundy’s sons Ammon, Ryan and Mel, broke into and occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Building in Oregon, vowing to kill anyone who

jailed two arsonists convicted of purposely setting fire to BLM land where they’d poached deer.

Anyone who wonders what Western states would do with U.S. land should consider what they’ve already done with it. In exchange for relinquishing all claims on public property new states were awarded ‘trust lands.’ Trust lands have generally been used to create revenue via oil and gas extraction, logging, mining and outright sale.

For example, of Nevada’s original 2.7 million acres of trust

land only 3,000 acres remain. In Colorado you can fish and camp on virtually all federal land and hunt on most. But you can’t hunt, fish or camp on most state land because it’s reserved for extractive industry.

The attempted heist of your land in the West is about one thing only — private profiteering. If it succeeds, it will mean no-trespassing signs and death to much of your fish and wildlife.

Ted Williams is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). He serves as Conservation Editor for Fly Rod & Reel magazine. (Photo here of Malheur Nat’l Wildlife Refuge from USFW.)



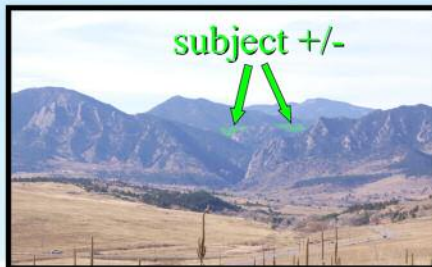
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Searching For The Good Fight - Nez Perce War

By Daniel Person - HCN

William T. Vollmann's striking new novel, *The Dying Grass*, chronicles the shameful events of the Nez Perce War of 1877, when the United States Army tried to prevent several bands of Native Americans from fleeing to Canada after miners and settlers encroached on tribal lands in the Northwest, in blatant violation of an earlier treaty.

Much of the tale — and it's a long one, north of 1,200 pages — is told from the perspective of Gen. Oliver Otis Howard, who led the campaign.

Howard personifies a troublesome wrinkle in American history: the near-simultaneous fights to emancipate slaves and obliterate Native Americans. Unlike many of his fellow bluecoats, Howard was fiercely opposed to slavery; in fact, he founded Howard University, a black college, in Washington, D.C., in 1867.

Vollmann uses Howard's memoirs to create internal dialogues that show him wrestling with the injustice of American Indian policy. Howard was acutely aware of the fact that settlers were willfully encroaching on treaty land in the Wallowa Valley. He sees his government as terrorizing the Nez Perce people: "He feels for them, of course. He disapproves not only of our national Indian policy, but also of Wallowa's heedless seizures."

Yet he still leads the campaign against the Nez Perce and several other Indian tribes. Why? Howard himself struggles with the question: He's a soldier; he needs the money; he's proud to serve his country. When all else fails, he reasons that "Washington has given instructions, and there must be an end."

Howard is a tragic figure whose self-deception becomes painfully obvious as the long march carries on. In him, Vollmann finds a clear historical allegory for America at large — a nation keenly aware of its principles even as it fails to live up to them.

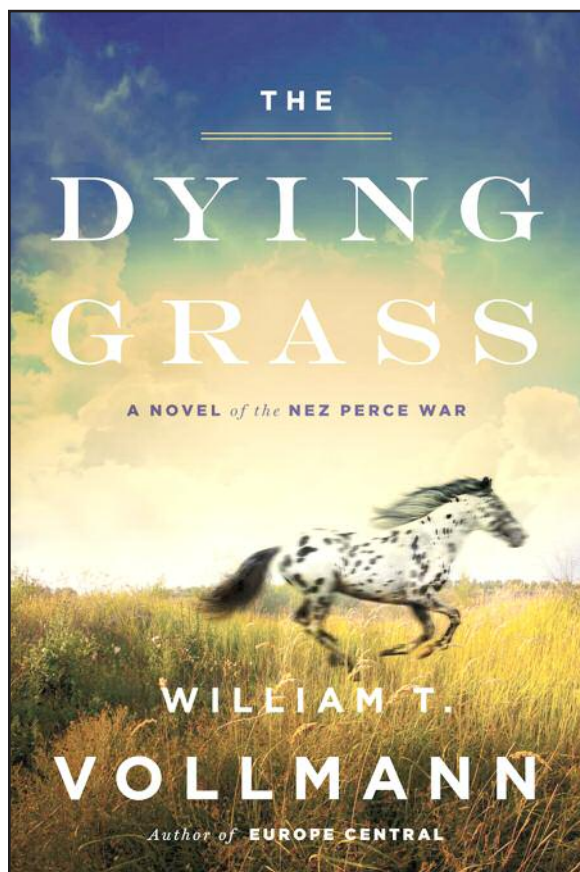
Vollmann is notorious for writing at too great a length, but something must be said for the book's word-to-word beauty. He has a tendency to fall into near-verse when describing a scene.

Early in the novel, he flashes forward to his own visit to Chief Joseph's grave on the Colville Indian Reservation near Nesplelem, Washington, where the surviving members of Joseph's

band were eventually placed, years after their surrender. Standing in the cemetery, Vollman forms something like a High Plains haiku from a simple inscription on another gravestone: *My precious little girl Haylee Roxanne June 5 2004 Oct 6 2004*

"— my heart is good; my heart is grass; graves in the gravel and golden grass."

The Dying Grass by William T. Vollmann
1,213 pages, hardcover: \$55. Viking Press, 2015.



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Sound Tracks Of The Wild

By Pat Ford

In a small corner of popular music, there are songs that have been written and sung in the haunting voices of animals, and the Canadian singer-songwriters Gordon Lightfoot and Ian Tyson have written what I think are the best of them. In Lightfoot's *Whispers of the North*, a loon speaks: **whispers of the north**

**soon I will go forth
to that wild and barren land
where nature takes its course**

The song starts with a loon's recorded call. Guitars enter on its fading pulse, and then the words, almost spoken, in short phrases that resemble wingbeats. Somehow he and his band evoke high flight, its detachment and its exultation.

Ian Tyson, though 82 and much bent - and now recovering from heart surgery a month ago - keeps on writing, singing and playing out of Longview, Alberta. His recordings are wonderful, but even as his voice and finger powers ebb, his peak comes in performance. His shows with band mates Gordon Maxwell and Lee Worden weave history, ballad, lament, hymn, rap, dance and tale, in rhythm and rhyme at a crossroads where 250 years of North American West meet the moment of music by an old man deep-rooted in both.

In Tyson's songs, all manner of animals swoop, scavenge, swim, scream, hunt, howl, die, mate and migrate. He loves the wayward - young hawks, magpies, crows, coyotes - and the wanderers - horses, wolves, salmon, geese. You know how a song first heard when young can echo down your life? One for me, from his fifth record, made with his then-wife Sylvia, is called *Wild Geese*:

**down by the stream
fresh otter tracks in the snow
now that the wind
says you ain't
coming back
anymore**

When I hear it - guitars and autoharp in measured pace with the singers' heart-catching voices - I am back in New York City where I heard it the very first time, or later by a Yellowstone stream, where watching two otters brought it back to me. And I feel a compass needle quivering and then settling straight to what I am and what has come to matter. Tyson has recorded three songs in animal voice. In *This is My Sky*, as an old man walks from his house to his work cabin, young hawks scream down at the intruder, leaving no doubt about whose territory it is:

**this is my sky
this is my sky
this is my sky—yi**

La Primera is a six-minute tale told by Spanish mustangs of their centuries in the American West: Cortez, who brought them to the continent; the Comanches, who made the animals their own; the cowboys, trailing cattle from Texas to Saskatchewan; and finally, the bands of horses growing up wild again in Montana's Pryor Mountains, running free into the new millennium. The horse sings:

**I am a drinker of the wind
I am the one who never tires
I love my freedom more than all these things -
The conquistador, Comanche and the cowboy
I carried them to glory
La Primera
Spanish mustang
hear my story**

Yellowhead to Yellowstone, written with Stewart McDougall, is in the voice of a wolf brought while a pup from Canada to Yellowstone in 1995, as part of wolf reintroduction in the West led by Int. Sec. Bruce Babbitt:

**from the Yellowhead to Yellowstone they brought us
then let us go**

we fled the only cage we'd ever know

Two early lines are the wolf's credo, and the song's:
then we'd be free

as wild as we were ever meant to be

The words, rhythms, and Tyson's old man's growl make me believe in the wolf, and in his mate, since it's also a love song. The anthropomorphizing is overt, as in all these songs. At their best, they are duets. You must believe the animal voice, but the songs create a blended place of animal and human, which you enter. More than the words, the music that I cannot reproduce here holds the conjunction together for its short time. Lightfoot again:

**whispers of my heart
in the tracks of animals**

It is the loon's heart, and Lightfoot's, and mine.

Pat Ford is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). He is a longtime conservationist and lives in Boise, Idaho.



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Fun Activities For Grandparents & Grandkids

From Jim Plane – State Farm Insurance

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there to lend a hand where we can. We have partnered with Huffington Post to create helpful content that supports you through major life events. Check out the original infographic on Huffington Post.

Grandchildren are a treasure. They offer the opportunity to relive parenthood without having to do any of the dirty work (like saying, “no”). And for grandkids, a weekend at Grandma and Grandpa’s house can be the highlight of an entire week.

But it’s been a few years since you were taking your own children on adventures and thinking up fun backyard games. Do kids even like the same things? How will you bond with this new generation of your family? What kind of grandparent should you be?

We’ve got great news: the classics — like catching a ball game and going on a bike ride together — still work.

For Ages 3-6: What kind of adventurer is your grandchild?

Foodies: Trip to the closest dairy farm or farmers market. Watch the cows being milked or ask farmers how they plant

and harvest crops. It’s a great education in agriculture and food production and an equally great way to expand their palate. It never hurts to include a special treat of chocolate milk or locally grown, seasonal fruit.

Naturalist: Get in touch with nature. This age group loves to be outside. Feed that appreciation of the outdoors and take them to national parks or botanical gardens. Their minds are like sponges, and often these locations have great (and free) educational and interactive experiences for younger children.

Ages 7-11: What time of year is it?

For Spring, Summer: Go fishing. The quiet fishing hole is a great environment for conversations. Away from tech and amid the natural beauty of the world, there are no distractions and lots of laughs guaranteed. It also provides great memories when the enormous bass turns out to be a log.

For Fall, Winter: Get festive! The holidays are a wonderful time of the year that brings families together. Whether it’s attending celebratory-light displays or decorating cookies, these annual favorites will get everyone into the spirit of the season.

Ages 12-14: Which best describes your grandchild?

Doer: Work together in the kitchen. Now that their fine motor skills are well developed, get them involved in the food prep. Try out recipes together – you may end up creating something that becomes a new favorite.

Thinker: Share the Sunday paper. Reading is important at any age, and a great way to bond together on a weekend morning. Sharing the paper with your grandkids (after vetting what is age appropriate, of course) is a chance to teach them about the world and answer their questions in a controlled environment.

Ages 15-18: How often do you see your grandkids?

On Occasion: Take trips to cultural epicenters. Exposure to arts and culture is really important and can even affect test scores. Bring your grandkids to the theater and art



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Grandparents, prepare life with grandkids by ensuring your house is ready for your grandchildren by baby proofing your home and improve driving skills with brain boosters for when you visit the little ones!

Find resources for family safety tips for fun activities with grandchildren throughout the State Farm Learning Center at LearningCenter.statefarm.com

You can also find information on college savings if you're considering helping to build your grandchild's education plan!



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museums. Expand their horizons and talk about themes and motifs. They're also more likely to appreciate these experiences more at this age than when they're younger.

Often: Build a hobby together. By now, you have a sense of who your grandchild is and where his or her interests lie. Engage in a shared interest. If your granddaughter loves baseball, catch a game at the local ballpark and cheer on the home team. Maybe your grandson is an artist. Buy canvases and easels and work alongside him. You may even learn something.

Ages 19+: How far away do your grandchildren live?

Far: Become pen pals. Getting a handwritten letter or card in the mail is still incredibly exciting. Make it easy and gift them the stationery and stamps as a going-away present. It will keep

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Part 16 - Overpopulation

By Frosty Wooldridge

Bird life on Midway Island in the Pacific Ocean and the onslaught of plastics Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, "Until my ghastly tale is told; this heart within me burns." From his epic work: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. This ghastly, if not poignant look onto Midway Island, 2,000 miles out in the Pacific Ocean, reminds us of the sublime beauty of our planet via the waved albatross, but how fast humanity's plastics ravage the natural world. A four-minute video

allows you a mind-changing look into humanity's onslaught of the natural world. <http://www.upworthy.com/people-should-know-about-this-awful-thing-we-do-and-most-of-us-are-simply-unaware?c=ufb1>

Hopefully, the four minutes you take to watch this sobering if not stomach churning video—gives you the courage to speak up, take action and push for deposit-return laws on every piece of plastic that leaves our stores across America and around the planet.

You must take action with your state and federal leaders

to stop further damage to our natural world. Our civilization and all civilizations around the globe must implement plastic-deposit-return laws if we hope to salvage what's left of the health of our oceans worldwide. We need to implement effective educational systems in order to make every world citizen responsible for that plastic bottle cap, toothbrush holder, soft drink container,



Styrofoam cooler and another 100,000 plastic items that we buy and toss 24/7 around the planet.

(Notice that all animal life cannot distinguish between nutrient foods and plastic. This creature's stomach held enough plastic of every description to finally give it a painful and slow death of choking and starvation. Yet, humans refuse to engage plastic-deposit-return laws or change containers all to glass in 2013 and God only knows how far into the future. We should not manufacture plastic bottle caps or anything that can fall into the mouths of the

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creatures of the natural world.) Photo kanat.jsc.vsc.eud

In my State of Colorado, we tried to institute bottle-return laws in 1974 and 1988, but beer brewer magnate Peter Coors defeated us with his endless fortune. He pretends to be an environmentalist, but he failed himself, his family and future generations with his quest for more money over the natural world.

Coors does not stand alone.

World leaders and manufacturing CEOs echo similar disregard for our natural world. As to common citizens around the world, they remain clueless as to their discard of plastics.

(Countless millions of seabirds suffer the fate of this one - previous page - with plastic-

loaded bellies that they mistaken for food. If world leaders and manufacturing CEOs possessed an ounce of morality—ethics—personal accountability over the money they make—this horrendous “ghastly tale” could be solved.)

When Coca-Cola hit 100 years of age, the CEO boasted, “I am so proud to bring the world Coke.” In reality, via my world travels, I watched millions of kids and parents smiling with toothless mouths because they suffer caffeine-sugar addiction from Coke and other soft drinks. They lack any access to toothbrushes and floss. Today, we know that soft drinks create heart problems and obesity. Would the CEO of Coke take action to stop his drink from circulating around the world to render millions of toothless smiles? Would he add a toothbrush and floss to every purchase of his product? Would he support deposit-return laws for his plastic containers? Answer: not a chance.

(Top photo this page: Marine life worldwide strangles itself on plastic debris circulating around the planet on the surface and beneath the waves. Humans kill 100 million sharks annually (that figure is correct and has gone on annually for over 25 years) and heaven only knows how many die from ingesting plastics before they die and sink to the bottom where there is no way to count their numbers.)

Photo by www.Sprinterlife.com

In Daniel Quinn’s book, *Ishmael*, he said, “And yet you do destroy the planet, each of you. Each of you contributes daily to the destruction of the world. You’re captives of a civilizational system that more or less compels you to go on destroying the world in order to live.”

(Above: Typical island beach anywhere around the world




where plastics float up and land. Trillions of pieces of plastic of every discription continue their onslaught on wildlife and the natural world. What do humans do? In the last 50 years since they invented plastics, they keep throwing it into the oceans with no pause in sight.) Photo by

www.oceanfilmfest.org



Through this series, you’ve witnessed pictures of the 100 million ton, size of Texas, floating island out in the Pacific Ocean: **Great Pacific Garbage Patch**. It’s huge, it’s ugly and it’s growing. Every day of the year, countless billions of humans toss plastic somewhere into a lake, stream, river, on the land and

into the oceans. As you saw from (Continued next page.)



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Highlander Worldview

the four-minute video, we witness and understand the damage, but we fail to take action. Eleanor Roosevelt said it 50 years ago; "We must prevent human tragedy rather than run around trying to save ourselves after an event has already occurred.

Unfortunately, history clearly shows that we arrive at catastrophe by failing to meet the situation, by failing to act when we should have acted. The opportunity passes us by and the next disaster is always more difficult and compounded than the last one."

If we live out Roosevelt's tale to its "ghastly finish" and

fail to take action—we face acidified oceans where marine life cannot live and procreate. We suffer death of plankton that create 80-90 percent of the oxygen we breathe on this planet. We face warming oceans via carbon footprint from fossil fuel burning, which in turn, destroys our climatic systems worldwide. All marine life continues to eat and incorporate those mini-particles of plastic into their systems, so that, when we eat them, we pay the same



consequences you saw from the albatross on Midway Island. *(This whale died with a belly full of plastic. Ultimately, the plastic stuffs up marine creatures' colons so they cannot process foods and die.)* Photo by www.invw.org

Frankly, I am not optimistic that humans share the collective will or intelligence to save

themselves. If we do possess any chance, we need to move on information found in the video and these pictures to change the way we use plastics around the world. Because the United States citizens use two million, that's 2,000,000 plastic bottles every five minutes and discard them—we need to take action damned fast.

(Very few people comprehend the enormity of the plastics onslaught around our planet.

Again, it's floating and landing not only on beaches, but under the oceans as well. In its wake, utter devastation on eco systems, marine life and, in the end a "ghastly tale" for all of humanity.) Photo www.columbia.edu

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Bundle Up & Go Outside

By Emily H. Freeman

“Your son looks quite “warm,” another mother says, eyeing my 3-year-old son as we drop off his older brother at kindergarten. I look down at Isaac, his body encased in a snowsuit, two additional insulating layers hidden beneath. “He goes to an all-outdoor preschool,” I reply, but the mother is already distracted, busy waving goodbye to her child.

Isaac and I leave the elementary school and drive into the hills east of downtown Missoula. Deer lift their heads from the tall grass as we pass; turkeys congregate in the middle of the road, refusing to budge until I sound my horn. Our elevation increases, and a few early-season snowflakes begin to fall from the gray sky. I smile and silently congratulate myself on the wisdom of choosing the snowsuit.

We pull into the driveway of the Pattee Canyon Outdoor School, waving at the teacher as she turns off the electric fence that protects the chickens from nighttime predators. Isaac immediately heads for the pile of ponderosa logs stacked against the barn, his footing careful on the damp wood, even in his snow boots. I don’t hover, or worry, or holler at him to “be careful,” all of which I likely would’ve done just months ago.

Isaac’s skills at determining what’s a risk and what isn’t have been honed at this school, where knives and saws figure into the curriculum just as much as arts and crafts and the ABC’s.

A 20-foot canvas teepee rises from the center of the lawn, providing occasional refuge from the wind or an unexpected mid-day rain shower. But most of the day is spent out in the elements. The 3- and 4-year-old students eat their snacks around an open fire, clamber over dirt and stones in lieu of a playground, and hike up into the woods behind the school, returning with souvenirs like deer bones and turkey feathers. Somehow, in the midst of all of these outdoor activities, they also manage to get a handle on the basic skills they’ll need in order to start kindergarten.

Outdoor preschools have long thrived in Sweden, Germany and other parts of Western Europe, and are slowly making their way to the United States, particularly in the West.

Proponents assert that students of outdoor preschools are able to focus and retain information better than children educated indoors, exhibit fewer behavioral problems, and struggle less with the constant sickness normally brought home in these early school years. These un-walled environments also help children to develop many of the so-called “non-cognitive skills” - like grit and adaptability - which educators and researchers are discovering to be strong predictors of future success, even more so than early

reading or the ability to sit in a chair for an hour-long stretch.

Beyond simply believing in the philosophical underpinnings of the movement, I’ve witnessed its success first-hand. Isaac has thrived at his outdoor school in a way that he never did at his previous preschool - a lovely, supportive (indoor) space, where his boyish energy in the classroom was constantly being redirected, rather than applied to practical work or hands-on explorations of the natural world.

But it’s not just boys who stand to benefit. A friend of mine raves about the changes she’s seen in her daughter, Lola, one of Isaac’s classmates. At the age where Lola was poised to enter full-bore into princess obsession, she’s now playing with such abandon in the dirt that it turns her bathwater brown, and stopping her mother during walks to investigate animal tracks or scat. But perhaps most importantly, she’s become more confident.

Like many of the parents at the school, Lola’s mother put her daughter in the outdoor preschool as an experiment, unsure how it would turn out. The results have far exceeded her expectations.

While it’s unrealistic to expect existing preschools to abandon their buildings and turn their students loose outdoors, it’s not impossible for teachers to consider increasing the ratio of outdoor-to-indoor time, planning unstructured field trips to uncultivated wild spaces, and setting children free to play on land that isn’t wholly tended and tamed.

Our lives in the West are inextricably linked to the outdoors, and if we want to raise intelligent stewards of the land, it makes sense to begin that relationship early. Outdoor preschools can be a great first step in that direction.

Emily H. Freeman is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). She lives and writes in Missoula, Montana.



<http://www.TEGColorado.org>

Elephant's Extinction

Dear EarthTalk:

What is being done to save elephants around the world? I understand that these magnificent creatures are teetering on the brink of extinction. — Millie Vicente, San Jose, CA

In just one decade between 1979 and 1989, half of all Africa's elephants were lost to the ivory trade. Public outrage over the loss led to a ban on all international trade in elephant tusks by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)—an international agreement regulating trade in wild animals and plants—and African elephant populations were able to bounce back.

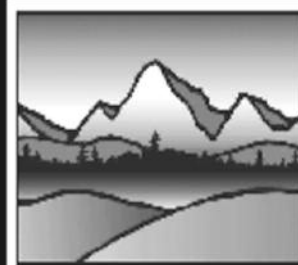
However, a disturbing new wave of illegal elephant poaching has been underway in Africa in recent years, due to rising demand for ivory goods by China's budding middle class. As much as 70 percent of illegal ivory goes to China.

In Beijing, one pound of ivory can bring in \$1,000. From 2010 to 2012 alone, 100,000 elephants were killed for ivory tusks. Last year, approximately 30,000 elephants were illegally poached—this equates to one elephant being killed every 15 minutes.

Massacres that leave behind graveyards of nearly 100 elephant remains have become prevalent across Africa. In 2013, poachers on horseback in southwest Chad shot and cut the tusks off of at least 86 elephants, including 33 pregnant females, in less than a week. American missionary Gary Roberts tried to rescue a surviving baby he found tied to a tree, but despite his best efforts the elephant died. "The poachers killed pregnant females and all the calves," said Celine Sissler-Bienvenu from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). "Even if the conditions were right, which they are not, it would take more than 20 years for this population to recover."

In Zimbabwe, poachers are using cyanide to kill entire herds at a time. In October 2015, rangers in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park found 78 elephants killed by the poison. "We're now trying to check how many elephants had fully developed tusks, because babies are among those killed," said Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management spokeswoman Caroline Washaya-Moyo. "The rate at which we are losing animals to cyanide is alarming," she added. Some 300 elephants fell victim to the same fate in the park

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a year before. Many non-target species are also dying from the cyanide intended for elephants. The park agency was hoping drones and trained dogs would intensify poacher

current trend continues,” said Dune Ives, senior researcher at Vulcan Inc., which is working with the non-profit **Elephants Without Borders** on the Great Elephant Census

to document elephant population numbers around the world. “In five years, we may have lost the opportunity to save this magnificent and iconic animal.”

Meanwhile, other groups are working diligently to spread awareness about the ongoing crisis. In summer 2015, **Save the Elephants** staged public demonstrations in Beijing and New York City where they destroyed nearly two tons of ivory. “If we want our grandchildren to grow up in a world where they see elephants in the wild,” U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told the crowd amassed at the New York event in Times Square, “we owe it to them to shut down the market that fuels poachers.” *CITES*, www.cites.org; *IFAW*, www.ifaw.org; *Great Elephant Census*, www.greatelephantcensus.com; *Elephants Without Borders*, www.elephantswithoutborders.org; *Save the Elephants*, savetheelephants.org. www.earthtalk.org.



monitoring.

According to a June 2014 CITES report, 20 percent of Africa’s elephants may be killed in the next 10 years if poaching continues at current levels. Meanwhile, many worry that extinction isn’t far off. “This species could be extinct in our lifetime, within one or two decades, if the

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**FEBRUARY
2016**

POWER UPDATE

Meet the Candidates

For members who wish to hear from each candidate in person, United Power will hold a candidate forum. All United Power members are welcome to attend the Meet the Candidates forum to learn more about each director candidate, hear from your cooperative leadership and tell us how we're doing.

Meet the Candidates

Tuesday, March 15, 2016
7:30 a.m.
Coal Creek Canyon Community
Center, CCCIA Hall
31528 Highway 72
Golden, CO 80403

The Meet the Candidates event is free and light refreshments will be served. RSVPs are not required.

Look Up, Stay Alert During Outdoor Work & Play

As kids and adults alike head outside to perform winter clean-up and play, be alert for power lines and other electrical hazards. It's the best way to stay safe from electrocution—and even death.

For Kids

- Never fly a kite anywhere but in an open space. Kites could easily become tangled in power lines.
- Don't climb trees that are near power lines and poles—evergreens can disguise dangers this time of year; leaves during the spring and summer.
- Stay far away from power lines lying on the ground. You can't tell if electricity is still flowing through them. If there's water nearby, don't go in it. Water is the best conductor of electricity.
- Obey signs that say "danger" and "keep out" around large electrical equipment, like substations. These signs aren't warnings; they're commands to keep you safe.
- Never climb a power pole.

For adults

- If power lines run through your trees, call United Power—tree trimmers with proper protective equipment can trim branches safely.
- Remember that power lines and other utilities run underground, too. Call 811 to have utility lines marked before you start digging.
- Starting that winter cleanup yard work? Sweep dried leaves and debris from outdoor receptacles.
- Upgrade your outdoor receptacles—or any outlets that could come in contact with water—to ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).
- Use only weather-resistant, heavy-duty extension cords marked for outdoor use.
- Don't leave outdoor power tools unattended for curious children or animals to find.

2016 Annual Meeting & Election

Wednesday, April 13

Adam's County Fairgrounds
9755 Henderson Road • Brighton

Dinner, Director Election & Business Meeting
Registration begins at 4:30 p.m.

More information at www.unitedpower.com.



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3155 Ridge Road
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3 BD/ 3 BA 2,829 sq. ft. **\$485,000**



33189 Janelle Circle
Beautifully designed & crafted
3 BD/ 2 BA 3 car Garage **\$374,900**



7964 Chase Circle #98
Bright & Clean Townhouse
2 BD/ 1 BA 824 sq. ft. **\$150,000**



95 Lewark Avenue
On Top of the World
2 BD/ 1 BA 1,579 sq. ft. **\$264,000**



11760 Lillis Drive
Remodeled Home with Barn
4 BD/ 3 BA 2,796 sq. ft. **\$409,000**



33901 Skyline Drive
Private Wooded Lot
3 BD/ 2 BA 3,174 sq. ft.



11568 Overlook Road
Beautiful Updates
2 BD/ 1 BA 1,258 sq. ft. **\$287,500**



33566 Coal Creek Canyon Drive
Beautiful Updated Log Home + Cabin
4 BD/ 4 BA 4,236 sq. ft. **\$389,000**



1210 Indian Peak Road
Beautiful Executive Home
4 BD/ 3 BA 3,544 sq. ft. **\$559,000**



11944 Vonnie Claire Road
Complete Remodel!
3 BD/ 2 BA 1,872 sq. ft. **\$339,900**



11673 Hillcrest Road
Great Getaway Cabin
1 BD/ 1 BA 846 sq. ft. **\$164,000**



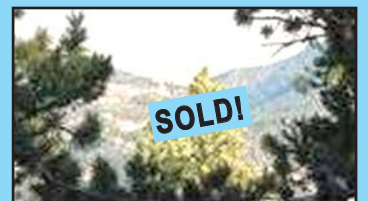
242 Black Bear Trail
Complete Remodel - Stunning Views!
3 BD/ 3 BA 2,556 sq. ft. **\$449,000**



TBD Rudi Lane West
.73 Ac. **\$30,000**



33966 Nadm Drive
1.08 Ac. **\$75,000**



11547 Shimley Road
1.15 Ac. **\$29,000**



0 Lillis Lane
Two building sites and much more!
5.04 Acres **\$79,000**



796 Brewery Drive
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