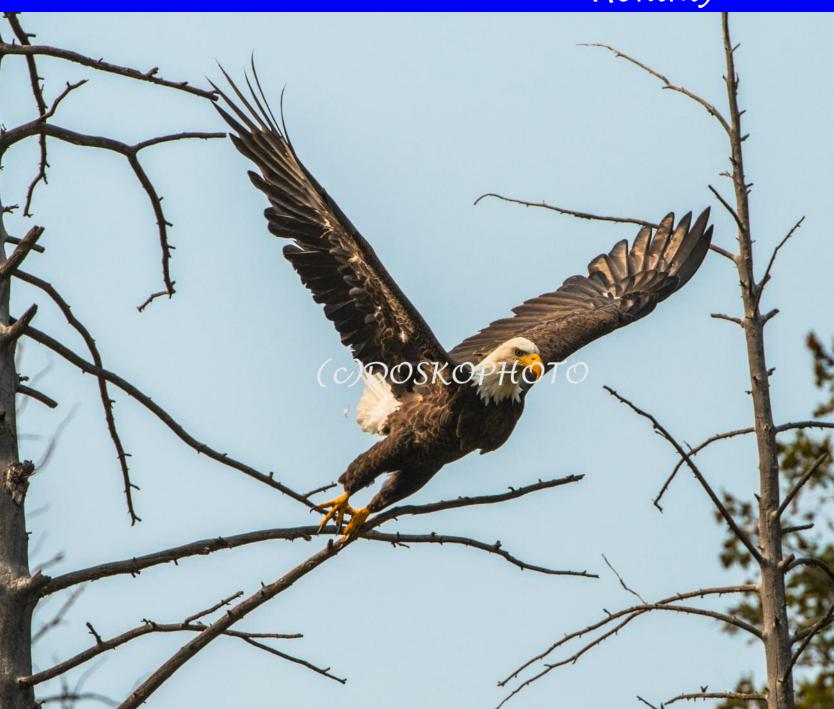
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PAGE 4 July 2018

Our National Bird - The Bald Eagle

From Wikipedia

The bald eagle is an opportunistic feeder which subsists mainly on fish, which it swoops down and snatches from the water with its talons. It builds the largest nest of any North American bird and the largest tree nests ever recorded for any animal species, up to (13 ft) deep, (8.2 ft) wide, and nearly 2,000 lbs. in weight. Sexual maturity is attained at the age of four to five years.

Bald eagles are not actually bald; the name derives from an older meaning of the word, "white headed." The adult is mainly brown with a white head and tail. The sexes are identical in plumage, but females are about 25 percent larger than males. The beak is large and hooked. The plumage of the immature is brown.

The bald eagle is both the national bird and national animal of the United States of America. The bald eagle appears on its seal. In the late 20th century it was on the brink of being destroyed in the contiguous United States.

Populations have since recovered and the species was removed from the U.S. government's list of endangered species on July 12, 1995 and transferred to the list of threatened species. It was removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife in the Lower 48 States on June 28, 2007.

The plumage of an adult bald eagle is evenly dark brown with a white head and tail. The tail is moderately long and slightly wedge-shaped. Males and females are identical in plumage coloration, but sexual dimorphism is evident in the species, in that females are 25% larger than males. The beak, feet and irises are bright yellow. The legs are feather-free, and the toes are short and powerful with large

talons. The highly developed talon of the hind toe is used to pierce the vital areas of prey while it is held immobile by the front toes. The beak is large and hooked, with a yellow cere. The adult bald eagle is unmistakable in its native range. The closely related African fish eagle (H. vocifer) (from far outside the bald eagle's range) also has a brown body, white head and tail, but differs from the bald in having a white chest and black tip to the bill.

The plumage of the immature is a dark brown overlaid with messy white streaking until the fifth (rarely fourth, very rarely third) year, when it reaches sexual maturity. Immature bald eagles are distinguishable from the golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos), the only other very large, non-vulturine bird in North America, in that the former has a

larger, more protruding head with a larger beak, straighter edged wings which are held flat (not slightly raised) and with a stiffer wing beat and feathers which do not completely cover the legs. When seen well, the golden eagle is distinctive in plumage with a more solid warm brown color than an immature bald eagle, with a reddishgolden patch to its nape and (in immature birds) a highly contrasting set of white squares on the wing. Another distinguishing feature of the immature bald eagle over the mature bird is its black, yellow-tipped beak; the mature eagle has a fully yellow beak.

The bald eagle has sometimes been considered the largest true raptor (accipitrid) in North America. The only larger species of raptor-like bird is the California condor (Gymnogyps californianus), a New World vulture which today is not generally considered a taxonomic ally of true accipitrids.

The call consists of weak staccato, chirping whistles, kleek kik ik ik, somewhat similar in cadence to a gull's call. The calls of young birds tend to be more harsh and shrill than those of adults.

The bald eagle occurs during its breeding season in virtually any kind of American wetland habitat such as seacoasts, rivers, large lakes or marshes or other large bodies of open water with an abundance of fish. Studies have shown a preference for bodies of water with a circumference greater than (7 miles), and lakes with an area greater than (4 square miles) are optimal for breeding bald eagles.

The bald eagle typically

(Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Wildlife

requires old-growth and mature stands of coniferous or hardwood trees for perching, roosting, and nesting. Tree species reportedly is less important to the eagle pair than the tree's height, composition and location. Perhaps of paramount importance for this species is an abundance of comparatively large trees surrounding the body of water.

Selected trees must have good visibility, be over (66 feet) tall, an open structure, and proximity to prey. If nesting trees are in standing water such as in a mangrove swamp, the nest can be located fairly low, at as low (20 feet) above the ground. In a more typical tree standing on dry ground, nests may be located from (52 to 125 feet) in height. In Chesapeake Bay, nesting trees averaged (32 inches) in diameter and (92 feet) in total height, while in Florida, the average nesting tree stands (75 feet) high and is (9.1 inch) in diameter. Trees used for nesting in the Greater Yellowstone area average (89 feet) high. Trees or forest used for nesting should have a canopy cover of no more than 60%, and no less than 20%, and be in close proximity to water. Most nests have been found within (660 feet) of open water. The greatest distance from open water recorded for a bald eagle nest was over (1.9 miles), in Florida.

Bald eagle nests are often very large in order to compensate for size of the birds. The largest recorded nest was found in Florida in 1963, and was measured at nearly 10 feet wide and 20 feet deep.

The bald eagle is a powerful flier, and soars on thermal convection currents. It reaches speeds of (35–43 mph) when gliding and flapping, and about (30 mph) while carrying fish. Its dive speed is between (75–99 mph), though it seldom dives vertically. Regarding their flying abilities, the bald eagle is considered surprisingly

maneuverable in flight, bounty hunters shooting from helicopters opined that they were far more difficult to hunt while flying than golden eagles as they would turn, double back or dive as soon as approached. Bald eagles have also been recorded catching up to and then swooping under geese in flight, turning over and thrusting their talons into the other bird's breast. It is partially migratory, depending on location. If its territory has access to open water, it remains there year-round, but if the body of water freezes during the winter, making it impossible to obtain food, it migrates to the south or to the coast. A number of populations are subject to post-breeding dispersal, mainly in juveniles; Florida eagles, for example, will disperse northwards in the summer.

The bald eagle selects migration routes which take advantage of thermals, updrafts, and food resources. During migration, it may ascend in a thermal and then glide down, or may ascend in updrafts created by the wind against a cliff or other terrain. Migration generally takes place during the daytime, usually between the local hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., when thermals are produced by the sun.

Supplemental prey are readily taken given the opportunity. In some areas reptiles may become regular prey, especially warm areas such as Florida where reptile diversity is high. Turtles are perhaps the most regularly hunted type of reptile. In coastal New Jersey, 14 of 20 studied eagle nests included remains of turtles. Snakes are also taken occasionally, especially partially aquatic ones, as are amphibians and crustaceans (largely crayfish and crabs).



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Park Tips Are Out, Strategies Are In

Article and Photographs by Diane Bergstrom

"STOP TELLING PEOPLE TO GO TO THE PARK!" my friend Jane, an avid hiker, chided me. "I don't even go any more," my friend Tina remarked. I appreciate Jane's good natured frankness, and also Tina's candor. I knew what they meant. The visitor numbers at Rocky Mountain National Park have steadily climbed, broken records, and resulted in jammed roadways and challenged planning to get into our backyard national treasure. It ranks as the fourth most visited national park with 4.4 million visitors in 2017. The front range is continuing to

grow along with Colorado's population, not to mention our reputation of being a wonderful vacation destination. We need to attend to our parks and wild places, because what we value and love, we will support and protect. It's no longer time for tips, what you need is an informed strategy. (Sorry Jane, I promise you both a strategized evening park trip if you're willing.)

I heard a speaker state years ago that one of the most potent stressors occurs when what we want doesn't happen in the time frame we expect. So true and the same goes for a park outing. Don't be dissuaded, be realistic. Pack your car with patience and plan, plan, plan. In 2014, when I wrote about the US Hwy 36 roadwork to repair flood damage, I outlined closures and strategies to get to the park. A visitor of a canyon resident read them, followed the strategy, and got to the park meeting spot 45 minutes ahead of her puzzled canyon hosts. How, her hosts asked? She stated she'd read the Highlander on his coffee table and followed the

The main strategy goal is getting you into the park with your nerves and optimism intact. If you expect to drive your own vehicle into the park, and find parking, plan on arriving before 9 am or go after 4 pm for your best opportunities. There is "less" traffic on weekdays but I put no guarantees on those expectations. If trailheads along Bear Lake Road are your destination, a good strategy is parking at the Park and Ride lot along Bear Lake Road and hopping on a free shuttle. Be aware there are often lines to get on one but they run every 10-30 minutes, depending on which direction you choose and taking into consideration elk jams, bear jams,

suggested strategy. Just saying.



moose jams, and traffic jams. From Park and Ride, you can take shuttles heading in two different directions. The Bear Lake shuttle runs every 10-15 minutes and the Moraine Park shuttle runs every 30 minutes. In addition to reducing pollution emissions, they provide a nice opportunity to watch for wildlife instead of a parking spot. The last terminus shuttle pickup on both routes is 7:30 pm, heading back to the Park and Ride. Plan your hiking time accordingly so you don't miss that last bus! When the Bear Lake corridor lots are filled, cars will be turned around at Moraine Park, and visitors will (Continued on next page.)



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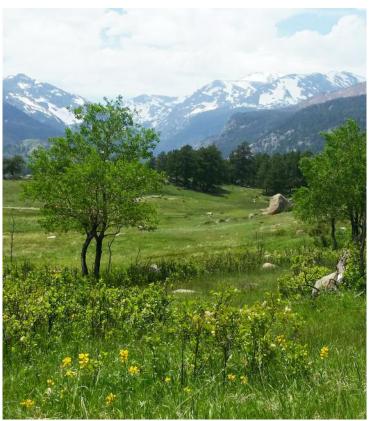
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be invited to return later or head further north into the park to access other trails. Be aware that even the lot at the Alpine Center at the top of Trail Ridge Road has been filling between 9 am and 3 pm. Not to say you can't park there, but you might have to circle a bit. Timing is everything.

The flood repairs on Hwy 34 are finished and it is open. The bridge work in Estes Park is also finished. Estes built a new parking garage, with over 400 free spaces, next to the Estes Park Visitors Center at the junction of N. St. Vrain Avenue and US 36. There is an easy access entrance heading into town along US 36. Watch for the off ramp near the golf course. Now pay attention to this strategy: the free busses going to Park and Ride in the park run on the hour at 7:30, 8:30, and 9:30 am. Starting at 10 am, they run every half hour until 5:30 pm when they go back to hourly, 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30 pm. The last bus OUT of the park heading back to the parking garage leaves Park and Ride on Bear Lake Road at 8:30 pm. You miss that bus and you're hitching back into town. The route is called the "Hiker's Shuttle" and while the ride is free, please board with your already-purchased park pass. Park passes are NOT sold at the Estes Park Visitors Center.

Ok, now for strategies on buying your way in. After receiving over 100,000 comments from visitors, business owners and politicians, the Department of the Interior did not drastically raise proposed entrance fees at 17 national park sites, 11 of which are in the west. Instead, a minimal \$5 increase has gone into affect at every park that charges a fee. Rocky's day passes are \$25, 7 day passes are \$35 for vehicles and \$20 for motorcycles, and annual passes are \$70. I suggest you pay in person at entrance stations for your passes so that the majority of the funds stay in and support RMNP operations. Ordering passes on line can take four weeks and a much smaller fee percentage stays in the local park. America The Beautiful annual passes for access to all federal public lands costs \$80. Senior annual passes cost \$20 while a lifetime pass costs \$80. Active military and disabled passes are free and more information can be found online at www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes. If your child just finished 4th grade, you can still apply for a free family pass at www.everykidinapark.gov. It will be valid



through August. Again, maximize your support for Rocky's operational budgets by purchasing your passes at an entrance station. The free in-park shuttle system is also directly funded by the fees.

Final condensed recommendations! Bring your own water and bottle, plus electrolytes, and snacks. Dress or pack in layers. The majority of hypothermia cases happen when the air temperature is between 30-50 degrees. Temperatures drop suddenly at higher elevations when a front moves in, leaving many out of state visitors underdressed. Educate and prepare your guests. Lightning injuries/strikes are also common so if you hear thunder, head for lower elevation and shelter immediately. Ticks are everywhere this summer and a possible 30% are carrying Colorado Tick Fever virus. Check for ticks after being in grassy and wild areas. Symptoms can appear three days after a bite and can include high fever, discomfort, and lethargy. Get to a doctor right away. Give wildlife,



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Highlander Issues

especially large animals, 25 yards distance. Remember if they change their behavior because of your presence or behavior, you're too close. Mothers with young are throughout the park and will aggressively protect their young. I recently observed a toddler run towards a goose



family at a local lake, her father casually walking behind her. The goose parent, being the same height as the toddler, perceived her as a threat and moved between her and the family, hissing and spreading its wings. The father didn't know this was defensive goose body language and I quickly told him it was about to protect the goslings that same way he would protect his child. He quickly called her back. Alaskan friends told me they'd rather run into a bear on a trail than a mama moose because bears are more predictable. The moose population is now on the rise on both western and eastern sides of the park. A collaring project is underway for biologists to study the effects of the growing population. Give elk and moose a wide berth, regardless of how peaceful and docile they might appear. Here's an Alaskan survival strategy: if you are ever chased by a moose, run in a zigzag pattern. Their front quarters don't allow them to follow that pattern easily. Better strategy: don't get in close vicinity. That includes taking selfies with the animals. There's a video going around from Yellowstone National Park of visitors walking up to bison and turning their backs to take selfies. I just can't even speak to that because Darwin's Theory of the Survival of the Fittest comes to mind, and ultimately the animal will

lose. If you see something, say something, either to an unaware visitor or report to a park employee or volunteer, including seeing someone feed the animals which endangers visitors and the animals. Let's all stay safe. The animals are also adjusting to record numbers of visitors.

Get the park newspaper upon entering, or go online to www.nps.gov/planyourvisit to check details of ranger programs, park movies, events, talks, walks, Junior ranger program, etc. There's a lot going on beyond the trails. Have a Plan B in case Plan A doesn't work out. Being flexible can put you in the most rewarding places and create unexpected lasting memories. Ask an employee or volunteer for suggestions. I personally look for a volunteer with a few wrinkles or a gray hair because they are likely to have been hiking the park for decades and can give you little known tips

and well-tested advice. As always, leave your dog (unless a bona fide service dog), drones and pot at home. Marijuana is not legal on federal properties and rangers shouldn't have to deal with it while they're protecting park resources. I've never advised this, but it's now a strategy, remember the park is worth the wait. Happy hiking!









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Camping

By Jane Parnell

It was a Friday night in July 2016, the height of tourist season. But having camped in this gulch for decades without incident — not even a hungry bear — we didn't anticipate how much had changed since our last visit five years before.

We drove past the Forest Service campground, which was, as usual, full, and on up a dirt road too rough for anything but a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Camping was allowed along the road in designated sites. These were the only free sites anywhere near the resort town of Aspen, Colorado, and functioning cellphone service. It was a calm, pristine evening, Venus rising above the trees, the sound of the creek after a long, congested drive as restorative as a Vivaldi concerto — until the guns started firing.

By bedtime we were pinned down. At almost every other campsite, it seemed, except for ours and the one across the road, people were armed and shooting their weapons. It sounded like an NRA convention had taken up residence, with members flexing their firepower on behalf of the Second Amendment. The veteran across the road, who was camping with his two boys, said the gunfire was all too reminiscent of his two tours in Iraq. He ordered his sons to stay in the camper and not to go outside without him, even for a quick pee.

With ice axes, brought for the climb tomorrow, in hand, my friend Babs and I walked down the road to ask our neighbors to knock it off. By then, their chainsaws had also buzzed into action, toppling the two tallest aspens in the grove and decapitating them. When we arrived, they were dragging the trunks to their bonfire to keep it going for the rest of the night. To our surprise, their SUVs bore Colorado license plates, so their ill-mannered behavior couldn't be blamed on ignorance. Not that ignorance was any defense.

The large sign at the mouth of the gulch made it clear. How could they have missed it? No shooting, no chopping down trees, no food left out to attract bears. Our neighbors weren't the only campers in the gulch who violated all three bans. At other campsites below us, boulders pinged and tree trunks crackled, as round after round struck its target, and smoke from a dozen bonfires drifted uphill, penetrating our tents.

Our neighbors seemed polite enough; the sight of the ice axes wielded by two women old enough to be their grandmothers might have helped. They actually apologized for the noise, but by the time we crawled back into our sleeping bags, the shooting from somewhere close had erupted again.

Earplugs were useless. The pop, pop, pop of bullets

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Highlander Nature

discharged in rapid succession rang out relentlessly, their capacity to terrify amplified by the echo chamber of the gulch. I nearly smothered myself with the down jacket I placed over my head. At midnight, the vet across the way

drove away. He said his ex-wife would never forgive him if their boys were gunned down on a camping trip with Dad. I would have poked my head out of the tent to wish him well but I didn't want to get caught in any crossfire.

Our experience was not unique. During Fourth of July weekend in 2015, a grandfather was shot dead at a Forest Service campground near Woodland Park, Colorado, while sitting at his campfire, roasting marshmallows with his son-in-law. His daughter and three grandchildren were taking a walk, and though they were not injured, they had to endure the kind of horrific experience no one should have to endure. In news accounts about that incident, a Forest Service spokesperson reported a quintupling of shooting incidents over the previous two years.

I tightened the drawstring on my bag, lowered my head to half-mast, and hugged the floor of the tent so hard, a foxhole might have opened up. At dawn, my head throbbed from lack of sleep — a hangover that would dog the entire hike. At 6 a.m., we made our escape, driving up the road to the trailhead for our ascent of a 13,000-foot peak. I'll never camp in that gulch again.

Here's some advice to campers with guns: Leave your arsenal at home. You have nothing to fear but yourself. And think of those three kids who have to live with the memory of their bawling mom for the rest of their lives as she stood over her father, pleading for him to breathe. They never caught the shooter. Whether it was homicide or an accident, Granddad was dead.

Jane Parnell is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). She the author of the mountaineering memoir, Off Trail: Finding My Way Home in the Colorado Rockies, recently published by University of Oklahoma Press.

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nature, not a shooting range or circus of humans creating havoc and unsafe conditions for the rest of us.



An Owl Fly-by Prompts Second Look At Mining

By Elizabeth Miller - High Country News

Last October, two field researchers were surveying waterways in southern Arizona's Patagonia Mountains, when one of them glanced into a tree and said, "Uh-oh." They saw a Mexican spotted owl, a federally threatened species, near the property where Arizona Mining Inc. has had as many as fifteen drilling rigs running since 2007, chasing silver, lead, zinc and manganese. "That's not what we were supposed to find," says Karina Hilliard, one of the contractors, "because that's more red tape."

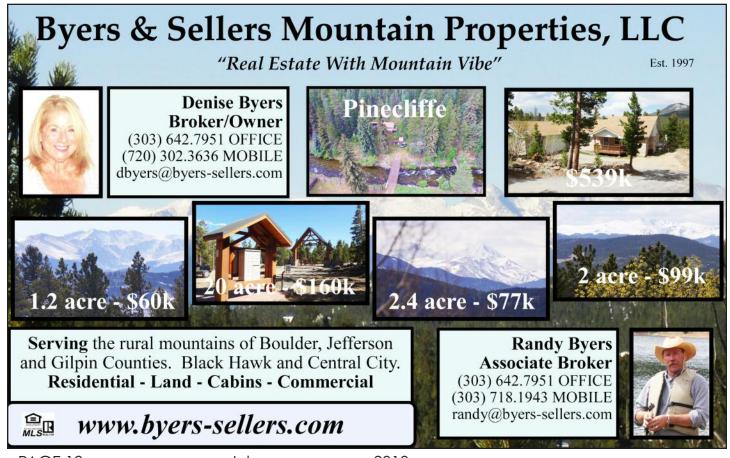
As they hiked away, the owl flew overhead — close enough that Hilliard felt the breeze from its wings. Arizona Mining Inc. has been drilling to map mineral veins, the first stage in an underground mine that could produce for up to 50 years. As it ramps up production around 2020, it's expected to need federal permits to expand. But with the owl sighting, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is "leaning in" to see how the operation has grown — and what threats it might pose to local wildlife —since the agency last thoroughly examined it. Depending on what it finds, future mine expansion could be impeded.

The Mexican spotted owls were in a gulch less than a mile north of the company's drilling rigs and tailings piles.

The owls, which roost in mature trees in mountains and canyons in the Four Corners region, are considered an indicator species for overall forest health. In Patagonia, home to a biodiversity unparalleled in the Lower 48, the owl has become a flashpoint in a town already divided over whether to try to resurrect the mining industry, or embrace a new identity as an outdoor recreation and bird-watching destination.

Arizona Mining, Fish and Wildlife and local birders have known for decades that Mexican spotted owls roosted in the Patagonia canyons. Two years ago, however, the agency determined that exploratory drilling posed no danger to threatened and endangered species, partly because it had no evidence that owls were nesting near the site. The mine's contractor reported breeding in proximity in 2016, and the service confirms they received documentation of a juvenile in the area months later.

Don Taylor, Arizona Mining's chief operating officer, says the company will be a responsible neighbor. The property was mined from the 1880s until the 1960s, and exploratory drilling has gone on since the 1970s. A 2018 technical report from Arizona Mining lists half a dozen endangered, threatened or sensitive species, including the owl, ocelot, jaguar, Sonoran tiger salamander, and yellow-billed cuckoo, living adjacent to or in portions of



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the mining operation.

In 2016, Defenders of Wildlife asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the Mexican spotted owls and yellow-billed cuckoos from the disturbance and habitat loss

the mine could cause. At the time, Fish and Wildlife Arizona field supervisor Steven Spangle said the agency would not investigate the operation because it lacked sufficient evidence that owls and cuckoos would be harmed by exploratory drilling. Two years ago, however, the company was merely drilling alongside roads, says Jason Douglas, an agency biologist. Since then, its operation has grown. Recent images from its website show massive tailings storage facilities that dwarf the dump trucks and backhoes used to fill them. And October's sighting has given Defenders new leverage to assert "longstanding concerns" with the lights, noise and human activity's effects on owls. The group recently wrote a letter urging Fish and Wildlife to ask the company to cease activities that could harm owls until it obtains a permit.

The mine operates on private, patented claims. If Fish and Wildlife determines its operations do indeed threaten owls and other endangered species, Arizona Mining would be invited to complete voluntary applications that could include measures to reduce harm to the species. The company plans to expand its tailings piles, potentially reaching onto national forest lands in about a decade. That move would

necessitate a federal environmental review and further consideration of possible impacts on endangered species.

Mexican spotted owl numbers decline alongside the loss of mature pine forests to clear-cutting and wildfires. Only a couple breeding areas remain in the Patagonia Mountains, says Nick Beauregard, who has worked for the nonprofit Bird Conservancy of the Rockies as an owl watcher, and one of them is within half a mile of Arizona Mining's property. "If you destroy habitat for one pair of spotted owls in the Patagonias, you've basically destroyed habitat for half of the spotted owls in the Patagonias," Beauregard says. Three years ago, he

recalls seeing one drill pad. "Since then, it's become full-on industrial. ... To think how that might be for a neighboring owl to have lights and noise in the drainage next door — it's hard to think that wouldn't be some disturbance."



Mexican spotted owl fledglings. Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Elizabeth Miller is a freelance journalist who covers public lands and wildlife management from New Mexico.



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Newspaper Strangled

By Jason Blevins

"O Justice, when expelled from other habitations, make this thy dwelling place."

As a bright-eyed kid with a ponytail and poorly trussed tie, I walked beneath that inscription every workday of my first decade at The Denver Post. Etched in stone at the newspaper's former downtown office, it imbued a sense of purpose and privilege to all who entered. The lofty hope it espoused — that newspaper reporting can champion truth, meaning and a sense of community — has withered under the watch of Heath Freeman, the pernicious hedge-fund owner who is murdering the paper.

Over 21 years, I weathered more than a dozen buyouts, as The Denver Post adjusted to the changing business of newspapering. When I was hired on as an intern chasing the ultimate gig in 1997, there were more than 300 journalists in the newsroom. The latest battlefield amputations by Freeman — spurred not by need but by punitive greed after the paper missed its annual budget by a few percentage points this spring — have slashed that count to less than 60, leaving about 35 reporters and photographers as the gasping "Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire."

Freeman is the head of Alden Global Capital, the firm that bought the Post's parent company, the debt-addled MediaNews Group, in 2010. Over the last few years, Freeman's vindictive hacking became too much for me. I could no longer reconcile my heart-and-soul labor with such an asshat owner. I bailed in April, and since then the exodus has grown, as a masthead of journalists — some of the very best in Colorado — flee Freeman's foul domain. Smart people say there are stages of grief. So far, I've occupied one: anger. And I'm not moving on anytime soon

Every day, another log is tossed onto the conflagration of my rage. There's the photo of the expansion underway at Freeman's vacation manse in the Hamptons; the news that Alden Global has squeezed its stable of newspapers — more than 60 across the nation — with a slash-andburn profit margin twice that of other major newspaper owners; the firing of the Boulder Daily Camera's well-respected editorial page editor, Dave Krieger, for publishing an editorial critical of Freeman and his rapacious goons at the laughably named Digital First Media; the de-staffing of the Cannabist, an awardwinning, first-of-its-kind website covering Colorado's grand experiment with marijuana; the resignation of The Denver Post's editorial page editor, Chuck Plunkett, after Freeman's minions denied an editorial revealing that he shamefully squeezed \$36 million in profit from his 11 Colorado newspapers, an absurd 19% profit margin that was not fueled by innovation or growth, but by firings.

Plunkett's departure was followed by senior editors Dana Coffield and Larry Ryckman, marking an incalculable loss to the newsroom. If history must note the fatal blow to The Denver Post, it likely will be the departure of Dana and Larry. Recently, we learned that

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Highlander Issues

Dean Singleton, who owned The Denver Post for more than a quarter century, captaining the paper through both its heyday and toward its nadir, had stepped down as chairman of the paper's board. Singleton, a consummate newspaperman who we respected deeply for keeping us working while he trimmed operations to handle declining ad revenue, doesn't see the paper surviving Freeman's avarice.

"To me, it's unbelievable that somebody would be so naive as to believe you can cut the heart out of a newspaper and still think it's going to survive," Singleton told Westword's media reporter, Michael Roberts, in an interview following his resignation. "Because you can't. I have little hope that the Post has a lot of future. There's probably nobody you could talk to at the Post who wouldn't give you a similar opinion. It's sad. It's like watching your mother or father go into hospice. This became a very good newspaper, and it became the heart of the state of Colorado, and they've cut the heart out of it."

Freeman — and his septuagenarian mentor, Randall Smith — are heating their mansions with the charred bones of newsrooms. The publicity-shy Smith (wouldn't you be too if you were torching local journalism?) bought sixteen mansions in Palm Beach last year, spending \$57.2 million as his young barbarian-in-training disemboweled newspapers across the country. Like I said, my rage simply will not abate.

It all happened so fast. In 2011, Alden Global hoovered up 50.1% of MediaNews Group's debt, as the company negotiated its way through bankruptcy. At the time, the national economy was in the tank. Newspapers were suffering, advertisers were slashing budgets and the internet was usurping print as the longstanding source of news. Alden Global corralled all its newspapers, which included The Denver Post, The Salt Lake City Tribune, St. Paul's Pioneer Press, San Jose's Mercury News, L.A. Daily News and The Orange County Register, under Digital First Media. Digital First's charismatic chief executive, John Paton, initially inspired hope for these papers in the digital age, and we all doubled our efforts to transform the industry, reporting stories, writing them, shooting video and tailoring multi-media stories to online readers, all while enduring ever-tightening budgets.

We succeeded. Thrived, even. Online readership soared. Subscriptions climbed. We harvested accolades, including a Pulitzer Prize and several Edward R. Murrow video awards. Then came the draconian cuts from Freeman. No one remembers seeing him ever visit The Denver Post newsroom, but he demanded an annual 20% profit margin. His draconian cuts started with equipment and led us to decamp from our downtown building, with its Pulitzer awards and etched inscription, for a windowless corner of the printing plant in unincorporated Adams County. Then came personnel cuts. Every year, a new round of layoffs, buyouts and soul-sucking send-offs.

We were duped. Freeman doesn't care about video. Or digital news. Or print news. Or news. He wants his newspapers to do one thing: kick out cash. He's cut more than 3,000 jobs from newsrooms across the U.S. It's a short-term play from a wannabe Gordon Gekko, but at least it's covering his inept investments in Greek debt and

flailing pharmacy chains. And it's working. Digital First Media papers are yielding him buckets of money: last year Alden reaped \$160 million from its newspapers, including \$28 million from The Denver Post, according to an independent report — dashing any hope that Freeman might leave before he's turned these papers into ash-piles.

"Journalism's mission is too important for such atrocious apostasy," Plunkett wrote in his final column, which Freeman's deputies spiked. "We renew our call for Alden to reinvest in its newsrooms, or release us to better ownership." Freeman won't. He's in this to the bitter end, and it's not going to take long for advertisers to lose any semblance of a return on their investments. The future of the 126-year-old Denver Post and other Digital First papers could not be bleaker. Even worse, Freeman is stifling coverage — even censoring his own editors — when we seek to expose how Alden Global is razing local journalism, the backbone of American democracy — and justice. And that's the real rub here. It's not just that journalists are out of jobs. It's that they are not telling the stories that we all need to hear. As the nation withdraws into echo chambers and filtered news, Freeman and his ilk are not just cutting budgets, they are severing the connections between us, the very stories that unite us. And that is something every citizen should fight to prevent.

Jason Blevins is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). A former Denver Post reporter, he's continued chasing stories about rural communities, mountain industries and the rich assortment of Rocky Mountain leaders.



Best Water Rights In The West

By Emily Benson

Tens of thousands of people on the Navajo Nation lack running water in their homes. But that could change in the coming years, as the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project goes into effect. It's expected to deliver water to the reservation and nearby areas by 2024, as part of a Navajo Nation water rights settlement with New Mexico, confirmed by Congress in 2009.

Three other Native water settlements currently await congressional approval. They arise from federal legal decisions recognizing that many tribes in the West hold water rights that largely pre-date — and therefore override — the water rights of non-Native settlers.

Many tribal nations are currently asserting those rights as a way to ensure economic vitality, affirm sovereignty and provide basic services that some communities lack. In many places, however, Native water rights have yet to be quantified, making them difficult to enforce. Settlement is usually the preferred remedy; it's cheaper, faster and less adversarial than a lawsuit, and can include funding for things like pipelines or treatment plants. With settlements, "the tribes are able to craft solutions that work for them and that can be more flexible than anything that could be

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achieved through litigation," says Kate Hoover, a principal attorney for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice water rights unit. Once negotiations are complete, Congress has to confirm the settlements. Here are the three introduced in the Senate this session:

THE SETTLEMENT: Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement

THE TAKEAWAY: This settlement allocates 4,000 acrefeet of Colorado River water per year from the Central Arizona Project to the 2,300-member Hualapai Nation. It also authorizes federal spending for a water pipeline to Peach Springs, the reservation's main residential community, and Grand Canyon West, an economically important tourist destination featuring a horseshoe-shaped "skywalk" jutting out over the canyon.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: The legality of Native water rights settlements stems from a 1908 U.S. Supreme Court case involving agricultural irrigation. Winters v. United States established that when reservations were created, they included an implied right to water.

Subsequent legal decisions confirmed that so-called "reserved water" could also be used for livestock, drinking water and even commercial purposes. That's crucial for this settlement, because the Hualapai Nation plans to use a portion of their water to expand Grand Canyon West — and their economy. "We have done everything possible to provide jobs and income to our people in order to lift them out of poverty — but the lack of a secure and replenishable water supply on our Reservation is our major obstacle to achieving economic self-sufficiency," wrote Damon Clarke, chairman of the Hualapai Nation, in testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

THE SETTLEMENT: Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement

THE TAKEAWAY: This settlement affirms the Navajo Nation's right to 81,500 acre-feet of water each year — enough to serve about 160,000 households — from the Utah portion of the San Juan River, a Colorado River tributary. In addition, it would establish funds for treating and transporting drinking water.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: In many Native water rights settlements, tribes agree to give up a portion of the water to which they're entitled — often allowing other groups to continue using that water, which might otherwise have been cut off — in return for expensive water projects, typically built by a federal agency.

The Navajo Utah settlement is different: It would transfer money directly to the tribe for water infrastructure. During a U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing in December, Russell Begaye, the president of the Navajo Nation, explained why the tribe, rather than the U.S. government, should lead the work: "It's important as a

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Survey work begins for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project on the Navajo Nation. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

sovereign nation that we are able to do that — employ our people, use our laws — in order to build and construct any kind of construction that may take place."

THE SETTLEMENT: Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas Water Rights Settlement

THE TAKEAWAY: This settlement confirms the right of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas to pull 4,705 acre-feet of water per year from the Delaware River Basin in northeastern Kansas. It would be a milestone in resolving long-standing disagreements over how to ensure the tribe has reliable water, even during droughts.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Kansas, like much of the West, is prone to drought. This settlement would help the Kickapoo deal with dry periods by allowing the tribe to store more than 18,000 acre-feet of water in a reservoir that has yet to be built, but that has been contemplated for at least 40 years. A dispute over how to acquire the private land that the reservoir would flood led to a 2006 lawsuit, and, eventually, to settlement negotiations, which concluded in 2016.

Experts say it's not unusual for settlements to take years or even decades to complete, and that securing congressional approval requires balance. "Ultimately, these settlements are political instruments,"





Pipes are laid for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Navajo Nation. Northwest New Mexico Council of Govts.

says Steven Moore, a staff attorney at the Native American Rights Fund and an advisor to the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas. "You really have to work these settlements out so that it's a win-win for everybody."

Emily Benson is an assistant editor at High Country News.



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Previous Page left: three cats in cat condo.

Top right: Making new friends.

Bottom right: Bear stands for treats.

This page left: little girl leads huge Percheron. Right: New foal with mama Mare.







Your Savings Account

From Jim Plane - State Farm Insurance

A savings account is one of the most basic ways to save money, as well as one of the safest. Deposits of up to \$250,000 are insured by:

the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (bank accounts) who insures deposits at the nation's more than 7,000 banks and savings associations. The FDIC identifies, monitors and addresses risks to these institutions.

The National Credit Union Administration (credit union accounts) who regulates, charters, and supervises federal credit unions.

Savings account basics

Savings accounts are liquid, or quickly convertible to cash, which makes them ideal for short-term savings, such as for the holidays, a major purchase or a vacation, or an emergency fund. If you need your money right away, you need only to withdraw it from your account.

Liquid: money available for quick withdrawal Emergency fund: money available during financial hardships, such as unexpected medical bills.

Electronic Funds Transfer: the transfer of funds from one account to another via computer.

Wire transfer: electronically transferring funds from a person or an account to another. This type of transfer is most often used for an individual transaction.

Automatic clearing house (ACH): an electronic network of financial transactions that large volumes of transactions in batches.

Interest rates

Typically, the trade-off for liquidity is a lower interest rate. While you'll earn interest on the money in your savings account, it won't be as substantial as with other investment vehicles. In other words, you're probably not going to get rich or retire off the interest you earn from a traditional savings account. But that's not the point of short-term or emergency fund savings anyway. That's not to say that you shouldn't shop around for the



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best rates and savings account for yourself. Most institutions offer a few options with a range of interest rates, balance requirements, and monthly service fees. And those are the main items you need to be aware of when choosing your savings account.

Annual percentage yield (APY): the annual rate paid to a depositor.

Compound interest: interest computed on the sum of an original principal and accrued interest.

Fees

Fees for savings accounts include monthly service fees and transaction fees. If you're a savvy saver, avoiding these fees is possible and desirable: Regularly paying fees can eat up the interest you earn, and possibly your savings as well. Monthly service fees are those charged to simply have an account. But many financial institutions will waive these fees if you maintain a specified minimum balance, or participate in an automatic deposit program.

You may eliminate transaction fees by being aware of your banking habits. If your bank limits withdrawals from ATMs and charges a fee for any withdrawals over a certain number, plan your withdrawals to stay within the limit. And try never to use out-of-network ATMs — those owned and operated by other banks — as you'll likely incur a fee from both the ATM owner and your bank. Some banks refund fees charged for use of out of network ATMs.

Overdraft: withdrawing more money than is available in

Overdraft protection: an extension of credit or an automatic transfer of funds from another account you own, usually with the same institution.

Balance requirements

Balance requirements are often linked to interest rates. Many banks and credit unions will pay more interest in return for having a higher minimum balance in your savings account. While this may seem reasonable, you need to be sure that you can maintain that higher balance. If you dip below the minimum amount at any point during the month, the monthly service fee will still be assessed. (Also, if you have a significant sum of money, a savings account may not be best savings vehicle for you. You may want to meet with a financial advisor to establish an investment plan.)

As with any type of savings, your best plan of action is to deposit your money and leave it alone. After all, when interest is compounded, even a small amount of money will add up over a period of time.

Skip Trip To DMV With Gov2Go

Colorado Citizens Now Can Skip the Trip to DMV with Gov2Go

A new 'one-stop-shop' platform for Colorado citizens' government responsibilities

DENVER – June 19, 2018 – Colorado citizens now have access to Gov2Go, a technology platform that makes it easier for them to interact with all levels of government. Among other benefits, Gov2Go lets citizens "Skip The Trip" to the DMV for vehicle tag renewals. Citizens can download the free Gov2Go app, receive renewal reminders and renew their vehicle tags from the convenience of their mobile phones.

The announcement was made June 18 by Jack Arrowsmith, executive director of the Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA), in conjunction with Colorado Interactive (CI). SIPA's mandate is to provide comprehensive eGovernment services to citizens through pioneering technology. CI is the team behind the state's official website.

"Gov2Go, the nation's first personal government assistant, represents an innovative customer service approach for Colorado government," Arrowsmith said. "Gov2Go lets citizens take care of interactions with government in one convenient place, saving them time, worry and frustration. It utilizes technology to give people back more time for family, work and the recreational activities so many of us love about living in Colorado."

Gov2Go makes it easy for citizens to access government services anytime, anywhere. After users download Gov2Go and create profiles, they'll receive reminders when their vehicle tags are due and have the ability to complete the transaction online. Users can show their stored electronic receipts, if needed, until their vehicle tags arrive in the mail.

Gov2Go isn't just a single-purpose application.

"Gov2Go is a platform that makes it easier for citizens to interact with government on all (Continued on next page.)



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levels," said CI President and General Manager Fred Sargeson. "Although users initially will see its convenience for handling vehicle registration renewals, Gov2Go will help them stay on top of election and voter information and government holidays, receive AMBER Alerts and purchase digital passes for select federal parks, including Colorado National Monument."

Now in all 50 states, the Gov2Go platform is designed to expand as new services become available. Colorado is bringing Gov2Go to its citizens through SIPA and CI. The SIPA/CI partnership provides governments with an easy-to-adopt platform that puts citizens at the center of government and delivers on-demand convenience.

About Colorado Interactive

Colorado Interactive is the team behind the official website of the state of Colorado and is overseen by the Statewide Internet Portal Authority. The portal operates through a public-private partnership between the state and



CI to help Colorado government entities web-enable their services. CI builds, operates, maintains and markets Colorado.gov and is part of digital government firm NIC (Nasdaq: EGOV).

About SIPA

Established in 2004 by the Colorado General Assembly, the Statewide Internet Portal Authority is a self-funded government organization created to be Colorado's single most comprehensive delivery channel for electronic government (eGovernment) services. SIPA strives to accelerate the adoption of efficient and effective eGovernment services by placing more online to benefit Colorado residents. In addition to no-cost websites, payment processing and event registration setup, SIPA provides SaaS technology solutions, consulting and cyber security assessments. Please visit www.colorado.gov/sipa.

About NIC

NIC Inc. (Nasdaq: EGOV) is the nation's premier provider of innovative digital government solutions and secure payment processing, which help make government interactions more accessible for everyone through technology. The family of NIC companies has developed a library of more than 13,000 digital government services for more than 6,000 federal, state, and local government agencies. Among these solutions is the ground-breaking personal assistant for government, Gov2Go, delivering citizens personalized reminders and a single platform for all government interactions. More information is available at **www.egov.com**.





Buffalo Field Campaign-buffalofieldcamgaign.org

Montana's largest Buffalo Safe Zone has been sold. The former Galanis property, about 700 acres of lush green grass and rolling hills, was recently bought, and while we don't know exactly how the new owners feel about the buffalo, the large "Bison Safe Zone" sign has been removed. The caretaker has contacted us to say that we are no longer welcome there, and we fear that this may mean the same for the buffalo. This is critical habitat that the buffalo from the imperiled Central herd use winter and spring, one place they are safe from any harm, and they are devoted to this land which is part of their calving grounds. The Galanis family — incredible champions of the buffalo — are devastated that they have had to let this land go. It's a heavy blow to all of us. But, we still don't know for sure how things may or may not change. Perhaps the new owners will understand the tremendous support and fierce loyalty the buffalo have from all the surrounding neighbors and others throughout the West Yellowstone community, and keep things as they are.

On the federal level, Yellowstone's superintendent, Dan Wenk, has been ousted by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. Though wrongfully touted by some "green" groups as a "bison protector." Wenk had, apparently, been in dispute with Zinke over the number of wild buffalo — the country's national mammal — who should exist in the Park. The controversial Interagency Bison Management Plan, crafted in the interests of ranchers, places a political cap of 3,000 on the buffalo population. A number not supported by science, ecology, or any form of logic. Yellowstone National Park alone can sustain upwards of 6,500 buffalo, while the surrounding lands of the Greater Yellowstone country could support at least 20,000. For a population who once existed in the tens of millions, this is still a minuscule population size. Yet, Zinke — a Montana cattleman — wants to drive the endangered population down to a mere 2,000.

Zinke, a corrupt Trump appointee, is a known enemy of the earth, a strong champion of industry and corporations who has oil & gas, timber, mining, and ranching advocates salivating. It's no surprise that, being from Montana, his attention would turn to the wild buffalo of Yellowstone with an aim to cause them greater harm.

For nearly 30 years Park Superintendents have played a lead role in slaughtering buffalo inside Yellowstone National Park. Some have expressed regret, like Mike Finley. Wenk is just the most recent of several superintendents behind the National Park Service's ongoing slaughter of our last wild buffalo.

That being said, the reality is, Wenk has hardly been a champion of the buffalo. Thousands of the country's last wild buffalo — the beloved Yellowstone herds — have been shipped to slaughter from within Yellowstone,



brutally treated, hazed, domesticated, and otherwise harmed with Wenk standing as Yellowstone's superintendent. For all the years he's been in office, he has bent over backwards to serve Montana's livestock industry, destroying imperiled wild buffalo. It has only been in recent months — after Yellowstone's trap was attacked four times — and public pressure against the buffalo slaughter has been mounting — that he has started to come out advocating for wild buffalo to be managed as wildlife, and that the livestock industry should not be the ones to dictate how buffalo live or die.

Will it be worse without him as Superintendent? We simply need to grasp that this whole system is broken and we must stand in solidarity and fight back harder. Zinke has made it clear that the war against the country's last wild buffalo — our national mammal — is escalating. With our sites aimed straight and true, we stand up even stronger for the wild. WILD IS THE WAY ~ ROAM FREE!

TAKE ACTION - Call Today to voice your opposition to the slaughter of our last wild bison.

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Workforce Do-Over

By Valerie Wedel

What do you do when life pitches 500 mph curve – spitballs? Duck! Seriously... There are those moments when life simply changes course.

A few years ago this happened. Divorce, radical change in fortunes, you know the drill. Having been mostly home with kids for... oh, about 16 years, there was not much in the way of current job skills left.

Being highly organized and efficient, one comes up with a plan. Here is what I initially came up with: 1. Panic. 2. Hide the panic so the kids aren't scared. 3. Realize your kids are smarter than you are. 4. Discover how really out of date your job skills are in today's market. 5. Panic ...

The first job this out-of-date college grad came up with was cleaning houses. This was actually great because it could be flexed around kid's school schedules. And when the world seems to be blowing up, mindless physical labor has a certain appeal.

Second job – light construction. Good news - this pays better than cleaning houses. Ladies, we can build it! Bad news - one discovers the boss is playing a shell game and doesn't actually have funds to pay the crew. Sort of good news – getting too old to swing a hammer anyway.

Third job... picking up freelance design work, to build on college training. Why free lance? Well, still needing to flex around kid's school schedules. More good news – at last working in the field one trained in 20 years ago. More bad news- seriously underbilling hours and losing money. More, more bad news: discovering technical skills are so out of date no one in the field will hire you full time, despite recent free lance work...

Fourth job... cleaning houses. Ends still not meeting. Good news: kids doing better, all of us slowly discovering a new normal.

It was clear a reset was necessary. How? With what resources?

Enter... WORKFORCE. Workforce is county based training and job placement help. For those of us who live in Jefferson County, Workforce offices are located in Golden near the Jefferson County Court House. For Boulder County folk there are Workforce offices located in Boulder and Longmont.

Through Workforce one can take workshops on resume writing, interview skills, and a plethora of other highly useful topics. Computer training includes Microsoft Office, including Word, Excell, Powerpoint, and Outlook. All of this is free. Our tax dollars pay for this.

When you first discover Work Force programs there is an amazing feeling of hope! Here one can update professional skills. There is also help with job placement. One finds knowledge, encouragement, and more hope.

Six months after completing Workforce training, resume, cover letter and interview skills updated, I won a paid internship in the somewhat specialized field I hoped to re-enter. Not bad for someone who just turned 58, and ended up as a single parent, without retirement or career. My technical skills were updated, thanks to a grant through Workforce dollars and my own hard work. I have a fighting chance to get back on my feet, at a level that will support the family. It feels like the universe is granting a do-over.

Workforce programs range from helping people re-enter the work force, to helping young people just starting out. Whether you are a high school drop out, high school graduate, older person returning to work, or any age in between, they can help. Finding work at a living wage is not always easy. At any age and stage, this amazing program can help one prepare for the future. May the Force be with you!

Workforce Locations:

Jefferson County: www.jeffcoworkforce.org 3500 Illinois St, Golden, CO 80401 Phone: 303-271-4701 Vision: Jefferson County Workforce Center provides comprehensive career services for job seekers and strategic services for businesses to attract and retain quality employees.

Work Force Boulder County: www.wfbc.org
Office Hours: Mon – Fri, 8 am – 4:30 pm 5755 Central
Ave., Suite B, Boulder, CO 80301 Ph. 303.413.7555
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Bears

By Matt Barnes

We can all agree that the recent incident in western Colorado, when a black bear bit a 5-year-old child, and the bear was killed in response, was unfortunate and might have been even more tragic. But I'm a biologist who studies bears, and I want to encourage us to pause and take a wider perspective, one that reduces fear and also allows wild creatures like bears to continue to survive in our midst.

Here's what happened: A bear searching for food wandered into a human community near Grand Junction. A child went outside at night and was bitten and seized by the bear. The mother awoke and screamed at the bear, which dropped the child and fled. The child was badly injured but survived. Wildlife officials from Colorado Parks and Wildlife pursued the bear and killed it. Most of us feel sad for both the child, who was hurt and terrified, and the bear, which was killed, but to blame the bear, the family or the wildlife officials is hardly a helpful response.

I would have done the same as any of the people involved. When I was just 5 years old, I wandered into the woods alone and sometimes into danger, but I survived. As

The helpful place. INDIAN PEAKS ACE HARDWARE 74 Highway 119 S, Nederland 303-258-3132 Mon. - Sat. 8 - 7, Sunday 9 - 5 Time to get outdoors, our Greenhouse is Open NOW! CO 72 & 119 NEDERLAND a bear conservationist, I've chased more bears than I can count out of campgrounds and parking lots, and I can say that, yes, the mother probably saved her daughter's life by screaming at the bear: Black bears will almost always run away from a human they perceive as aggressive.

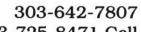
I've relocated bears that got food from human sources, but unfortunately, they usually return to the same site where they first got into trouble. Once, I had to kill a bear that became aggressive toward people after it had gotten food from them.

It is rare to find a documented event, but black bears have stalked and killed people. But that's not what happened in Colorado. The recent case fits the more common profile of a human (particularly a very small one) and a bear surprising each other at close range. The bear, in all likelihood, simply reacted out of instinct.

Since 2000, in all of North America, there have been only nine fatal black bear attacks, and only three of them occurred south of the Canadian border. In the same time period, there were eleven attacks involving grizzly bears, seven of which were south of the border in Montana and northwestern Wyoming. In almost every case where the bear could be found and identified, the animal was killed.

Killing a bear involved in an attack — even if the attack isn't fatal or can't be proven to be predatory — is standard





Paul Forbes 303-725-8471 Cell



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practice among wildlife management agencies. It's not an act of justice; we call it risk management. Bear biologists do not like to kill bears, but we're almost unanimous that it needs to happen in some cases. Most of those cases are preventable, however.

Bears are opportunistic omnivores; their life is all about looking for an easy meal. Ideally, that's out in the wild, but as our communities sprawl into the wilderness they start to look like a smorgasbord of fruit trees, bird feeders, pet-food bowls, grain bins and trash cans. Especially when wild foods are in short supply, such as in a drought year, bears are attracted to us.

We need to look at the bigger picture. These days, there are a lot of us living in bear country, and some of us are even raising fruit trees or backyard chickens. As our communities continue to entice bears, most of us are oblivious to our own involvement. When we leave a dog dish outside, we forget what that means to any wild animal that smells it. We need to think about how we can coexist with wildlife that passes in the night.

The larger issue is a philosophical one. Why do we choose to live in the West, especially in the foothills or mountains? We seek out wildness, beauty and connection to the more-than-human world. But when we do that, we are also choosing to accept nature's risks — including the unlikely but possible dangers posed by carnivorous animals.

Personally, I feel much more alive when I know I share the landscape with bears or mountain lions, even recognizing that there is a possibility, however remote, that I might die in an encounter with one. Meanwhile, I know I need to do my part to live responsibly, and in community, with the wild world that surrounds us all.

Matt Barnes is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). He works as a research associate specializing in bears with the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative, living in his mobile office between western Colorado and western Montana. He is also an Aldo and Estella Leopold Resident with the Leopold Writing Program in Tres Piedras, New Mexico.







Who Pays For Damage Caused By Climate Change

By Marco Simons

Three Colorado communities are suing to make oil companies open their wallets.

This April, a town and two Colorado counties sued two fossil fuel companies on the grounds that the companies need to help pay the costs of climate change. Boulder County, San Miguel County and the city of Boulder are not seeking to halt oil production, and they are not looking to lay all the costs of climate change at the feet of those two companies. All they ask is that those companies pay their fair share toward remedying a problem that the companies knew existed, and which they helped create.

Here's why the decision to sue makes sense. The oil companies in question — Exxon Mobil and Suncor — have long known about the harm that fossil fuel use causes. As far back as 1968, the American Petroleum Institute — the industry's largest trade association, of which Exxon is a member — received a report warning that, due to carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels, "significant temperature changes are almost certain to occur by the year 2000 and these could bring about climatic changes," and that there was "no doubt that the potential damage to our environment could be severe." Further internal reports throughout the 1970s reinforced these concerns.

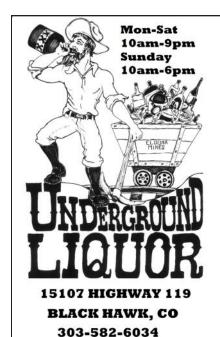
Unfortunately, these companies chose to disregard that knowledge in order to continue profiting from fossil fuels. Exactly like the tobacco industry, they participated in

disinformation campaigns to spread doubt about climate change and discredit the scientists who they knew were telling the truth. They also funded campaigns to oppose international efforts to address climate change.

Exxon and Suncor have now admitted that climate change is real and that their own activities are a major contributor to the problem. Indeed, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that fossil fuel use accounted for nearly 80 percent of the increase in greenhouse gas emissions between 1970 and 2010. Exxon and Suncor are two of the world's most substantial contributors to climate change.

Yet both companies plan to increase their fossil fuel production, all while sticking communities like Boulder, Colorado, with the bill for the cleanup. A report done for Boulder County, for example, estimated that its climate change costs will reach at least \$100 million dollars over the next few decades. The altered climate brought about by unchecked fossil fuel use has severe consequences for all of Colorado, as in the coming decades wildfires and droughts are expected to become more severe, air quality will diminish, water will become scarcer, and extreme weather events will become more common.

Many county and city leaders are justifiably worried about having to prepare their communities for the serious consequences of climate change. As San Miguel County Commissioner Hilary Cooper explained, "We are a small rural county dependent on tourism, farming and ranching. A natural disaster here could wipe out our reserves."



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Highlander Issues

asking for a jury to weigh the evidence and determine the extent to which the companies are responsible. We are confident that the courts will allow a Colorado jury to decide how much Exxon and Suncor should pay for the climate impacts that are now affecting Colorado's counties and towns. *Note: the opinions* expressed in this article are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of High Country News, its board or staff.



Communities can take measures to reduce their vulnerability to climate impacts. They can protect against flooding, and they can expand wildfire buffer zones. They can help farmers to find new crops that are more resilient to heat waves, drought and pests.

In fact, Exxon itself has taken measures to prepare for climate change, such as adapting its own offshore facilities to protect against sea-level rise. It's only fair that Exxon should share the costs when Colorado communities have to take similar measures.

Even if these communities were to reduce their own carbon footprint to zero, climate impacts are still inevitable. Dangerous levels of greenhouse gases are already trapped in the atmosphere. The costs to local taxpayers are mounting.

At its core, these communities' lawsuit against Exxon and Suncor raises questions of fairness. The communities themselves encourage the use of renewable energy, but the fossil fuel industry has acted, and is acting, recklessly.

"Our communities and our taxpayers should not shoulder the cost of climate change adaptation alone," said Suzanne Jones, mayor of the city of Boulder. "These oil companies need to pay their fair share."

Now, the three communities are

In November 2013, costly damage caused by the flooding that ripped through Boulder County, Colorado, two months earlier was still visible.

Kent Kanouse / CC Flickr

Marco Simons is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News. He is general counsel at EarthRights International, a nonprofit environmental law firm that is providing legal support for this lawsuit.



Spirit Of Adventure

By Frosty Wooldridge

The high drama of self-discovery!

When covotes howl outside your tent, that may be adventure. While you trudge through the wilderness with a 40-pound pack, that could be deemed "adventure." While sweating like a horse as you pedal over a 12,000-foot pass, you might be living an adventure.

While you thrust your brush onto the canvas, you come face to face with artistic expression. Perhaps a certain knot in a macramé project renders a new kind of adventure in your life.

When howling gale winds press your lips against your teeth while sailing into a raging storm, you face a mighty adventure. You may stand on the edge of a mountain with sub-zero temperatures before plunging into a deep powder chute. That could be called "adventure."

A new step on the dance floor may find you struggling with the beat of the music. It could be defined as imaginative adventure.

But that's not what makes an adventure!

You might ask, "Why not...what more do I have to do to create adventure in my life?"

Adventure begins where you define it. It rolls into "being" by your actions toward your passions. When you learn how to think "adventure" in whatever passion you pursue, you learn how to live adventure.

It is your willingness to struggle through it, to present yourself at the doorstep of Nature or in front of a canvas or mountain peak. You might be a writer struggling with a plot or character. Adventure advances as you express it.

Can you think of any greater joy coming from life than living inside the "moment" of an adventure? It may be a fleeting "high," a stranger that changes your life, an animal that delights you or even frightens you, a struggle where





http://www.TEGColorado.org



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you triumphed, or even failed, yet you braved the challenge. Those moments present you uncommon experiences that give your life eternal expectation.

That's adventure.

So where in your life do you find the calling of adventure that excites your soul? What "turns on" every cell in your body? What causes you to smile through your day? How do you get "there?"

It's known as the

"perfect speed." It's a thought pattern whereby you already know you reached your destination or dream or goal. Everything you think must be twice created: first, the idea, which secondly moves into form.

For an example: you desire to climb a mountain, paint a picture or learn a new dance.

You must take baby steps by hanging with those who love mountain climbing. Learn from them. Start small and grow wise, grow smart and grow strong.

You love art? Hang around artists. Engage a canvas, paper or clay. Discover your passion in the arts. Grow with someone who paints, sculpts or draws. Spend hours on your own works.

You want to become a dancer? Hit the closest studio. Take the classes. Learn the basics. Find your music style. Soon, you glide around the dance floor to the eternal joy of music and movement.

In the beginning, middle or advanced portion of your life, you remain the author and visionary of your success, your joy and your happiness.

I'm reminded of three home plate umpires who bragged how they called



balls and strikes:

The first said, "I calls them as I sees them."
The second said, "I calls them as they are."
The third said, "They ain't nothin' till I calls them."

Remember that the only way you "gallop" into your dreams remains your call! Charge onto the playing field with creativity, energy and courage. The rewards magnify life to your highest and best.



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Getting Used To Bike Rage

By Michael Wolcott

The German couple was out to see America by bicycle. It was day two of their big adventure, a perfect springtime afternoon. We met by chance on U.S. Highway 180, halfway between Flagstaff, Arizona, and the Grand Canyon.

I was making the 40-mile trip by bicycle back to my eco-shack in the boonies, pulling a single-wheel trailer loaded with groceries. They were outfitted for a monthlong ride with stout panniers and lightweight camping gear. We stood astride our bikes by the side of the road, chatting in the sunshine.

The two had flown into Flagstaff the day before and planned to watch the sun set that night on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. "We still have jet lag," the guy said, "but we can't wait to see it. This is great."

A big motorhome swept past, and we all leaned, involuntarily, away from it. I mentioned that the road was far safer at night, when there's less traffic.

"Oh, we won't be riding at night," the woman said.
"We're here to see the West. Forty-four miles so far. What a beautiful road."

Indeed it is. Route 180 climbs the west flank of the San Francisco Peaks through ponderosa pine forest, tops out in bright-green aspen groves a mile and a half above sea level, then drops 2,000 vertical feet into the high desert.

I asked my new friends what they thought of the traffic. Sharing any pavement with motor vehicles is risky for bicyclists, but Route 180 is truly a death trap —crowded with tourists in a hurry who generally look everywhere except at the road. Shoulders, where they exist, are less than 18 inches wide.

"Oh, it's not so bad," the guy said. "I was a little scared by the drivers at first, but now I'm starting to trust them."

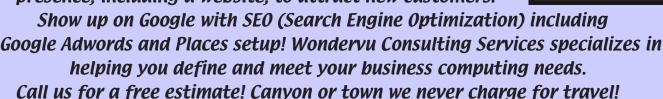
"Well, don't!" I practically shouted, then reeled out my bike-load of worries onto the formerly blissful travelers. We agreed to ride together for a while, and headed off, single file and way over on the right side of the road, where we belonged.

But the driver of the big Dodge Ram was displeased anyway. He came up fast behind us, stood on the horn, and sped up as he passed us — so closely that if he had hit a pothole and swerved, he would have creamed us. Then he stuck his arm out the window and flipped us the bird.

Welcome to America, I thought, the land of Get Out of

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My Way.

The Germans were puzzled by the incident. "What just happened?" they asked.

I explained that there are lots of angry people in America. For some reason, the sight of a bicycle on the highway really triggers rage in some drivers. I said that in my years of bike touring I've been cursed at, swerved at and spit at. A beer bottle has been lobbed my way. More than once, a stranger has yelled out the window, "Get a job!"

To my knowledge, there is no statistical link between bicycling and employment status. Maybe there's some research I don't know about. But I do have some guesses about where this kind of inexcusable behavior comes from.

Perhaps some of you are thinking, "Well, that driver in the truck was probably just fed up with bicyclists who don't obey the traffic laws." Maybe, but even if that were true, the driver's pointless, threatening display was way out of proportion to any perceived "offense." And there was no actual offense, by the way: We two-wheelers were following Arizona traffic laws to the letter.

No, that kind of hostility comes, I believe, from deep in a person's psyche: a disdain for and fear of people who are perceived as different. To some drivers, the bicyclist is the "other," the one who is different. And difference, for some at least, presents a threat. To these people, the other can't be trusted, and the other shouldn't even be here.

That distrust makes no sense, but humans do not always make sense. Despite our undeniable skill at abstract



Bike To Work group in Denver.

reasoning, we are largely irrational beings, with violent tendencies. Fear of the other just is.

This fear is probably at the root of most of the world's ailments. It sparks wars, fuels religious persecution and keeps demagogues in business. In the past, it has led to lynchings, and it leads to unarmed black men being shot in America today.

And on a perfect spring day in Arizona, it could have gotten three bicyclists killed on a highway. Imagine that.

Michael Wolcott is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). He writes from northern Arizona.





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Power Update

July 2018

Common Causes of Summer Outages

Summer is a time to relax, enjoy family, plan vacations and have some fun in the sun. It's not a time when we'd ideally like to worry about the possibility of power outages, but they are still possible. United Power monitors its system for outages, and potential outages, 24/7 so it can immediately respond when one occurs to quickly restore power to affected members. Here are some common causes of summer outages:

Wildlife

Despite United Power's best efforts, animals seem to have the innate ability to locate, and interact with, substations, poles and electrical boxes. The cooperative takes proactive measures to guard against animal related outages, including avian protection on its wires and deterrents to protect ground equipment. These measures not only help prevent outages, but also protect the wildlife. Unfortunately, some animals are small enough to sneak by these defenses and get into equipment. Rodents and snakes like to hide and nest in equipment, creating the potential for outages.

Weather

While living in the mountains provides unique challenges during the snowy winter months, summer is not immune. Severe weather can spring up at any time in the mountains, and lightning storms can contribute to outages. Most of United Power's poles are equipped with technology that helps redirect lightning current away from transformers. In situations where these are not present or fail, elements down the line will "break" to prevent the current from continuing farther. This often makes a loud "pop," similar to a gun being fired. While these protective elements may prevent an outage from spreading, or hopefully prevent it entirely, it does not guarantee an outage will not occur. Severe weather is often accompanied by high winds, as well, which may blow down lines and/or poles and interrupt power.

Falling Trees/Branches

In June, United Power talked about the importance of safe tree trimming around power lines and when members are responsible for removing tree limbs approaching power lines on their property. United Power also contracts with Asplundh to monitor trees near primary power lines throughout its territory. These proactive measures help to minimize outage risks where possible, but cannot prevent them entirely. Falling tree limbs are yet another potential outage risk for our members. If you notice a limb hanging dangerously close to primary power lines in your area, please contact United Power immediately.

Vehicle Accidents

It's impossible for United Power to account for the behavior of drivers traveling through its service territory. Occasionally, an accident may temporarily interrupt service to members when it involves one of the cooperative's poles, utility boxes or, very rarely, a substation.

Members can report an outage by calling our outage line at 303-637-1350 or by logging into their account via SmartHub. This allows United Power to quickly assess the areas affected and allows us to assure that service has been restored.



Fairs and Festivals in Your Area

As your cooperative, we love being present in the communities we serve. Every summer, United Power takes an opportunity to actively sponsor or participate in events happening in and around those communities. The cooperative will be in your area at least twice this summer:

- 1.) Wednesday, July 4, 2018 Canyon 4th Fest CCCIA Hall 31528 Hwy. 72, Golden, CO
- 2.) August 18-19, 2018
 Gilpin County Fair
 Gilpin County Fairgrounds
 230 Norton Dr., Black Hawk, CO



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33686 Gap Road Log, Stucco, Stone Mtn Home - 40 Acres 3 BD/ 3 BA 2,979 sq.ft. \$1,100,000



941 Indian Peak Road Fabulous Mtn Retreat w/5 Car Garage 5 BD/ 3 BA 1.09 Acres \$724,900



1720 Gross Dam Road Exquisite Home VIEWS - Pool - 4 Acres 4 BD/ 4 BA 5,913 sq.ft. \$899,000



805 29th Street
Convenient Spanish Towers Condo
1 BD/1 BA VIEWS \$284,900



7592 Nikau Avenue Nicely Remodeled Niwot Home 4 BD/ 3 BA 2.096 sq.ft. \$514,000



29373 Spruce Canyon
VIEWS - Remodeled - Over 3 Acres
3 BD / 3 BA \$564,000



10712 Twin Spruce
Charming Cabin / Seasonal Stream
822 sq.ft. \$189,000



15 Debra Ann
BeautifuL-Raised Ranch w/Private Pond
4 BD / 3 BA .8 Acre \$522,000



33848 Ave De PInes
Fantastic Mtn Home w/City Views
4 BD/ 3 BA RV Garage \$484,000

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For additional information and photos:
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