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About the Cover: Bobcat



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Bobcats

If you wish to discourage Bobcats from coming into your yard here's how you can protect your pets from bobcats and other wild animals: walk small dogs on a leash. Always keep pets vaccinated as some wild-life are susceptible to diseases transmissible to dogs and cats, i.e. feline panleukopenia (feline parvo), canine distemper, and rabies.

Take steps to ensure you are not attracting predators to your yard - clean up brushy areas or woodpiles, and remove any food sources. Cats prey on many wildlife species, i.e. song-birds, face many dangers outside, and can attract predatory wildlife to your yard, as well. Avoid bushy areas or paths near abandoned or open space properties. Never encourage or allow your pet to inter-act or "play" with wildlife.

Do not leave pets unattended outdoors. Remove food sources, i.e. fallen fruit, food refuse, pet food.

Try these tactics: Use noise and/or motion activated deterrents to make a bobcat uncomfortable. Try an air horn or motion activated sprinkler; bang pot lids together, or put a radio outside set to a news or talk channel. Clear any excess vegetation to remove secluded hiding spots.

Don't forget that Bobcats are useful to have around: they keep voles, mice and other unwanted rodent numbers in check. They are usually shy and don't like the spotlight so you may never see them while they do their jobs.

If you feed the birds or squirrels, ensure there is no overflowing bird seed on the ground to attract rodents at night, or restrict feeding. Bobcats can be attracted to the squirrels and birds that come to our yards to feed.

Do not turn your small dogs out by themselves or in a poorly enclosed yard.

If you have chickens or fowl, ensure they are put up at night. Bobcats are indigenous to the Mountains and sightings of them in adjacent residential areas are not uncommon.

Bobcats do not attack people. In fact, bobcat attacks are virtually unknown; however, no one should ever attempt to touch or handle a wild bobcat or her kittens.

Bobcats weigh between 15 - 40 pounds. Carnivore biology studies show that carnivores in this weight range take prey that is much smaller than they are. There are many reasons why trapping and removal is not a long-term, viable solution.

For instance: Predator species, such as the bobcat, establish and defend a territory. When such an animal is relocated to an established territory, the defending (established) animal will attack potentially killing, injuring, or driving the relocated bobcat from its new territory. An injured bobcat may not survive, since survival depends

upon the ability to hunt, capture and kill prey. A wild animal that lives within the boundaries of a city and has lived its life as a scavenger may not have adequate hunting skills, and therefore may not be able to survive without the opportunistic foraging of outdoor pet food, plentiful rodents, backyard fruit, vegetables, and trash of its urban upbringing. Wildlife studies show that urban wildlife learns survival skills for urban living, and country wildlife learns survival skills for country living; they do best when left in the environment for which they have developed survival skills.

Wildlife disease is another factor. Wild predators in urban settings may have been exposed to diseases associated with domestic pets, which could be transmitted to other wildlife not normally exposed to these threats.

Trapping and removing animals has done nothing to correct the human equation. The cycle of imbalance will continually repeat itself, at great cost to the community, if people fail to change their own habits and environments. Recommended long term solutions for homeowners involve modification of the premises.

(Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Wildlife

By Ashley Michels

A Colorado woman is hoping to change the hunting laws in Colorado.

Telluride-based veterinarian Christine Capaldo is petitioning Colorado Parks and Wildlife to stop issuing hunting permits for bobcats.

“I was actually shocked to learn that bobcat hunting and trapping is still occurring in this day and age,” Capaldo said. She says she has been researching bobcat hunting in Colorado for the past two-and-a-half years and in November 2018, she submitted a petition to CPW formally asking for a ban.

“There is no need to kill bobcats. This is not conservation,” Capaldo said. “The citizens of Colorado and tourists coming to Colorado want to see bobcats alive.”

Currently, hunters and trappers can harvest bobcats from December to February with a CPW-issued license. “Bobcats are no different than any of our other species that we hunt in Colorado,” Colorado Parks and Wildlife spokesperson Lauren Truitt told FOX31. “Bobcat hunters and trappers have to bring every animal into a Colorado Parks and Wildlife location. It is personally inspected by one of our staff members.”

According to CPW, between 1,500 and 1,800 bobcats are harvested per season. A state report indicates those numbers are growing.

“This increasing harvest trend generally follows increases in prices for bobcat pelts,” the 2016-2017 Furbearer Management Report says.

Capaldo says she also wants to institute a bobcat hunting ban to keep Colorado’s bobcat pelts from being sold for profit.

“They’re killing the animals typically by strangulation. This causes immense pain and prolonged suffering,” she said.

The Colorado Trappers and Predator Hunters Association is against the proposal. The association’s website states that the petition “is filled with misleading information and inaccurate data.”

They also worry that restrictions on bobcat hunting could lead to further hunting restrictions in Colorado. It will now be up to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission to decide the fate of bobcats in the state.

The commission discussed the petition at its meeting in Grand Junction. The panel could make a final decision at



that time or they could wait until a later date.

“The commission will do its due diligence and hear testimony from all sides and really try to make the most informed decision, not only for the social portion of wildlife management but also the biologic components as well,” Truitt said. (*Hunting for Bobcats is still allowed.*)

“Even if you institute a ban or a reduction in hunting opportunities, it doesn’t mean the animals aren’t still being managed. Someone else is just managing them for the state,” Truitt said. Bobcats typically live in more mountainous areas of Colorado. They are present in the foothills and will often be found in areas with large populations of cottontail rabbits. “Our populations of bobcats are very stable and in many cases they’re increasing,” Truitt said. (*This statement is misleading and has not been fact checked for years. CPW considers our bobcats as nuisance animals so their opinion isn’t worth much weight, they like the revenue from licenses.*)

(Photo of Bobcat and kitten by Michael Reilly.)



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Confront Climate & Nature Crisis

By Tom Udall Jan. 31, 2020 High Country News

In his 1963 book *The Quiet Crisis*, my father, former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, sounded the alarm about the creeping destruction of nature. “Each generation has its own rendezvous with the land, for despite our fee titles and claims of ownership, we are all brief tenants on this planet,” he wrote. “By choice, or by default, we will carve out a land legacy for our heirs.”

Last January would have been Stewart Udall’s 100th birthday. And 57 years after he wrote the *The Quiet Crisis*, it is more urgent than ever that we heed his words — and follow his example — in order to save the natural world. As Interior secretary under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, my father was the visionary leader of a burgeoning conservation and environmental movement. During his first year as secretary, then-Bureau of Reclamation Chief Floyd Dominy took him on a flight over southern Utah to show him the “next” big dam. My dad took one look at the red-rock spires below and saw not a dam, but the next national park. He carried this vision back to Washington, D.C., and worked to establish what is today Canyonlands National Park.

Canyonlands is one of four national parks, six national monuments, nine recreation areas, 20 historic sites and 56 wildlife refuges that Stewart Udall helped create as secretary of the Interior. In the face of environmental damage and species loss, he worked with Congress and the president to enact some of our country’s most successful conservation programs, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Clean Air Act, and the national wilderness system. In the process, he protected millions of acres of public lands.

In the span of a few years, Stewart Udall and other conservation leaders significantly deepened our national commitment to the lands and waters that sustain us. In addition to providing our generation and future ones with cleaner air and water, the lands they preserved and the protections they put in place created the bedrock of a strong economy today.

But now, the quiet crises that my father warned us about have risen to a crescendo that is impossible to ignore. Climate change is widely acknowledged as an existential threat to our planet. Meanwhile, the nature crisis has accelerated close to the

point of no return. We lose a football-field’s-worth of nature every 30 seconds. And according to a United Nations report, 1 million species are at risk of extinction because of human activity.

The current administration has helped inflame these crises, eviscerating landmark protections like the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Power Plan. The last President has already created the worst environmental record of any president in history as his administration hacks away at the nation’s proud conservation tradition.

But merely reversing those environmental attacks would be like putting a Band-Aid on a life-threatening wound. These crises were already worsening before he took office, and the trajectory will continue after he leaves unless we drastically rethink our approach to conservation.

If we fail to enact the kind of bold conservation framework my father envisioned, we will forever lose millions of plant and animal species — the biodiversity critical to our rich natural inheritance and fundamental to our own survival. We will lose not just our way of life, but the planet as we know it.

Today, just as we did 50 years ago under Stewart Udall’s leadership, we must write an aggressive new playbook to confront the climate and nature crises head-on. And we need to act fast.

That’s why I’ve introduced the Thirty by Thirty Resolution to Save Nature — a resolution to set a national goal of protecting 30% of our lands and waters by 2030, with half protected by mid-century. The resolution reflects the will of the scientific (Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Wildlife

community, including and scientists like E.O. Wilson, who say that we need to protect half the planet to save the whole.

We must also face down climate change with the urgency it requires. To do so, we should make our public lands pollution-free. Emissions from fossil fuels extracted on public lands account for nearly one-quarter of the nation's carbon dioxide emissions. Instead of being a source of pollution, public lands can and should be part of the solution. Knowing that we must transition away from fossil fuels, we need an inclusive approach that gets us to net zero carbon pollution.

And as we transition, we must support and protect the communities, tribes and states that have long relied on fossil fuels. No one should be left behind in our transition to a clean energy economy.

Indeed, equity, inclusion and environmental justice must be our guiding lights — our true North Star — just like they were for my father. After a long career in public office — during which he fought segregation and discrimination at every turn — my dad spent his final chapter fighting alongside the widows of Navajo uranium miners. His mission was to ensure that families hurt by the federal government's nuclear weapons activities were justly compensated, because he understood that low-income communities, communities of color and Native communities often bear the worst consequences of

the environmental desecration and destruction too often caused by the rich and powerful.

Our conservation work must provide equitable access to



A wild female bobcat sits near Bosque del Apache, New Mexico. Pat Gaines/CC via Flickr

nature and a just distribution of its benefits. We must ensure environmental justice for all. The future of our planet — and of humanity itself — depends on it.

This January on what would have been my father's 101st birthday, let us remember a man who saw a national park where others saw a gigantic dam — a man who clearly saw the peril in mortgaging the land for short-term economic incentives.

Just a few years before his passing, my father and my mother, Lee, published a letter to their grandchildren in High Country News. This was their call:

“Go well, do well, my children. Cherish sunsets, wild creatures and wild places. Have a love affair with the wonder and beauty of the earth.” Now, with the wonder and beauty of the earth under threat, we must listen to Stewart Udall's plea: that we do well — by the planet, and by future generations.

Tom Udall is a United States Senator representing New Mexico (who did not run for re-election.) A member of the Democratic party, he has also served as a U.S. Representative and New Mexico's State Attorney General.

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Rebuild Better Than Before

By Jonathan Thompson Nov. 24, 2020 HCNews

In early 2017, not long after the President moved into the White House, his chief advisor, Steve Bannon, said that the administration’s aim was the “deconstruction of the administrative state.” A charitable listener might have heard a run-of-the-mill libertarian goal, to downsize the bloated government in order to make room for personal liberties.

It has since become clear that the President cared more about freedom for government and corporations — and for that matter, COVID-19 — to run rampant.

Perhaps nowhere was his approach more thorough than when it comes to the Earth. He removed limits on mercury and methane emissions, incapacitated the Clean Water Act and gutted protections for the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, to name just a few of nearly 100 rollbacks. All purportedly to help the economy, achieve “energy dominance” on public lands and make him look good — energy-efficient light bulbs, he said, “make you look orange.”

President-elect Joseph R. Biden has indicated that he’ll quickly roll back the rollbacks as soon as he’s inaugurated.

Yet a reset is not enough. In fact, many of the rules didn’t cut it under President Obama, and though Obama tried to fix many of them, his efforts often fell short. Here are a few examples of policies and rules that the last administration obliterated, and that Biden — hopefully with Congress’s help — could now rebuild, making them better and stronger than before.

Clean Power Plan: President Obama’s plan mandated a cut in power sector carbon emissions by 32% from 2005 levels by 2030, which essentially would have forced coal out of the energy mix while leaving room for natural gas. Before it went into effect, the last President gutted the plan, though it was hardly necessary: Economics forced coal plant retirements after his election, coal mining jobs continued to wane and emissions dropped even more than the Obama plan would have required. The plan was obsolete before it was finalized.

Biden’s plan must provide for a just transition for workers and communities that will be abandoned by the fossil fuel industries. Biden’s plan must include more ambitious emissions cuts and, equally as important, provide for a just transition for workers and communities that will be abandoned by the (Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Politics

fossil fuel industries.

Oil and gas development: The President rolled over the environment by rolling back rules for fracking, stocking the Interior Department with industry insiders, ramming through approvals of pipelines built by his multi-million-dollar donors, and by slashing royalties paid by oil companies.

Yet Obama's policies were equally friendly to energy development. His administration leased out two million more acres of public land to oil and gas companies during his first term than the current administration and oversaw a drilling boom of unprecedented magnitude. Biden needs not only to roll back the rollbacks, but also to overhaul the leasing process to shift power away from corporate boardrooms and back into public hands, and increase oil and gas royalty payments across the board to give American taxpayers a fair shake.

Bears Ears National Monument: In 2015, the Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute, Hopi and Zuni tribes asked Obama to designate as a national monument 1.9 million acres of public land in southeastern Utah, with tribal representatives having a major management role. When Obama established the monument, it was 600,000 acres smaller than the proposal, and the tribal role was reduced to an advisory one. The President slashed the monument by 85% and rammed through a shoddy management plan for what remained, further diminishing the tribal role.

Biden should restore the monument, giving the tribal nations an equal role in determining new boundaries and creating a strong management plan.



Bears Ears National Monument was designated by President Obama in December 2016. In December 2017 the last President attempted to reduce Bears Ears National Monument through a new presidential proclamation, cutting the size of the monument by 85%. This modification is being contested. Jeff Sullivan/CC via Flickr

That's only the beginning. Biden will also have to restore another 80 or more regulations, redirect agencies that have been steered off-course, invalidate the lease sale for the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, bring science back into policymaking, stop the building of the border wall, and clean the house of the last President's appointees who are trying to destroy the so-called administrative state from within.

That includes William Perry Pendley — Twitter handle @Sagebrush_Rebel — whom the last President installed as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management in 2019. This September, a judge ruled that Pendley — never approved by Congress — had served unlawfully, and ordered him out of his role. Anticipating this, Pendley changed his title and refused to leave, insisting that the law and the court's order "has no impact" on him.

With the President now taking a similar stance, Biden may be forced to drag two people out of office this month.

Jonathan Thompson is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West.

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Organics Price ~ Cheatgrass ~ Not On Agenda

Dear EarthTalk: My New Year's resolution is to eat healthier. Which fruits and vegetables are worth spending extra money on for organic varieties? Likewise, is it worth it from the standpoint of health to also pay a premium for organic meat, cheese and eggs? *P. McAdams, via email*

It is indeed difficult to figure out which foods are worth spending more money on for organic varieties. Sure, you can just buy only organic in every category, but you'd end up spending upwards of 20% more every time you shop. And certain "conventional" (i.e., non-organic) foods contain lots of pesticides and chemicals while others do not. Knowing where to draw the line in the grocery aisle is increasingly difficult given the profusion of organic choices these days. But luckily if you are armed with a few facts, you can eat healthier without breaking the bank.

As for produce, many conventionally grown fruits and vegetables don't contain or pass along significant amounts of pesticides or other noxious chemicals. The non-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) suggests only buying organic for their so-called "dirty dozen" list of common produce items that do tend to harbor larger amounts of chemicals: strawberries, spinach, nectarines, apples, peaches, pears, cherries, grapes, celery, tomatoes, sweet bell peppers and potatoes. Going for organic varieties of these fruits and vegetables is one of the most affordable ways to eat healthier because the price premium on organic produce is in many cases negligible given more consumer demand driving increased production and supply.

On the flip side, EWG also produces the "Green Fifteen" list of produce that tends to be contaminant-free even when not organic: avocado, pineapple, onion, papaya, frozen

sweet peas, sweet corn, eggplant, asparagus, cauliflower, cantaloupe, broccoli, mushrooms, cabbage, kiwi and honeydew melon.

As for animal products, organic varieties can only bear the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) "Organic" stamp if they are "raised in living conditions accommodating their natural behaviors (like the ability to graze on pasture), fed 100% organic feed and forage, and not administered antibiotics or hormones." As to whether organic meat is better for your health, don't bet on it. A 2015 Spanish study found that consumption of organic meat does not diminish—and in fact might slightly increase—the risk of getting cancer. That said, other research has shown that organic meat contains more healthy Omega-3 unsaturated fats—this results from the animals eating grass not grain. Another good reason to go organic if you eat meat is ethics: Conventionally raised livestock are subject to confinement and overcrowding while being dosed with antibiotics to prevent the spread of bacterial infection in their midst. The same calculus applies to organic versus conventional dairy products: organic milk and cheese may contain more Omega-3s but otherwise the health differences are negligible.

It certainly is a balancing act today to shop with your family's health and your own conscience in mind while not breaking the bank. The bright side of this conundrum is that we do have so many healthier choices overall these days, and it's easier than any time in the last 75 years to avoid chemicals in your food if that's the way you want to roll.

Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss December 17, 2020

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Highlander Environmental

Dear EarthTalk: What is Cheatgrass, when did it become such a big problem out west? *William G., Portland, ME*

Cheatgrass is an annual grass native to Europe and eastern Asia that European settlers brought to North America in the late 1800s as forage for grazing their livestock. Little did they know at the time that this innocuous looking herbaceous plant would eventually wreak havoc on ecosystems across the American West, edging out native plants and creating conditions ripe for now all-too-frequent brush fires.

“It probably wouldn’t have outcompeted with native vegetation if early settlers hadn’t also introduced large numbers of livestock like cattle and sheep into sagebrush country,” reports Mike Pellant, a retired Rangeland Ecologist with the BLM who volunteers for the non-profit Sage Grouse Initiative. “Our palatable native grasses and forbs [herbaceous flowering plants] weren’t adapted to high levels of uncontrolled overgrazing by domestic livestock, which created a void that Cheatgrass quickly filled.”

And once Cheatgrass gains a foothold, it ups the fire risk around it significantly, in part because it sets seed in the spring and by the heart of fire season, in mid- to late-summer, its shoots have dried out and become like tinder that can spark into fire with the slightest provocation. “Basically, cheatgrass is comparable to tissue paper covering the landscape—an easily-ignited fuel that carries fire quickly and spreads it rapidly,” adds Pellant.



Native plants in the Great Basin have not evolved to handle such frequent burns—every five to seven years on average lately. As such, each Cheatgrass-fueled brush fire creates more open space for more of the weed to quickly colonize. And by moving into open territory before native plants have a chance to set seed, Cheatgrass ensures its dominance over the desert ecosystems it inhabits.

The ascendancy of Cheatgrass is also a big problem for native wildlife as well as plants. The Greater sage grouse, Mule deer and Pygmy rabbit are just a few of the iconic desert species dependent on healthy sagebrush plants for their own survival. If sagebrush steppe landscapes go the way of the dodo thanks to Cheatgrass, so will these species and dozens of others which contribute to making the American desert such a special place.

That said, there is little we can actually do to effectively stop Cheatgrass’ spread—it has already taken over some 50-70 million acres of desert across the American West. Herbicides applied widely have been effective at removing grown Cheatgrass plants, but these synthetic chemicals do nothing against the seeds already rooted in the soil—meaning the plant will sprout anew the next spring regardless. Employing all-natural soil microbes to inhibit the growth of Cheatgrass’ root system below the surface shows promise as a potential solution. But it could be years before we know whether it’s feasible to use on such an epic scale given how much Cheatgrass has already spread across the sagebrush steppe.

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Not Even On The Agenda?

Republicans Keep Heads In Sand On Climate.
But there's hope with a new generation of GOP youth with environmental conscience.

Dear EarthTalk: How can it be that climate change—the major planetary issue of our time and a primary issue for Democrats—isn't even on the agenda for Republicans in the upcoming elections? —Will Harris, Bridgeport, CT

Americans, regardless of political affiliation, all live on this planet together and share its ecosystems and resources. Yet there is a deep divide among us with regard to environmental policies and climate change. Nothing underscores this divide more than the last President's rolling back of nearly 100 mostly Obama-era environmental regulations since 2017. And during the 2020 Republican National Convention, climate was not mentioned once, apart from him bragging about leaving the Paris Climate Agreement.

Climate and environmental issues were once a bipartisan concern. As early as 1900, Republicans and Democrats in Congress were passing bills on environmental issues together. One of these bills, for example, was the Endangered Species Act which was passed unanimously in 1973 by the Senate and later by a 390-12 vote in the House (another bill this president is in the process of dismantling). Even up until 2007-2008, the GOP supported many of the environmental regulations passed. Republicans such as George W. Bush, Newt Gingrich (former Republican Speaker of the House), Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney and John McCain all agreed verbally that protecting our planet from climate change was not a partisan issue. It wasn't until 2008 when Obama tried to pass policies to help reverse and mitigate climate change that special interests began to really intercede in U.S. environmental politics.

That being said, there is reason for hope in the generations of Republican youth joining the table who are dedicated to making climate change a prominent issue for the Republican party. One recent study found that millennials

and younger Republicans are more likely than older Republicans to view government efforts to reduce climate change as insufficient (52 percent versus 31 percent). Similarly, 78 percent of younger Republicans (against 53 percent of older ones) agree that alternative (non-fossil-fuel) energy sources should be a priority, numbers that bring hope to those already working on climate change issues.

The American Conservation Coalition (ACC) is an advocacy group started by Benji Backer and other young Republicans in 2017. Backer said his drive to start this group after his freshman year of college came from his love of nature that was inspired by his family. "They were Audubon members, Nature Conservancy members. But they were conservative, and I grew up not thinking that the environment should be political at all," says Backer.

Another youth-led advocacy group that has emerged is the Young Conservatives for Carbon Dividends (YCCD), which supports carbon taxes to reduce greenhouse gases. Founder Kiera O'Brien grew up in Alaska and says that she and fellow Republicans have seen the impacts of climate change first-hand in the rapidly warming region.

As things worsen globally, many others, despite party affiliations, will likely come to similar realizations. The question is, can each and every one of us band together to make impactful change before it's too late?



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Colorado State University Updates

Colorado State University joins national & international organizations in listening to Sounds of Your Park

Editor's Note: *This new effort by organizations to shed light on how human made noise has such adverse effects on people and wildlife should also be a warning to our elected officials that by allowing Denver Water to expand Gross Dam it will harm all the residents within the sound radius of the biggest proposed construction project in Boulder County history.*

WHO: The Sound and Light Ecology Team at Colorado State University joins the U.S. National Park Service, Parks Canada, George Wright Society and IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas to celebrate acoustic beauty and the diversity of the world's national parks and protected areas.

WHAT: The new site has sounds from parks and protected areas around the world, from the Gunnison River in Colorado to a roaring waterfall in Slovakia, and a dawn chorus at the banks of the Limpopo River in South Africa. Researchers will continue to add to this collection of sounds in the years to come.

Many of the natural spaces, species and traditional cultural practices are disappearing at an alarming rate due to human activity around the globe. These losses take with them associated unique natural and cultural sounds.

The Sounds of Your Park initiative aims to celebrate these sounds and raise awareness about the protected parks and places where these sounds can still be found. The official launch of the new initiative coincides with Find Peace in Parks, a theme from the National Park Service.

Given the global pandemic, this is an important time to share these recordings, which many people find healing and restorative during an isolated and lonely time. Natural sounds benefit human health in a number of ways, and can work to connect us in this particularly disconnected period in human history.

CSU team receives \$1 million grant to develop noninvasive biomedical imaging technologies

Since the early days of his career, CSU Professor Randy Bartels of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering has been developing methods to advance the basic science of controlling matter with light.

Now, building on his previous findings and proven techniques, Bartels is leading new research in optical and biomedical microscopy aimed at improving lives and fighting disease.

Bartels has received a \$1 million Deep Tissue Imaging Grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, or CZI, to develop new imaging technologies that could not only advance understanding of the human body, but also offer new capabilities for studying basic biology, disease pathology, and early disease diagnosis. He will work in partnership with co-principal investigators Jeffrey Field, director of the Microscopy Core Facility at CSU, and Christian Puttlitz, professor and head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

"We want to enable researchers everywhere to visualize, measure, and analyze the biological processes underlying health and disease," said Cori Bargmann, CZI's head of science. "That means taking multiple approaches." Unscrambling light to peer deeper into the human body. Breakthroughs in biomedical imaging have transformed human health diagnostics, from magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to computerized tomography (CT) scans. But to cure, prevent and manage diseases, there is a need for a deeper understanding of biological systems. "We are far from the ultimate goal: to observe cells and subcellular processes in living organisms in a minimally invasive manner," CZI said in a release. The grant from CZI will allow the CSU team to develop a novel, noninvasive imaging tool to open new windows of observation into the human body. Their goal is to view information at cellular resolution, in complex tissue

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and through skin and bone, in living organisms. According to CSU's Bartels, light propagating through a dense fog is like light propagating through biological tissue.

"If you attempt to use a flashlight to view the bones and tendons and blood vessels within your hand, for example, you won't succeed. The light will be scrambled so that all you see is a red glow on your palm," he said.

Bartels and his team aim to unscramble that light in biological tissue to illuminate previously hidden features. While ultrasound, MRI, and x-ray imaging can form images from deep within the body, imaging deep in skin with optical microscopy is not possible because tissue scrambles the light propagation, rendering the tissue opaque, and thereby fundamentally limiting the range of biological questions that scientists can address today. "My goal, ultimately, is to help people live healthier lives," Bartels said. "I'm thrilled to be supported in this endeavor by CZI. Together, we will revolutionize the way we 'see' light." *About CZI Founded by Dr. Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg in 2015, CZI is a new kind of philanthropy that's leveraging technology to help solve some of the world's toughest challenges — from eradicating disease and improving education to reforming the criminal justice system.*

CSU scientists play key role in first-ever global report on soil biodiversity

On Dec. 5, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations releases a first-of-its-kind report, "State of Knowledge of Soil Biodiversity: Status, challenges and potentialities," a collaborative effort by more than 300 scientists around the world. This project was led by several organizations, including the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative, whose leadership team is based at Colorado State University.

University Distinguished Professor Diana Wall, scientific chair of the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative, and Monica Farfan, executive director, talked with SOURCE about the

new report and what it means for soil ecology and research. Wall is also the director of the School of Global Environmental Sustainability at CSU. Farfan studies mite communities and holds a doctoral degree from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Question: What is the significance of the new UN report?

Monica Farfan: This is really the first time that an informative report on soil biodiversity has been produced by a coalition of scientific experts. It is an important tool for policymakers to be able to incorporate into their decision-making on all biodiversity. When we talk about biodiversity, there is a gigantic amount in soils that is underappreciated because it is unseen for the most part.

Diana Wall: When we think of biodiversity most people consider all biodiversity on lands, to be above ground, and not below ground. Up until recently, scientists and the public did not have an appreciation for all the different types of organisms that keep soils fertile and healthy. The knowledge base was so splintered. I have recently heard from researchers around the world who are saying what I've talked about for some time: We need to get all disciplines working on and looking at microbes and organisms and what they do for ecosystems and people. How does what is happening below ground affect above-ground life? *(Continued on next page.)*



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Q: What does it mean for CSU to have this lead role in producing the report?

Wall: It is recognition that CSU is an outstanding place for scientific research and outreach on soil science and soil ecology. This includes studying life in soils, and land managers incorporating soils as part of a terrestrial ecosystem. Scientists in multiple colleges are involved in this type of research. Studying the microbes and animals in soil is not just focused in one department, and that excellence in research brings international researchers here.

The Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative was started by a bunch of scientists – including me – who realized that the science had advanced so quickly and we knew so much about what the organisms below ground do, and what they do for us. But there was a gap in that the information was not being widely shared with people who manage lands around the world. We started the initiative as a scientific network to improve sharing the science, and, with policymakers, came up with a plan to produce an assessment. It was a step that came logically. We've been talking about it for five years.

Q: What, if any, parallels do you see between this report and other 'first-ever' scientific assessments?

Wall: I would compare the increasing awareness on soil

health to the Clean Water Act, which was designed in 1948 as a pollution control effort, but then reorganized and expanded in 1972.

There's a lot of discovery going on below ground, using technologies to see how carbon flows, looking at the enzymes in soil, estimating disturbance or threats to soils and the biodiversity. How does that compare with what's taking place above ground, and what's going to happen with climate change? Scientists are also studying droughts and the effect on fauna and microbes on the prairie.

Q: This new report hits at a time of changing federal leadership in the United States. Is that timing important?

Wall: Yes. You'd better believe it. During the Obama Administration, there were several meetings called by the White House related to soil health in all lands, not just agriculture, and I was invited to take part because of the many scientists we represent globally, from taxonomists to geochemists who work in urban, agriculture and all ecosystems. That had never happened in my lifetime.

I am hopeful that it's going to be different from the last four years and positive under the Biden Administration, and that federal leadership will continue to pay attention to biodiversity in all lands beyond agriculture and soil health.

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The Sparkle Off Snow

There are few things in life that can compare to the sparkle off the light of snow crystals on the ground, mounds of diamonds twinkling like nothing else in nature. Many people fail to notice, whether too busy or thinking the visual too irrelevant to give it much credence. But the person that notices and gives high value to the beauty can be changed by its crystalline occurrence simply due to the colorful way light plays off the frozen water. The folks that value that simple and yet nearly supernatural twinkle view most of nature as valuable and sometimes surrealistic.

This can separate the few from the many and the few have far more chances to enjoy nature in ways the others can never comprehend. Some join in by way of art or photography that catches their eye in a particular way that touches the heart or soul of the individual. By way of that experience they may then be touched when exposed to nature: hiking or biking, horseback riding or skiing, it all depends on the soul then being open to exposure through experience or even through reading a book that describes a particular natural setting.

Some describe their awakening to nature as organic: a similar feeling brought on by a sensual contact or the soulful awakening and pleasure of feeling close to their higher power. Eastern religions call it Nirvana and yet it can be as close as walking outside and communing with the forest or a mule deer walking close to your house and not being afraid and running away as you close the door and experience their closeness. Or hiking a trail and coming upon an unsuspecting and unafraid wild creature that lets you into their space without showing fear and running away. What happens in your soul is original and special to you, in that moment and that you can keep forever in your memory.

If by chance you capture it in a photo you may share it, but it will be available to you by the memory of the moment. I think since cameras are so available these days, everyone has one on their smart phone? we often forget the simple pleasure of the experience and instead focus merely on capturing a photograph. Our brains are organic

computers and cameras so we are shortchanging many experiences by rushing to see it through the lens instead of in our hearts.

Last year was by all accounts a real challenge: sad for folks that lost loved ones, painful for people that got sick and had to fight for their health to return or still are fighting. Some lost their businesses or jobs or both and many are still unsure of tomorrow, financially and life stability. This year may get better sooner rather than later but we must stay diligent and not be irresponsible in our actions that could cause other's harm.

In my personal opinion I think we should endeavor to learn from our hardships: work from home more, shop less, recreate closer to home, eat out fewer times a week, save money, share blessings and try to think of ways to be more responsible to the Earth. If we complain less and be grateful more then it stands to reason we will end up being happier as a species.

Compare ourselves to folks fleeing from civil wars or genocide and living in tent cities without running water, food, clothing and a solid roof over their heads could help us see our lives: even during a pandemic lockdown as not so catastrophic. Perspective becomes elusive when your whole life seems to be crumbling and it is almost impossible to have empathy for folks dying in hospital beds.

I hate cliches that are meant to give us a 'pep' talk so I'll refrain from the usual and just share what my life experience has taught me. You can always pull a positive from a negative, some situations or experiences are impossible or nearly impossible AND yet if we work at it - that positive - life-evolving epiphany is just out of reach so we must stretch our thinking, our usual way of reacting and go beyond to strive for that life lesson. Most of the folks that need this way of thinking won't be the ones reading this, so if you are reading this and thinking 'oh yea, an aha moment' then you have a head start on the others that may get there someday.

By A.M. Wilks

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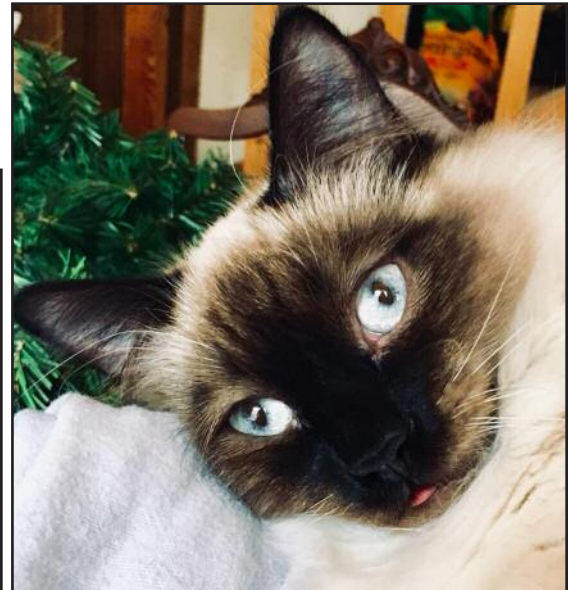
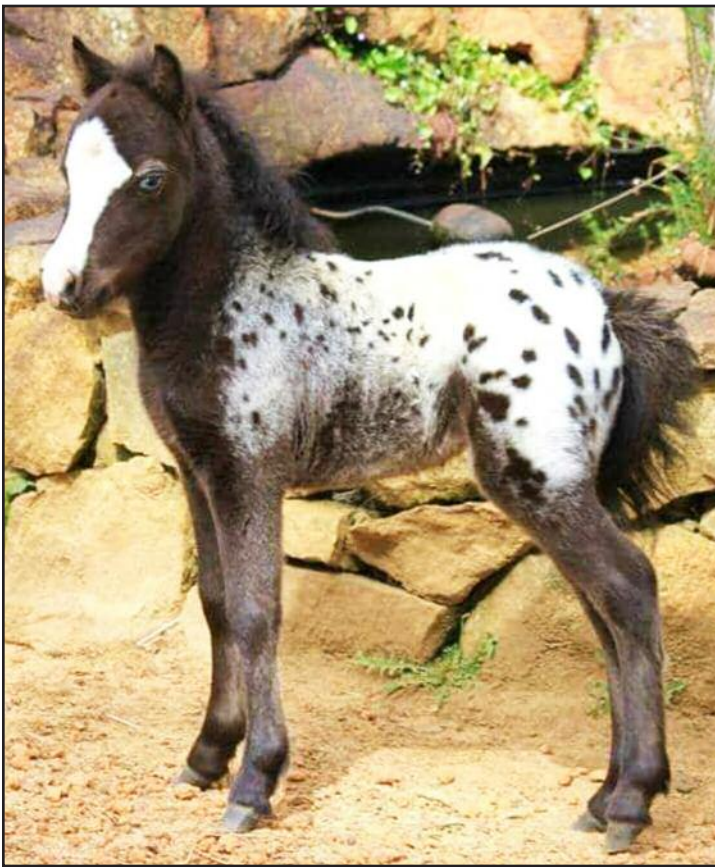
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Previous page top left: *Cat from Pam.*

Top right: *Carter with Daphne.*

Bottom left: *Chanel the Doodlebug.*

Bottom right: *Levon from Krystina.*

This page top Left: *Equestrian Dreams*

Top right: *Mustang line up.*

Bottom left: *Lincoln & Sparty from Julie.*

Middle right: *Cat from Pam.*

Bad Driving Habits & Defensive Driving

From Jim Plane – State Farm Insurance

Time to break these bad driving habits

Avoid dangerous driving situations with these tips.

Drivers may slip into some bad driving habits when they're comfortable with the road — but those bad driving habits might result in a crash, a traffic violation or undue wear and tear on your vehicle.

Bad driving habits to avoid

Failing to signal. It's important to let other drivers and pedestrians know your next move so they can slow down and accommodate. Signal at least 100 feet in advance.

Riding the brakes. Keeping your foot on the vehicle brake pedal might be causing excess strain on your brakes. If you are driving a manual-transmission vehicle (stick-shift), try downshifting to remain at safe speeds.

Rolling through stop signs. Even if you think the streets are clear, come to a complete stop before turning or proceeding into the intersection. If you don't and the intersection is not an all-way stop, you may cause a crash.

Slowing down to look at crashes or construction. Rubbernecking is not only dangerous, but can also

contribute to a chain reaction of slowed traffic. Keep your eyes on the road ahead so you can stay alert to closed lanes or police officers directing traffic after a crash.

Sudden stops. Keep an eye on your surroundings and anticipate when you might need to stop. Pressing slowly on your brake pedal helps save on the excess wear on brake pads.

Fast starts. Peeling away from a stoplight uses excess gas, but also might be putting a strain on the key components of your engine. Accelerate at a slow smooth rate.

Driving on fumes. In older electric fuel pumps, the gasoline acts as a coolant. By driving with low fuel in your car, there is less fluid to help cool the engine. In today's vehicles, the fuel pump is encapsulated inside of a tube and surround by fuel at all times, even when the fuel level is low. Check out what to do if you happen to put the wrong fuel in your car.

Using the curb to park. Easing into a parking space until you hit the curb damages your tires and potentially causes alignment issues.

Running yellow or red lights. It can increase your chance of a crash. If the light turns yellow before you reach the intersection, it's best not to risk it.

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Disregarding the speed limit. Though posted speed limits vary by state, use the following ranges as a general guide if you don't see a posted limit:

Residential area: 15-30 mph

Undivided road (rural): 40-55 mph

Divided road (rural): 55-70 mph

Freeway: 55-65 mph

Discover more ways to maintain your vehicle, like regular tire maintenance, washer fluid top off and the car wash.

Defensive driving tips can help drivers take on the road safely

What are some defensive driving techniques to help you stay safe on the road?

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 37,461 vehicle fatalities in 2016. Speeding and offensive driving are major problems that contribute to fatal car crashes throughout the United States. These defensive driving tips can help you or a loved one take on the road safely.

Possible ways to stay safe on the road

Avoid driving during periods of high traffic, typically during morning, lunch, and evening commute times.

Keep your windshield, headlights, and mirror clean to improve visibility.

Raise your seat high enough so you have a clear view of the road. Sit on a small pillow if necessary.

Limit distractions inside the vehicle. This includes the radio and conversations with passengers and use of cell phones.

Stay alert. Watch for flashing lights and listen for emergency vehicles. PULL OVER FOR THEM.

Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead so you have ample time to brake safely if necessary. In normal driving conditions, the general rule is one car length for each ten mph. That is four car lengths at 40 mph. Many fatal car crashes involve following too close - tailgating. Especially in mountains, wildlife can cause the car in front of you to slow quickly or even stop to avoid hitting them. Increase following distance when visibility is poor or you're in traffic.

Keep windshield wiper blades in proper working condition. Any car parts store will have new blades and will actually install them for you right when you buy them.

Get periodic vision and hearing tests, especially if you drive at night. When you consider that 90% of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is limited at night, it is no surprise that the **night driving crash rate is roughly three times that of daylight driving.**

Slow down after the sun goes down. Close to two-thirds of fatal crashes that happen at night are speed related.

Take a defensive driving course. Some insurance policies may offer price discounts if individuals take these courses.

Carefully read medication labels to see if they may impair driving skills.

Don't drive if you're feeling tired, lightheaded, or stressed.

Avoid driving during inclement weather.

Use other transportation services such as taxis, rideshare services, and buses if you're unsure of your ability to drive safely.

Always wear your seat belt.

Obey the posted speed limit. Speeding puts lives and licenses on the line. It may also be expensive, and pricey tickets could increase insurance rates.

Share the road. Bicyclists must adhere to the same rules of the roads as motorists yet are more vulnerable to injury. Always give ample space to other vehicles to maneuver safely, from bikes and motorcycles to large trucks.

Business drivers, consider these defensive driving tips as well

Set rear view and side mirrors appropriately, to eliminate blind spots around your vehicle. Check mirrors frequently while driving, including lane changes, to be more aware of your surroundings. Be aware of road warning signs for hills, curves, animals, and other obstacles. Be especially alert at intersections, for proper signage/signals, and crossing traffic. **Pull over if you are slower than four vehicles behind you, it is the law!**



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Regenerative Agriculture

By Michael Elizabeth Sakas Dec. 10, 2020 HCN

This story was originally published by CPR News and is republished here by permission.

On a pasture outside of Steamboat Springs, rancher Matthew Gordon bends down and grabs a handful of grass. His wife Mandy watches and chuckles over his excitement. “What’s happened here is really super cool, because we have like several layers of organic matter built up on top of this ground,” Matthew said. “But underneath, even now during this cold time, I can see new grass growing.”

The Gordon’s cattle helped build up this layer. Their hooves trample down grass and their own waste which makes good compost, and provides insulation to help store water and keep the temperature cool.

Matthew and Mandy are nerds for this kind of stuff. They listen to podcasts, watch YouTube videos and take classes on the best ways to manage land in more natural and sustainable ways. They’ve worked on other ranches, but now they’re taking all that they’ve learned about regenerative agriculture to start their own operation — in the middle of a historic drought and a changing climate.

“I see water kind of going away and that can be a little scary,” Mandy said. “Through a lot of our practices, by helping promote healthier soil, it helps the water infiltrate and stay on the land instead of running off.”

Carbon farmers

A conventional rancher turns cattle out onto pasture for several weeks or months. But that can lead to overgrazing and major damage to the land, especially during a drought. So the Gordons use portable electric fences to keep their cattle moving, mimicking how predators chase herd animals around.

“Whether it be elk or bison that used to be on an area for a short period of time, consuming that one bite or two of the vegetation, and they would move,” Matthew said. “And that’s when the magic happens of the recovery period.”

Since there’s still something left of that grass, it can use photosynthesis to regrow. Through that process, the plant captures carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and carries it

down into the soil through a healthy root system.

“Carbon capture is kind of a buzzword these days, and they’re trying to develop technologies to do it when this is a technology that we’ve had for forever,” Matthew said. It’s likely that Colorado’s drought will continue into 2021 and Gov. Jared Polis is urging farmers and ranchers to prepare for it. To adapt to climate change, some producers are learning techniques that can also help trap and store carbon.

Industrial farming like intensive tillage, animal feedlots and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, have done a lot of damage to soil ecosystems worldwide. The United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that the world could run out of topsoil in about 60 years at the current rate of degradation.

Nicole Civita, the sustainable food systems specialization lead at the University of Colorado Boulder, said before farmers and ranchers started to plow up the prairies, there was a “really complex, rich ecosystem.”

“We took what had developed over millennia and had been really well managed by Indigenous communities, and destroyed it all very, very quickly to our own peril,” Civita said.

Regenerative agriculture is considered an important climate solution since it has the potential to draw down a lot of carbon. One technique that the U.S. Department of Agriculture tracks is the use of cover crops, which help promote healthy soil instead of leaving the ground bare between harvests.

Support and funding

From 2012 to 2017, there was a 2.8% increase in cover crop acreage in Colorado, USDA data shows. But only about 1% of the total crop acreage planted in Colorado was used for cover crops.

While more farmers and ranchers are adopting regenerative agriculture techniques, they make up a small number overall. Civita said that it’s not what most producers know.

“There’s a knowledge gap that we need to bridge because

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we have been farming in agrochemical-ly intensive ways for a long time,” she said.

Farmers and ranchers also need to be convinced that these techniques work, Civita said. Many are reluctant to abandon current farming methods that seem to be working.

It also takes time to reap the benefits, she said.

“It’s not as though a farmer can stop farming in a more conventional way tomorrow and suddenly the soil is magically healed.”

Such efforts can help farmers adapt to climate change — and make more money, Civita said.

Cindy Lair, who manages the Colorado State

Conservation Board program for the Colorado Department of Agriculture, said profitability is key to making regenerative farming popular.

“If it’s not going to help make good business sense to a farmer or rancher, they’re really not going to be interested in doing this,” Lair said.



Farmers and ranchers often need financial support to make the shift. Colorado has created a soil health program to help, but there’s no state funding for it yet. For now, the program is funded by a \$5 million partnership with the USDA.

The Gordons got a microloan from a local nonprofit to help them start. Matthew said one of the biggest challenges is convincing other farmers and ranchers to give regenerative agriculture a shot.

“Inherently the farming and ranching community attracts very tough and hard-headed people, and that’s what makes them good and what

makes them resilient,” Matthew said.

The Gordons want to reshape that rugged mindset for a changing climate. For them, that means learning to adapt so their ranch can change, too.

Michael Elizabeth Sakas is a general assignment reporter and producer for CPR News.

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Exposing Crime

By Emily Guerin Nov. 17, 2020 High Country News

What it took to investigate a suspicious town in the Mojave Desert

The creator of the 2020 podcast California City reflects on how she exposed deceptive desert land sales — from the outside.

In June 2018, I was sitting at the top of a small, crumbling butte just after sunrise, looking out at the maze of abandoned roads that crisscross the small Mojave Desert town of California City. I was there to dig into rumors I'd heard that, for decades, salespeople here had been using deception and high-pressure sales tactics to sell land. That morning, on that butte, I asked a local woman to tell me what she knew.

She had suspected that something sketchy was going on at Silver Saddle Ranch & Club, a kitschy, rundown dude ranch on the outskirts of town — think taxidermy jackalopes and knock-off wagon wheels. The owner appeared to be using the place as a tool to sell “near-worthless desert land,” as state investigators later put it, at exorbitant prices.

But back then, on the butte, I was still learning the basics of how Silver Saddle worked. When I asked the woman what she knew, she looked around, and, in a whisper, asked to go off the record. She didn't want to be seen as the kind of person who would gossip to a reporter about a local business.

“You get to go back to LA,” she told me. “But I have to live here.”

FOR MOST OF MY CAREER as a journalist, I had been the local reporter, the one who “had to live here.” Before I moved to Los Angeles in 2016, I reported on the oilfield from Bismarck, North Dakota. I watched as journalists from CNN and the New York Times flew into the state, did interviews and then flew home to write their exposés, while I attended yoga classes with the state's top oil lobbyist — surprisingly flexible, but a loud breather — and drank wine with lawyers suing the state over oil spills.

Part of me envied the national reporters, but another part resented them for the lack of consequences their coverage had on their own lives. It seemed essential, I thought, to live with the people you reported on. But soon after I moved to LA to work for the local NPR station KPCC, I reported a story in California City, 100 miles north of LA, and stumbled across what was happening at Silver Saddle.

Silver Saddle lured prospective buyers from around California with the promise of a free weekend at the ranch. The buyers were nearly all Filipino, Chinese or

Latino, and many spoke English as a second language.

After a sales tour and high-pressure sales tactics, the salespeople convinced many to buy land — and the company made tens of millions.

For over 60 years, salespeople had been giving a version of this pitch in California City. The town was founded in the late 1950s by a developer who touted it as the next San Fernando Valley. But the growth never came, and the Federal Trade Commission sued the company for deceptive marketing. It declared bankruptcy in the early 1980s, and a former employee purchased much of the land. Today, most of California City is raw desert, and fewer than 15,000 live there. But until very recently, Silver Saddle still sold a version of the Gold Rush-era settlers' dream: If you buy land here, you'll be rich one day. How had it evaded state and federal regulators?

Over the next two years, I tried to find out. Along the way, I had to grapple with my role as the big-city reporter. I interviewed dozens of people who'd bought land from Silver Saddle, and read piles of court documents, deeds, old newspaper articles and ads. But it was surprisingly hard to find locals willing to talk. My early experience on the butte kept happening. I began to worry that I was parachuting in, exposing something the residents preferred to keep quiet. The characteristics that often create comfortable, tight-knit communities sometimes allow wrongdoing to fester in them.

But the more I talked to people who invested with Silver Saddle, including people who spent their life savings there, the more convinced I became that a knowledgeable outsider had to be the one to expose the company. It felt like almost everyone suspected that what Silver Saddle was doing was

wrong, if not illegal. But it was too scary, too political or too far outside their job description to intervene.

I'd been reporting for over a year when the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation filed a sweeping lawsuit against Silver Saddle, accusing it of fraud and shutting it down. I don't know how much impact my reporting had, but I heard my digging may have put Silver Saddle on the state's radar. The case is now working its way through the civil court system. My podcast, California City, came out last summer, and many people who had bought land over the years thanked me for exposing what they felt was a 60-year long swindle.

I'm still wary of parachuting into small towns. But I realize now that the characteristics that often create comfortable, tight-knit communities sometimes allow wrongdoing to fester in them, to become normal. Sometimes, you need a compassionate outsider to pull back the curtain.

Emily Guerin is a senior reporter and makes podcasts at KPCC in Los Angeles. She is a former High Country News intern.



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Update: BuffaloFieldCampaign.org

A family group of buffalo takes up residence in Yellowstone Village, where they know they are safe from human-caused threats.

Photo by Stephany Seay, Buffalo Field Campaign.

The situation in the field has stayed relatively quiet since we last wrote, though we did lose one more adult female from the imperiled Central herd to a state hunter over the weekend. The rest of her family group continues to be savvy to hunting pressures and are staying safe on buffalo friendly private lands for now. Snow is finally starting to accumulate but



the grass the buffalo need remains unburied and easy to access. We've gotten enough snow, however, that we are finally skiing instead of hiking as we venture into the

buffalos' migration corridors. Even so, the serious thrust of real winter with heavy snowpack has yet to come.

We'd like to take this time to give a big shout out to the good folks of Yellowstone Village / Hebgen Lake Estates. This is the small subdivision on Horse Butte that we constantly talk about, where the buffalo have many devout friends. Residents of Yellowstone Village are outstanding watchdogs for our friends the buffalo, keeping a close eye on hunters who troll their neighborhood, and letting us know when things are amiss.

Over the lifetime of this Campaign, the residents of Yellowstone Village have been a tremendously strong voice for the buffalo. They literally lead the nation in demonstrating that humans and wild buffalo can peacefully live among one another. There is no question that this housing area is 'the' perfect living classroom of co-existence. We are humbled by the great love the residents have for the buffalo. They show it in so many ways, by putting up Buffalo Safe Zone signs, using the buffalos' images in their street signs, contacting us with information, sharing their stories, keeping an eye on hunters, or advocating for them with the powers-that-be.

We always know the buffalo are in good hands when they are in this community. There is no other place like it on the entire planet. The buffalo, too, know they are among friends there. Let this set the standard across the continent as we continue to realize our collective vision of wild buffalo roaming freely all over this land!

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Nuisance Animals

By Ingrid Winter

People who know about my passion
For wildlife rehabilitation

Ask me

How can I justify saving animals
That are considered

Useless or invasive

Nuisance animals

Such as

Starlings

(called 'Euro trash' by some!)

Pigeons

(Dirty!)

Collared Doves

(Aggressive! Invasive!)

or Prairie Dogs

(Aka 'Agricultural Pests' !)

Squirrels

('Rats with bushy tails')

Why save them people ask

When they are so abundant

Not endangered

Sometimes harmful

Or simply a nuisance

And, in some cases

Invasive in the sense

That they push out

Indigenous species

Such as

The collared Doves

Replacing

Morning Doves

I am not a scientist or a wildlife manager

Or an expert of any kind

But here is

What I have to say –

I feel

That our job is to try and

Save the life

Of any animal

That comes to us

Whether or not

It is of a species

We deem useful or worthy

For a life Is a life

And the animal does not know

That it is useless or invasive

Or whatever label

We attach to it and has not

Committed a crime punishable

By death

And moreover,

When it comes

To the label 'invasive'

The species

That should come to mind first

Is us – Humans

Who have taken over

The world

And have caused

Innumerable species

To disappear

Forever

So –

How can we presume

To have a right

To decide

Who is allowed

To be here

And who is not

(Muslims?

Homeless?

Mexicans?

Indians?.....)

And who

Is going to live

And who

Is going to die?



Photo by Alexa Boyes.

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Indigenous Representation

By Graham Lee Brewer & Anna V. Smith Dec. 14, 2020

Tribal leaders respond to the idea of an Indigenous Interior secretary.

Representation is important, and so are policy decisions impacting tribes on the ground.

President-elect Joe Biden has pledged to make his administration the most diverse in history, a promise that so far he has fulfilled with several key appointments. For weeks now, momentum has been building behind a push for the Department of the Interior to be run by an Indigenous person for the first time in history. Dozens of tribal leaders have called upon Biden to appoint U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland, D-N.M, an enrolled tribal member of the Laguna Pueblo.

Beyond the obvious symbolic importance of having an Indigenous person lead Interior, a department with a long history of defying the best interests of tribal nations, the possibilities such a position would bring for tribal administrations and citizens alike are endless. Native leaders and advocates are hoping that a Haaland appointment would result in improved tribal consultation on everything from land protections to how agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency, interact with tribal communities. As the country awaits Biden's decision to be carried out, Native communities are bracing for what could prove a seismic change in the way the federal government treats the interests of Indian Country. "It will be a moment to exhale for tribal leaders," said

Judith Le Blanc, a citizen of the Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma and director of the Native Organizers Alliance, a national Native training and organizing network. An Indigenous person leading Interior, she said, would mean having someone who understands the legal and inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to govern their own lands.

"We're the only peoples in this country who have a collectively owned land base that has been self-governed since the beginning of time," Le Blanc said. "To have someone who understands that historic fact and therefore the rights and responsibilities to consult and to discuss before a decision is made that will affect treaty lands will be amazing. It creates opportunities and possibilities that tribal leaders will have to step into."

The possibility of an Indigenous person leading Interior comes after an election in which Indigenous voters supported the Biden/Harris ticket in critical states like Arizona, Nevada and Wisconsin. As IllumiNatives — a nonprofit working to increase Native visibility — put it in a social media post, "Joe, Native people showed up for you. Now, show up for them." If Haaland — or someone like Michael Connor, a member of Taos Pueblo and former deputy Interior director, whose name has also been floated as a possible nominee — were to run the department, it would have a significant impact on Indian Country policy for the next several years not only for department policies and representation, but also for on-the-ground realities.

Under the current administration, environmental laws were significantly weakened, protections of places like the Tongass National Forest were rolled back and large-scale,

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high-impact projects like the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines were expedited. Many of those policies included a rushed — or, in the case of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, nonexistent — tribal consultation process. While all bureaucracies have flaws, both Haaland and Connor understand that including tribal nations in a government-to-government consultation process is non-negotiable. They could also reverse some of the current administration’s controversial decisions. Whoever is confirmed, the stakes are high.

The Yurok Tribe was one of a host of tribes to sign a letter to President-elect Joe Biden, urging him to choose Haaland. The tribe has had a protracted battle with the federal government over keeping enough water in the Klamath River to support their lifeways and the river’s salmon population. In 2001, a government decision caused the largest fish kill in Yurok and U.S. history. Vice Chairman Frankie Myers says the representation and experience that would come with Haaland as an Indigenous person and lawmaker would be a welcome change: “Ensuring that Indigenous voices are at the highest level of government, specifically when it comes to resources, is critical for us moving this country in a better, more positive

way.”

“I can’t believe it has taken this long. We have never been included in decisions that will affect our future.” Bernadette Demientieff, executive director of the Gwich’in Steering Committee, agrees. In November, the current administration announced that it would auction off oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge just two weeks before Biden takes office. The refuge, which lies within the ancestral lands of the Gwich’in, supports the sensitive populations of Porcupine caribou, polar bears and walrus. The Gwich’in Steering Committee has filed numerous lawsuits to stop the sale. “This current administration has done nothing but disrespect and violate the rights of our people,” Demientieff wrote in a statement to High Country News. While Native voters tend to lean left, Indian Country issues on the Hill have typically found support with both Republicans and Democrats.

The six Indigenous people who will join the next Congress are split evenly between the parties. And even though the political atmosphere has been considerably polarized under the last administration, the prevailing sentiment is that Haaland’s ability to work across the aisle will keep Indian Country policy (Continued next page.)

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from becoming a politically divisive issue.

“There’s a reason why people like (Republican U.S. Reps.) Don Young and Tom Cole have publicly spoken out in very positive ways regarding Deb,” said Keith Harper, a member of the Cherokee Nation and an Obama appointee who was the first Indigenous person to represent the U.S. on the United Nations Human Rights Council. “Because they’ve worked with her and know she’s willing to put the party politics aside and get pragmatic about challenges.” “Because we understand that Native American issues are not a matter of conservative versus liberal, we have accomplished a great deal together,” said Rep. Cole. Out of all representatives in the House, Haaland’s bills have had the most bicameral support, and often bipartisan. And the political allies and partners she’s made in Congress have some predicting that this would translate to consensus building across the government on issues affecting Native people.

“Oftentimes, Interior is looked at as the agency that handles Indian affairs,” said Kim Teehee, the Cherokee Nation’s congressional delegate. “We have HUD (Housing and Urban Development) that handles Indian housing, we have the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) that handles broadband, education, the USDA (Department of

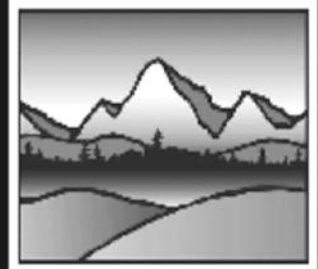
Agriculture). There is such a cross-cutting nature of Indian Country issues, and I think she has the unique ability as a Cabinet secretary to convene the agencies.”

One non-Native whose name has been floated for the position is retiring Sen. Tom Udall, a Democrat from New Mexico, who has long been a champion of Indigenous affairs in Congress. His father, Stewart Udall, was secretary of Interior from 1961-1969 under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.

A number of progressive Native-led organizations have called on him to remove his name from consideration. When asked what it could mean for an Indigenous person to lead Interior, Udall told High Country News that “Native Americans should be in high positions throughout government in the White House and various agencies – it’s not just about the Interior Department,” adding that the next secretary must prioritize tribal nation’s needs with inclusive consultation, and put in “the hard work to make sure Native voices are front and center throughout the department.”

Graham Lee Brewer is an associate editor at High Country News and a member of the Cherokee Nation. Anna V. Smith is an assistant editor for High Country News.

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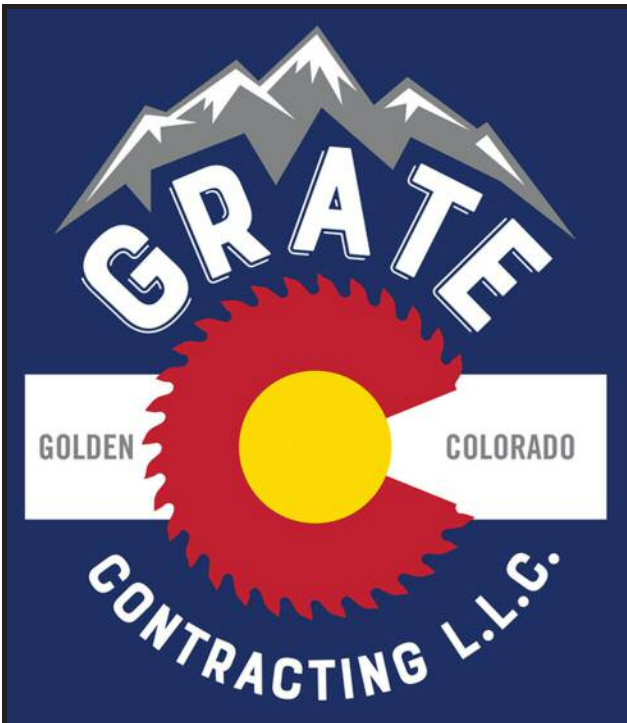
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Integrity

By Frosty Wooldridge

Over the years, one of my friends married a beautiful woman and fathered two boys. He shared his pride with me as they grew to become men. I watched their pictures fill the entire front of his refrigerator. His boys adorned the walls of the living room and his office.

Both boys graduated from outstanding universities. Each earned lucrative jobs in the business world. Both boys married wonderful college sweethearts who brought children into the world. They live in wonderful homes in successful neighborhoods.

But recently, my friend informed me that one of his boys continually cheats on his wife over the past five years to a point that his wife set in motion divorce proceedings. My friend felt deep embarrassment that his son betrayed the mother of his grandchildren. My friend felt responsibility for his son's lack of moral integrity.

From a successful life, the cheating husband betrayed his wife, his kids and his friends. Not only did he create a

horrible breach in his own life, but also he created incredible consequences with the married women with whom he initiated sexual affairs. In the end, he betrayed himself. He faces child support, broken family, weekend visits with his kids and a total breakdown in the cohesiveness of his children.

“Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

He never thought about that! I'm reminded about the same events with the legendary singer Elvis Presley. Before he married Pricilla, Elvis Presley enjoyed a wild and free-flowing bachelor life. Once he entered the sacred rights of marriage—society and every woman expects their man to be faithful for life. To break such a vow, any marriage partner faces ominous consequences.

While everything looked fine on the outside, Elvis Presley lost his bearings. He lost the daily enjoyment of watching Lisa Marie Presley grow up at Graceland mansion. He lost his emotional and spiritual connection to his spouse. He

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became a weekend father, which fractured his connection with his only offspring.

Shortly after his divorce, Presley gorged himself on fattening foods and endless drugs. He lost his moral compass. The negative emotional vibrations he set in motion tore at the moorings of his heart. He became erratic, obese and forgot words to songs at his concerts. By the age of 43, he died of a heart attack. Many said he died of a broken heart.

In American society, some estimates show that half of American men cheat on their wives. Today, 50 percent of marriages end in divorce courts. Millions of kids see their mother and father living separate lives. They lose the structure of their family because their father or mother failed to adhere to the sacred bonds of matrimony.

I wrote a teen novel about the early loss of a parent through death or divorce in my book: ***Strike Three! Take Your Base***. The novel shows two paths for the teens facing the loss of a parent. It's gut wrenching! Yet, it's positive.

Where does that leave any of us? How can we maintain integrity with our spouse and ourselves? How can we avoid what happened to Elvis Presley or my friend's son in

the not too distant future?

If you marry someone, remain honest with him or her. If you're not happy with the marriage, then tell them and work it out work. If it cannot be worked out, proceed toward a divorce. Avoid throwing sexual betrayal into the mix.

With children in the arena, make certain to let them know they are safe. Make certain they know they are loved by both of you.

Make certain each of you supports the other spouse with good words, good actions and positive comments about them.

While you may feel pain, betrayal, anger, resentment and other negative emotions—understand that life moves forward. You must choose to move with it. Yes, cry, scream, sob and feel the pain—but choose life and all its opportunities.

Above all, choose high vibrational living for you, for your kids and for each day.

In the final analysis, live a life of integrity. Life will respond with integrity.

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PROPANE

Agfinity ins front cover 1.970.454.4081
Carl's Corner pg 10 303.642.7144

REAL ESTATE

Byers-Sellers Mtn Properties pg 20 303.642.7951
Mock Realty-Kathy Keating -Back cov 303.642.1133
Mountain Home CO pg 29 303.618.9619

RETAIL

ACE Indian Peaks Hardware pg 26 303.258.3132
B & F Mountain Market pg 31 303.258.3105
Meyer Hardware pg 3 303.279.3393
The Silver Horse - pg 5 303.279.6313
The Rustic Moose - pg 5 303.258.3225

REVERSE MORTGAGES

Universal Lending Corp. pg 10 303.791.4786

ROOFING

Independence Roofing pg 3 720.399.0355

STEEL STRUCTURES

Steel Structures America ins cov 970.420.7100

TAXES

Karen Schwimmer, CPA pg 10 303.642.0628

WATER & WELL

Arrow Drilling pg 24 303.421.8766

Power Update

January
2021

No Rate Increase for Members in 2021

United Power is pleased to announce there will be no rate increase in 2021. The decision from the cooperative's Board of Directors was made in November upon approval of the 2021 budget and rate structure. For many members, who have had to endure a tumultuous past few months or have been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the news could not have come at a better time.

Rates were able to remain steady thanks to the forethought of cooperative leadership, who recognized the potential financial impact the pandemic could have and took immediate action to reduce spending in various departments. Just as businesses and homeowners adjusted spending, each team at United Power was tasked with evaluating initiatives that could either save money or be delayed without impacting service.

A variety of factors allowed the cooperative to keep rates steady, but perhaps chief among them has been the amount of growth seen throughout the service area, despite the pandemic. The slowdown United Power anticipated on its system never materialized. Instead, another strong year

in residential and business growth, as well as load growth, helped fuel its ability to weather the storm. Other shifts in the ways our members interacted with us this year made small, but noticeable, changes to costs. Member enrollment in services like online account management and paperless billing was also a factor, which helped the cooperative improve efficiencies and provided real savings.

"United Power has been fortunate during this time," said Laurie Burkhart, the cooperative's chief financial officer. "We haven't seen the same level of impact as many other cooperatives, and that's due in large part to the actions our teams have taken, as well as continued growth we've seen. It's allowed us to keep our rates from increasing and provide some small relief to our members."

United Power offers members a variety of rate options to flexible to many different lifestyles and usage patterns. You can compare rates and choose one that most closely fits how you and your family use energy at www.unitedpower.com/rates.



Scholarship Opportunities

Applications Due: Jan. 29, 2021

Each year, United Power awards academic scholarships to outstanding students served by the cooperative. Scholarships include awards for students attending an accredited university or college in Colorado or pursuing a specific degree program, as well as 10 book scholarships. This year, United Power will award 17 scholarships for a total of \$19,500. Awards range between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

Eligibility varies for each scholarship, but in general overall academic achievement (such as GPA and ACT/SAT scores), extracurricular activities and community involvement rank high in the evaluation process. A brief written essay is required, and the applicants primary residence must be in United Power's service territory.

For more information, including a list of available scholarships, visit www.unitedpower.com.

Bundle Up for Winter Storms

Are you prepared for winter's cold grasp? Winter weather fell quickly upon us this year, with some parts of United Power's service territory receiving approximately a foot of snow followed by a few cold fronts moving through the state dropping the temps well below freezing. The winter weather can wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions. Here are some ways you can better prepare your home for winter weather before it officially arrives later this month.

- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment every year to ensure they're working safely and properly. Change out the filter on your furnace. Have your chimneys cleaned and inspected to make sure nothing is blocking the flue.
- There are many places in the home where heat can escape and cold air can enter, but windows are one of the biggest culprits. Consider installing storm windows for better insulation.
- If replacing windows is too expensive, sometimes a little caulk can do the work. Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system. Covering windows with plastic (from the inside) can also keep the cold out.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.



Member Services: 303-637-1300

Coal Creek Office: 303-642-7921

www.unitedpower.com

Chili Challenge Drive-Thru

Our Past Four Winners will compete - **Saturday, Jan 23, 2021**

CCCIA Hall 31528 Hwy 72



134 Kegley Road

Best Views in Colorado

4 BD/ 3 BA 4,051 sq.ft. **\$1,350,000**



Coal Creek Canyon

Gorgeous Updated Log Home - 1.82 Acres

4 BD/ 4 BA 3,817 sq.ft. **\$1,100,000**



206 Lone Ponderosa

Remodeled Throughout 1 Acre

2 BD/ 1 BA 1,175 sq.ft. **\$429,000**



181 Hummingbird Lane

Nicely Updated - Theater Room 1.29 Ac.

3 BD/ 2 BA 2,129 sq.ft.. **\$474,000**



92 Black Bear Trail

Continental Divide View!

3 BD/ 2 BA 2,088 sq.ft. **\$520,000**



Coal Creek Canyon

Fabulous Luxury Home, Views

4 BD/ 4 BA 4,697 sq.ft. **\$950,000**



3497 Coal Creek Canyon #18

Adorable Summer Cabin

3 BD/ 1 BA 1,184 sq.ft. **\$249,000**



11470 Ranch Elsie Road

Horse Property! 3.8 Acres

2 BD/ 1 BA 1,948 sq.ft. **\$455,000**



198 Range Road

Solar Powered & Secluded "Treehouse"
2 BD/ 2 BA 1,652 sq.ft. 2.7 Ac **\$569,900**



34226 Gap Road

Amazing Mtn Home, Backs to Conservation
Land 4 BD/ 2 BA 2,750 sq.ft. 1.14 Acre



Vacant Land

1257 / 1316 Chute Road

Secluded 5+ acres, Divide, City,
and Gross Dam Views **\$139,000**



11440 Inspiration Road

Amazing Views at Road's End
3 BD/2 BA 2,341 sq.ft. 1.5 Ac. **\$540,000**



Coal Creek Canyon

Luxury Mountain Living 59.4 Acres
4 BD/ 5 BA 3,661 sq.ft. **\$1,744,750**



Coal Creek Canyon

Custom Log Home - 4.2 Acres
3 BD/ 4 BA 3,300 sq.ft. **\$900,000**



85 Valley View Drive

Breathtaking Divide & Lake Views
4 BD/ 4 BA 3623 sq.ft. 1+Ac. **\$775,000**



**BUY OR SELL A HOME with
Kathy or Janet & USE
the moving truck for FREE**



Kathy Keating
CRS, ABR, GRI
EcoBroker
Broker Associate
303.642.1133

For additional information & photos:
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