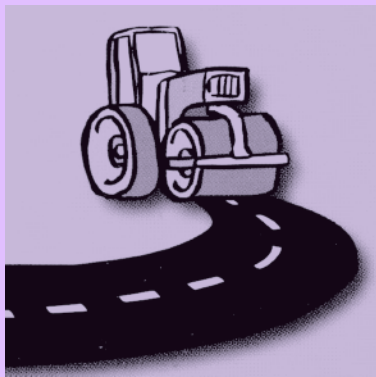




**Highlander** Monthly

**May 2020**



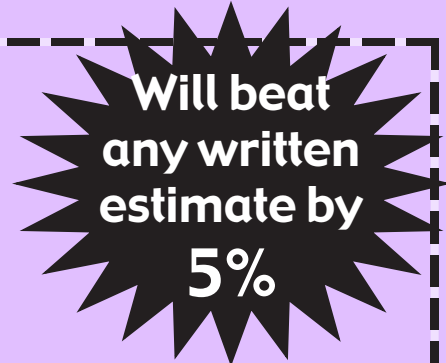
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## About the Cover:

*Baby Moose by Dave Tee,  
see his other photos  
@daves\_not\_h3r3\_man*

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Check the online issue to see the pictures in color!  
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# CONTENTS

## Pages

PUBLISHER, EDITOR, ADVERTISING SALES,  
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**Anita M. Wilks**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
**Diane Bergstrom**  
**Suzanne Bertisch, MD, MPH**  
**BuffaloFieldCampaign.org**  
**Julio Vincent Gambuto**  
**Mary Papenfuss - High Country News**  
**Jim Plane - State Farm Insurance**  
**Rena Priest - High Country News**  
**Represent.Us**  
**Helen Santoro - High Country News**  
**Valerie Wedel**  
**A.M. Wilks**  
**Frosty Wooldridge**  
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**Dorian Anderson**  
**Diane Bergstrom**  
**BuffaloFieldCampaign.org**  
**National Park Service**  
**Andrew A Reding**  
**Valerie Wedel**  
**Anita Wilks**  
**Dave Tee @daves\_not\_h3r3\_man**

<b>Wildlife</b> -	Close encounters of the Moose kind	5, 6
<b>Letters</b> -	2020 Census ~ Choices	7
<b>Science</b> -	Dawn Chorus	8, 9
<b>Prose</b> -	Motherhood Denied	10, 11
<b>Issues</b> -	Prepare for the ultimate Gaslighting	12, 13
<b>Wildlife</b> -	Captive Orca's chance for redemption	14,15,16,17
<b>Tips</b> -	Vehicle Accidents & Repairs	20, 21
<b>Wildlife</b> -	Extinction looms for S.Calif. Mtn Lions	22, 23
<b>Health</b> -	Strategies to promote better sleep	24, 25
<b>Wildlife</b> -	Update: Buffalo Field Campaign.org	27
<b>Observation</b> -	Bird Tracker on Bike	28, 29
<b>Politics</b> -	Anti-Corruption Act	30, 31
<b>Ecology</b> -	Extreme Wildfires Change Forests	32, 33

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<b>Animals &amp; Their Companions</b>	18, 19
<b>Ad Index &amp; Telephone #'s</b>	34

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# Close Encounters Of The Moose Kind

It has always been a mystery to me why so many folks don't think of Moose as possibly dangerous enough so that they give them the ample respect they deserve as a very large wild animal. Is it the Bullwinkle syndrome similar to Teddy bears? Maybe that cartoon animal and stuffed bears instill some innocence in human thinking about them that often causes humans to get hurt and wildlife to pay the ultimate price.

If you ever personally see a baby Moose (*our cover photo shows a grand example*) take immediate precautions to safeguard yourself because if mama Moose see's you it could be bad. Usually Moose ignore humans as much as they can but if you find yourself between a young Moose and its mama you have just hit her red button to protect their young. You won't outrun it or be able to fight it off, or even have much of a chance at hiding behind a tree. Climbing the tree might be your only chance to avoid the hospital.

This winter I had a too close for comfort encounter with a Moose in my front yard. With snow on the ground I was walking up my driveway towards my vehicle, looking at the ground to pick the best footing and so not looking around. My canine companion - who is usually running around and beats me to the vehicle, was right beside me bumping into my knee. Next thing I know, she was growling very softly and that alerted me to look up. I was only six feet away from a full-grown Moose that was pruning my willow tree. I whispered to the dog, go back to the porch (which she did thankfully) and I quickly backed up and then went back to my front porch. Heart beating frantically in my chest I put the dog in the house and

quickly sat down to watch the Moose out my office window. I'm not even sure it registered we had been there. I felt incredibly lucky to have a canine that didn't bark or act aggressively toward that massive beast and had the good sense to tell me danger in a way I could save us both.

To say the very least, we look around the property now before going out to do anything and the Moose has visited a few more times but has never shown any tendency to bother the horses or even investigate my bird feeders. I can honestly say the Moose was immune to any noises I made to get it to move on or go away: banging on pots and pans, using a bear horn, yelling - nada, not even a look in my direction. I only did those things because I was late for an appointment and couldn't get to my vehicle until it left of its own volition.


I enjoy watching wildlife, even bears or coyotes that use my property as a corridor to the seasonal stream behind my house and the Moose is no exception now that I am in the good habit of doing a visual scan before heading outside.

A young bull moose knocked down and trampled a woman this winter when the woman tried to guide the animal away from a vehicle near her home, according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). The woman, in her 50s, was taken to a hospital with injuries, and the moose was euthanized. The woman told CPW that she saw a vehicle she didn't recognize drive onto her street at the same time the moose was in the area. She went outside her house to guide or shoo the moose away to let the vehicle pass. That's when the moose knocked her down and trampled her.

"Unfortunately, the victim felt *(Continued on next page.)*

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## Highlander Wildlife

too comfortable and got too close,” said Lyle Sidener, CPW area wildlife manager, in a press release. “Moose look like big friendly critters, but they are tolerant only to a point.”

CPW wildlife managers later found two moose in the area, according to the spokesperson. Based on information they got from the victim, they determined which moose had attacked her - a young bull without antlers - and euthanized the animal.

It’s CPW policy to put down any animal that injures a person, the spokesperson said. He added that people should avoid putting themselves in close contact with wild animals, and that the best advice is to stay away. This is the second incident involving a moose encounter in Breckenridge this winter. In early March, a woman was cited for harassing a moose that was in the downtown area. CPW relocated the moose a few days later, when visitors to the town wouldn’t leave it alone.

These incidents are prime examples of how humans can do harm to wildlife by not respecting them as wild. Please don’t feed wildlife this summer to save their lives by not conditioning them to look to us for food and

ignoring their normal fear of us, except for Moose that is - just give them plenty of room.

*Article & this photo by A.M. Wilks*



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# 2020 Census ~ Choices

## 6 Reasons to Fill Out the 2020 Census

If you haven't yet completed the 2020 Census, now is the time! You can do it online or by phone. The United States Census is a count of every person who lives in the United States. It occurs only once every ten years.

### Why fill it out?

1) Help mountain tax dollars fund mountain services. The Census determines how much federal money will go to local governments for the next ten years. One person counted in Boulder County, for example, will bring back \$2,300 per year to the county! Mountain nonprofits also rely on Census data to apply for grants to fund local programs.

2) The count determines our national and local political representation. Colorado's number of representatives in Congress is based on the Census. So are congressional, state, and local political districts, which are redrawn after the Census to ensure each person's voting power is roughly equivalent to someone in another part of the state.

3) Census information is critical for emergency responses. First responders and recovery efforts rely on detailed population information to identify where and how much help is needed in the wake of disasters like the 2013 floods, the 2016 wildfires, and the current pandemic.

4) Rural folks are usually undercounted. If we aren't counted, we aren't fairly funded or represented, which makes it harder for mountain folks to access services like healthcare, food assistance, affordable housing, child care assistance, and infrastructure support.

5) It's quick and confidential. It will take about ten

minutes and your response is private, protected by federal law. You will be asked simple questions about your household, including home ownership status and who lives with you. You will NOT be asked for your social security number, citizenship status, or financial information.

6) You can avoid people knocking at your door. Census workers have to visit households that have not self-responded. Introverts like myself may appreciate the chance to be left alone!


Complete the Census online at [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov) or call (844) 330-2020 . Katherine Harvey Census Outreach Coordinator, TEENS, Inc. [katherine@teensinc.org](mailto:katherine@teensinc.org)

### Dear Readers,

Just in case you thought I might be working off planet and not up to date on current events, I wanted to set the record straight and tell you that the Highlander's lack of coverage for negative issues or people is a choice made long ago when I first decided to try and print positive news whenever possible.

We are all bombarded with negative information everytime we turn on the news to get a weather report or to try and keep informed about politics or the economy. I feel it is my job and duty to try and entertain, educate and inform you about our world without the mainstream negativity you can count on in our 24/7 news cycle.

It is not always an easy job so when I have to print news about our wild buffalo or horses, etc. I try to give you an action step you may take to help the causes I feel are important. Your letters are welcomed too. Editor

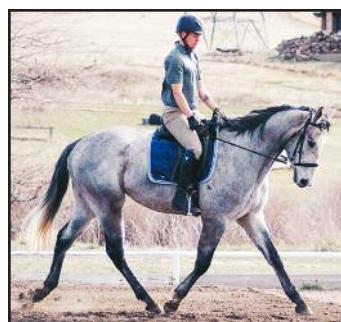


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# Dawn Chorus

Article and Art by Valerie Wedel

The Eastern horizon glows. Night is passing. We wait for the sun to rise. Suddenly there is a burst of song... Every bird within hearing distance bursts into full throated song. An orchestra of birdsong, with an invisible conductor, somewhere, laughing. Dawn Chorus.

Have you heard this Dawn Chorus? Perhaps been woken by it? Unable to sleep through it, even when you want to?

The Dawn Chorus is a phenomenon all over the world, where ever birds live. As dawn approaches, they burst into lively song. Birds singing the Dawn Chorus can seem louder and wilder than any other time of day. It can also seem brightest and loudest in the spring, as snows recede here in Colorado, and plants begin to grow again.

In his article in *New Physis*, C. Van Dalen discusses theory and research regarding this phenomenon. The Dawn Chorus happens all over the world, both north and south of the equator. It seems to be loudest in the spring time, and starts to get quieter during harvest seasons. Mystics have long proposed that birdsong is deeply connected to the life and health of our green, living world. Modern science is beginning to agree.

For many years scientists have known houseplants are healthy housemates for people. Plants breath in carbon dioxide we humans breath out. Through one of the amazing pathways of life on this planet, plants convert carbon dioxide into nutrients. In return, plants breath out the oxygen we humans need to breath in. At a large scale, this is why the Amazon jungle plus our forests are sometimes referred to as "the lungs of the planet."

Perhaps you know (or are yourself) a "tree hugger" who talks to his or her plants, and is secretly sure they talk back. A scientist might say plants benefit from human breath containing carbon dioxide. If a plant seems to grow better because it is being talked to, does that have anything to do with the sound of the actual voice? Do birdsong or other sound frequencies actually help plants grow better? Is it coincidence? Perhaps just carbon dioxide in our breath?

Could mystics be right when they say birdsong helps plants grow? Scientists have found a trail of clues that this seems to be true. One such researcher is Dan Carlson.

Building on science, after decades of experimentation, Carlson created a company and growing system called *Sonic Bloom*. His mission is to help provide enough nutritious food for people, especially in areas of poor soil, low rainfall, and poverty. Carlson served in Viet Nam in the 1960's and this moved him to devote his life to exploring food production to help end human suffering. Carlson developed a commitment to organic farming along the way. His gardening system relies on plant nutrients meant to balance and nourish living plants, combined with certain sound frequencies played for the plants.

Building on the work of others as well as his own field work, Carlson showed birdsong, and human music which includes similar sounds, really does cause plants to become stronger, healthier, and better able to take in more nutrients through their leaves. Birdsong and similar music helps plants survive bad growing conditions. It makes them more nutritious for people and animals. It helps them grow larger, faster, and live longer. The frequencies of birdsong simply do this.

Human music can also help plants grow better. Scientists have experimented with Bach's violin compositions, among other compositions. East Indian ragas and classical music seem to be effective. Remember a curious tenet of science – what scientists look for they tend to start to find. There could be a burgeoning field of music for plant growth, waiting to develop.

In addition to growing better with certain sound frequencies, such as those of birdsong, Carlson noticed that plants open their stomata to take in air and nutrients during the birdsong. So he experimented with misting nutrient solutions onto plants while playing birdsong and other music frequencies for them. The results included greatly improved plant growth. He also noticed plants would actually modify their leaves to create more stomata.

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Stomata are special openings that open and close on leaves, allowing air and nutrients to be absorbed. The shape of the stomata also changed, becoming more regular and better defined, in plants exposed to music plus nutrients.

Carlson's research has stood the test of time and is currently in use internationally. It is perhaps less well known here in the United States. One early sample of Carlson's work is a Purple Passion vine he raised. Apparently these vines typically grow about 18 – 24 inches tall. Combining sound frequencies to mimic birdsong frequencies, with misting organic nutrients onto the leaves, Carlson's Purple Passion vine was 1,350 feet long and still growing as of its publication in articles in 1982-3. This plant earned a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest houseplant in the world.



Birdsong is really amazing. A single bird might sustain one or two notes while warbling two others. A single bird creates its own harmonies! We humans can only come close to matching this by choosing to blend our voices and / or musical instruments. Can you imagine singing three or four-part harmony with friends to help your garden grow?

Another lovely benefit of birdsong is how we humans feel when we hear it. According to Linda Andrews (*Psychology Today*, 7/4/2011):

“Bird calls and songs can be lovely to listen to... Whether attracting mates, defending territory, or signaling danger, birds communicate with each other acoustically. Bird sounds engage the human brain... conveying information about our surroundings. They foster ... connection with nature, which research shows may provoke effortless attention, restore alertness, reduce stress, decrease hostility, and promote a sense of well-being.”

In other words, birdsong is also great for us humans! If you are woken by the Dawn Chorus this spring, can you feel it as a gift? As long as we have birds singing and plants growing, we have life.

Birdsong celebrates and reminds us humans of the new season of growth and life this spring. If you decide to join our local birds, and sing to your plants, maybe they will grow better. While singing to plants, you may also feel better. Deep breathing during singing oxygenates our own bodies, making us a little healthier and happier, too. To our health!

References: <http://www.newphysis.com/dawnchorus.html> - Van Dalen, Cornelius. *The Dawn Chorus and Life Forces*. *New Physis Newsletter Archive*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/minding-thebody/201107/the-birds-and-the-trees> Andrews, Linda W. *The Birds and the Trees*. *Psychology Today*, July 4, 2011. <https://originalsonicbloom.com/background.html> Overview of D. Carlson's work to support plants to grow optimally and be more nutritious. See also: <http://dancarlsonsonicbloom.com/Media.html> An article regarding Carlson's Purple Passion vine and its amazing growth to over 1,000 ft length.



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# Motherhood Denied

Article & Photograph By Diane Bergstrom

A pre-existing medical condition was disclosed with numerous repercussions; motherhood was denied. It wasn't a diagnosis she was prepared to hear. Or accept. But there it was. She was shocked, angry, confused, pained. She felt cheated. Again. A future door slammed in her face; the door jam blurred by evaporating options. Alternative options became untenable. Her mind spun, her throat closed, and her heart seared.

What would she do now that she couldn't be a mother?

She grieved deeply then mourned her loss for three years. And while mourning, she: planted a garden, made meals for a new mother, took care of the elderly, talked to children about being stewards of the national parks, helped visitors identify wild animals and birds, looked for lost hikers on the trails, created masks, comforted grieving friends, interviewed families and wrote eulogies, petsat, delivered wounded wildlife to rehabilitation centers, wrote poetry, recycled, read to the blind, wrote a grant, took disabled women on outdoor adventures, remembered birthdays, loved her family and family of friends, attended peace marches, wrote her congresspeople about social and environmental concerns, prayed for the earth to heal and the wars to end, helped others find jobs, encouraged young women to travel, babysat, celebrated her nieces and nephews, held space in waiting rooms for friends in surgery, parked her car and rode her bike, grew organic flowers and vegetables—sometimes watering them with her tears, composted, arranged adaptive art lessons for the brain-injured, made food bags for the homeless panhandlers, sent herbs and salves to the hurting, lifted her heart with music and exercise, de-cluttered her life and renovated her home, captured images of people and nature, watched tundra swans raise their young over an Alaskan summer, wrote untold stories of women who are making a difference in this world, listened to the stories of those near the end of their lives, climbed a mountain, and gave away the baby things she had collected over the years.

What would she do now that she couldn't be a mother?

She mothered.

(Happy Mother's Day to everyone because everyone holds, nurtures, and loves someone or something!)



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# Prepare For The Ultimate Gaslighting

By Julio Vincent Gambuto

Gaslighting, if you don't know the word, is defined as: manipulation into doubting your own sanity.

For the last hundred years, the multi-billion-dollar advertising business has operated based on this cardinal principle: find the consumer's problem and fix it with your product. When the problem is practical and tactical, the solution is "as seen on TV" and available at Home Depot. Command strips will save me from having to re-paint. So will Mr. Clean's Magic Eraser. Elfa shelving will get rid of the mess in my closet. The Ring doorbell will let me see who's on the porch if I can't take my eyes off Netflix. But when the problem is emotional, the fix becomes a new staple in your life, and you become a lifelong loyalist. Coca-Cola makes you: happy. A Mercedes makes you: successful. Taking your kids to Disneyland makes you: proud. Smart marketers know how to highlight what brands can do for you to make your life easier. But brilliant marketers know how to re-wire your heart. And, make no mistake the heart is what has been most traumatized. We are, as a society, now vulnerable in a whole new way.

The cat is out of the bag. We, as a nation, have deeply disturbing problems. You're right. That's not news. They are problems we ignore every day, not because we're

terrible people or because we don't care about fixing them, but because we don't have time. Sorry, we have other sh\_t to do. The plain truth is that no matter our ethnicity, religion, gender, political party (the list goes on), nor even our socio-economic status, as Americans we share this: we are busy. We're out and about hustling to make our own lives work. We have goals to meet and meetings to attend and mortgages to pay — all while the phone is ringing and the laptop is pinging. And when we get home, Crate and Barrel and 3M and Andy Cohen make us feel just good enough to get up the next day and do it all over again. It is very easy to close your eyes to a problem when you barely have enough time to close them to sleep. The greatest misconception among us, which causes deep and painful social and political tension every day in this country, is that we somehow don't care about each other. White people don't care about the problems of black America. Men don't care about women's rights. Cops don't care about the communities they serve. Humans don't care about the environment. These couldn't be further from the truth. We do care. We just don't have the time to do anything about it. Maybe that's just me. But maybe it's you, too.

Well, the treadmill you've been on for decades just stopped. Bam! And that feeling you have right now is the same as if you'd been thrown off your Peloton bike and onto the ground: what just happened? I hope you might consider this: what happened is inexplicably incredible. It's the greatest gift ever unwrapped. The Great Pause. It is, in a word, profound. Please don't recoil from the bright light beaming through the window. I know it hurts your eyes. It hurts mine, too. But the curtain is wide open. At no other time, ever in our lives, have we gotten the opportunity to see what would happen if the world simply stopped. And because it is more than rare, it has brought to light all of the beautiful and painful truths of how we live. And that feels weird. Really weird. Because it has... never... happened ...before. If we want to create a better country and a better world for our kids, and if we want to make sure we are even sustainable as a nation and as a democracy, we have to

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pay attention to how we feel right now.

And what a perfect time for Best Buy and J. Crew and Gwyneth Paltrow to help me feel normal again. If I could just have the new iPhone in my hand, if I could rest my feet on a pillow of new Nikes, if I could drink a venti blonde vanilla latte with two pumps of syrup, then this very dark feeling would go away. You think I'm kidding, that I'm being cute, that I'm denying the very obvious benefits of having a roaring economy. You're right. Our way of life is not ruinous. The economy is not, at its core, evil. Brands and their products create millions of jobs. They make up a system that keeps us living long and strong. We have lifted more humans out of poverty through the power of economics than any other civilization in history. Yes, without a doubt, Americanism is a force for good. It is not some villainous plot to wreak havoc and destroy the planet and all our souls along with it. I get it. But its flaws have been laid bare for all to see. It doesn't work for everyone. It's responsible for great destruction. It is so unevenly distributed in its benefit that three men own more wealth than 150 million people.

Its intentions have been perverted and the protection it offers has disappeared. And so the onslaught is coming. Get ready, my friends. What is about to be unleashed on American society will be the greatest campaign ever created to get you to feel normal again. It will come from brands, it will come from government, it will even come from each other, and it will come from the left and from the right. We will do anything, spend anything, believe anything just so we can take away how horribly uncomfortable all of this feels. And on top of that, just to turn the screw that much more, will be the only effort even greater: the all-out blitz to make you believe you never saw what you saw. The air wasn't really cleaner; those images were fake.

But you did. You are not crazy, my friends. And so we are about to be gaslit in a truly unprecedented way. It starts with a check for \$1,200 — don't say I never gave you anything — and then it will be so big that it will be bigly. And it will be a one-two punch from both big business and the big white house — inextricably intertwined now more than ever and being led by, as our luck would have it, a Marketer-in-Chief. Business and government are about to band together to knock us unconscious again. It will be funded like no other operation in our lifetimes. It will be fast. It will be furious. And it will be overwhelming. The Great American Return to Normal

is coming.

From one citizen to another, I beg of you: take a deep breath, ignore the deafening noise, and think deeply about what you want to put back into your life. This is our chance to define a new version of normal, a rare and truly sacred (yes, sacred) opportunity to get rid of the bullsh\_t and to only bring back what works for us, what makes our lives richer, what makes our kids happier, what makes us truly proud. We care deeply about one another. That is clear. That can be seen in every supportive Facebook post, in every meal dropped off for a neighbor, in every Zoom birthday party. We are a good people. And as a good people, we want to define — on our own terms — what this country looks like in five, ten, fifty years. This is our chance to do that, the biggest one we have ever gotten.

We can do that on a personal scale in our homes, in how we choose to spend our family time on nights and weekends, what we watch, what we listen to, what we eat, and what we choose to spend our dollars on and where. We can do it locally in our communities, in what organizations we support, what truths we tell, and what events we attend. And we can do it nationally in our government, in which leaders we vote in and to whom we give power. If we want cleaner air, we can make it happen. If we want our neighbors and friends to earn a dignified income, we can make that happen. If we want millions of kids to be able to eat if suddenly their school is closed, we can make that happen. And, yes, if we just want to live a simpler life, we can make that happen, too. But only if we resist the massive gaslighting that is about to come.

It's on its way.

Look out.

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# A Captive Orca's Chance For Redemption

By Rena Priest High Country News April 1, 2020

On Aug. 8, 1970, Tokitae was one of six juvenile orcas abducted from the waters off Washington state. Boats, planes and bombs were used in the hunt and resulting capture, and five orcas died. Juveniles were separated from their pods and netted off to await transport into captivity at amusement parks. During those weeks between capture and transport, the adult orcas never left the abduction site, and the sound of their grief-filled keening rang through the cove.

When Tokitae arrived at the Miami Seaquarium on Sept. 23, 1970, she'd already been named by the veterinarian who oversaw her capture and transport. In Chinook jargon, Tokitae means, "Bright day, pretty colors." But in the 1960s, Miami began rebranding itself, marketing itself as a destination with "subtle sex appeal," and Tokitae was given a new stage name: Lolita.

It's believed that the character Lolita in Vladimir Nabokov's notorious novel of that name was inspired in part by the story of a real girl — 11-year-old Sally Horner — who was abducted in 1948 and driven across the country to be exploited and abused by her captor. Horner's nightmare ended with her escape after 21 months in captivity. She died in a car accident two years later, but I

imagine she was happy to have those years of freedom — a chance to live as a normal teenager.

The scientific name for the orca is *Orcinus orca*. In Latin, *orcinus* means, "kingdom of the dead," or "belonging to Orcus," god of the underworld. In the Lummi language, orcas are called Qwe lhol mech ten, "Our relations under the waves." To my tribe, the Lhaq' te'mish of the Salish Sea, they are people. In our stories, they have societies and a culture similar to our own.

They are the first harvesters of salmon, and, like Coast Salish tribes, they are matriarchal. Most remain by their mothers' sides for their entire lives. The matriarchs are the keepers of the wisdom — the decision-makers, the leaders on whom the survival of their pods depend. Lolita's mother is presumed to be a 91-year-old L-pod matriarch known as "Ocean Sun."

Serious observation of orcas only began in the 1960s. In 1971, as head of marine mammal research at the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Michael Bigg, a Canadian marine biologist, conducted a census, which ultimately found that, at most, there were only 350 orcas left. Previously, it had been assumed that regional orcas numbered in the thousands. The census was prompted by the increased interest in orca capture for display in marine parks. Between 1962 and 1973, 47 orcas were harvested from the British Columbia and Washington coasts; at least 12 orcas died.

Since then, scientists have broken Salish Sea orcas into distinct types: residents (fish and squid eaters), transients (mammal eaters), and offshore (gray whale eaters). Lolita is from the L pod — the largest of the southern resident sub-pods, though only 35 L-pod orcas survive in the wild. The endangered status of the southern resident killer whales has placed them at the center of a fight to restore health and habitability to the Salish Sea bioregion. Their world is a mirror for our own: What happens to them happens to us, and today, they are facing extinction.

I arrived at the Miami Seaquarium on a sunny Saturday in December, during peak tourist season. I wanted to see for myself the whale I'd read so much about, and the place



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where she has spent the last 49 years.

I surrendered \$51.35 for a ticket and made my way toward the orca arena. The area was shuttered by metal roll-up doors, and the wide concrete hallway was devoid of other patrons. A walk through the rest of the park revealed that it was just as sparsely populated: Vendors stood idle at concession counters, waiting to sell dipping dots or French fries. Grade-schoolers on a class trip splashed about at the underwater touch tank. At the penguin exhibit, an elderly couple stared into the display window, viewing penguins that stood listlessly in the 80 degree heat. Nearby, two children, completely oblivious of the penguins, played with their stroller.

At the edge of a concrete ditch, I leaned against a rail. When I looked down, I noticed two giant sea turtles swimming in the shallow water. One of the turtles swam toward me, bumped into the wall, turned and swam away. When he reached the other side, he bumped into the wall and turned back again. Swim. Bump. Swim. Bump. I wondered if he had been swimming in circles and bumping into walls all day. Or maybe all day, every day, for decades. As I wandered through the park, I realized the most astonishing thing about the place wasn't the captive wildlife. It was that on this beautiful waterfront, in this coveted real estate market, in this era of enlightened consumers, Seaquarium continues to exist at all.

The pool where Lolita has spent most of her life — where she watched Hugo die — is 80 feet long by 35 feet wide, with a depth of 20 feet. Lolita herself is 22 feet long. In the wild, orcas dive to depths of several hundred feet.

Miami tourism has come a long way since Lolita's arrival at Seaquarium in 1970. As the world's busiest launch point for cruise ships, the port of Miami is undergoing a \$1.5 billion-dollar upgrade, designed to create a lush new experience for visitors. The weekend of my Seaquarium visit, the port welcomed 52,000 visitors in a single day. Meanwhile, a few miles away at the Convention Center, Miami Art Basel drew an estimated 83,000. Hundreds of galleries there paid upwards of \$12,000 for a booth. Chic parties and elegant artist's receptions continued deep into the night in stylish Miami Beach hotels and nightclubs.

The bustle of well-heeled world travelers in a shining seaport, the haughty glamour and celebrity of high art — it all stands in stark contrast to this relic of entertainment: an aging whale in a crumbling theme park.

For the first 10 years of her captivity, Lolita shared a tank with a male orca named Hugo. Hugo exhibited what scientists call "stereotypy," a kind of compulsive behavior induced by confinement. He repeatedly bashed his head into the side of the tank until he eventually died of a brain aneurism.

If I wanted to understand Lolita's world in an objective way, I needed help. At a conference for college mathematics teachers, workshop participants were given the tank's dimensions and asked to measure it to human scale. Answers ranged from 130 feet to 170 feet. How big is that? Think of an area rug 13 feet long by 10 feet wide. Now imagine spending 10 years there, with another person. Then 39 more years there alone.

"This is just making me horribly sad," said one participant. "Is there anything that's in place to try and get her a bigger home? Or is this just her life forever?" "What's the standard captive killer whale tank size?" asked another. "It's supposed to be at least 48 feet wide," I explained. Minimum standards require that a captive whale must be able to swim twice its length in any direction. "So it's not even legal," said another participant.

Debate about Tokitae's tank has been ongoing for more than a quarter of a century. In the 1990s, Washington Gov. Mike Lowry and Secretary of State Ralph Munro launched the "Free Lolita!" campaign. In 2003, animal rights activist Russ Rector called on officials to issue code violations against the park.

In 2005, due to their rapidly dwindling numbers, southern resident orcas were granted protection under the Endangered Species Act. In 2015, the act's protection was specifically extended to Tokitae. It was hoped that the law would mandate her release. Instead, her endangered status worked against her, with some claiming that freeing her would make her vulnerable to "serious harm." In September of 2017, Hurricane Irma struck Miami, forcing the evacuation of 6.5 million (Continued on next page.)



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## Highlander Wildlife

people. Seventy-five people died. Lolita was left behind.

An orca's brain has the tissue and structure necessary to support high-order thinking and complex processes such as language, self-awareness and consciousness of visceral feelings, like empathy, embarrassment and loneliness. Orcas are highly social with unique cultures and languages. Tokitae's group, the southern resident killer whales, eat only salmon and squid and live in the waters off the southern tip of Vancouver Island. There are three subpods — J, K and L — and Tokitae is from L pod. Each pod has a distinct set of shared vocalizations — a pod song. It's not inherent; it's learned. Tokitae still sings her pod song. After 49 years, she hasn't forgotten.

Pat Sykes, a former Seaquarium employee, remembered Lolita's early days at the aquarium, when she was still just a baby. "The skin on her back cracked and bled from the sun and wind exposure," Sykes said. "She wouldn't eat the diet of frozen herring. ...



At night, she cried." (Above photo by Andrew A Reding.)

Throughout history, captivity has been a major U.S. industry. According to Justice Department Statistics, since 1970, the year Tokitae was captured, the national incarceration rate increased by 700%. As of November 2018, more than 14,000 immigrant children are incarcerated in camps operated by the federal government. Since 2017, at least six children have died in custody, or immediately upon release.

In 1925, more than 60,000 Native American children were removed from their homes and placed in boarding schools. Many experienced treatment tantamount to torture. Many ran away. Some died, trying to find their way home. Between 1879 and 1918, nearly 200 children were buried at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. There were at least 150 other such schools in operation during the same period.

A disproportionate number of Indigenous women go missing every year, enough to spark international outcry from tribal communities across the United States and Canada. Many of the women are never found, and some are found murdered. The movement to raise awareness of this horror is referred to as the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. At a recent Lummi Nation gathering, women sang and danced in honor of our lost sisters. Little Lummi girls held signs saying, "MMIW — I'm not next." If vulnerable people are taken from their families against their will, and they die, the charges against the perpetrators are kidnapping, and murder. If orcas are my relations under the waves, and if Tokitae dies alone, 34,000 miles from



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home, and if her body is quietly disposed of after a lifetime of exploitation for profit, are kidnapping, enslavement and murder the crimes that have been committed?

Because poisons accumulate in their blubber, orcas are more vulnerable than most animals to environmental toxins. Problems associated with chronic exposure to toxins intensify when orcas go hungry and blubber is metabolized into their bloodstream. Toxins are also passed through the mother’s milk, but approximately 70% of southern resident orca pregnancies are lost due to nutritional stress. There simply aren’t enough fish anymore.

On Sept. 25, 2019, the United Nations released a report by its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which presented the stark truth about rising temperatures, ocean acidification, declining oxygen levels and threats to crucial marine ecosystems. The impact of all these changes, the report noted, will be felt in increased weather disasters, rising sea levels, the proliferation of pathogens and threats to human food security.

Across the Western Hemisphere, Indigenous communities fight to protect our homelands against destructive practices by governments and corporations. But we consistently come up against a different world view: one that has no interest in protecting salmon or our relations under the waves, doesn’t believe in the interconnection of all things, and stands apart from the rest of nature, insisting that humans “have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” As a species, humans have followed this biblical directive to the exclusion of all reason. There are environmental protection laws, but those continue to place the health of the planet below the health of the bottom line.

Last fall, I went fishing with a Lummi elder — a fisherman with more than 40 years of experience on the water. The boat broke down 20 minutes from shore. As we waited for a tow, a skiff made its way toward us. It was another pair of fishermen — a father and son out since daybreak.

“We’re starving out here,” said the man. “We only caught one fish.”

This story was recorded at Klallam in 1925: “These people were blackfish (orcas). They invited him in and gave him something to eat. One day he fell asleep and when he woke he heard people outside the house as though they were lifting something heavy. Then they were quiet. He went out for he thought they had a whale. He saw nothing but a diver. He asked what

they were trying to move. They said they wanted to move the whale. This story says two things: First, nature is reciprocal. It will nourish us and give us opportunities to return the favor.

When I entered the orca arena, I walked up to the edge of Tokitae’s tank. She swam close — right up against the wall — and stayed there, suspended at the surface. A couple of Seaquarium employees stood watch, but aside from them, I was alone with her. I sang her a song, and she made vocalizations back to me. Then, there was a new feeling. Seeing Tokitae there in that tiny pool, knowing she’d spent nearly five decades there, raised doubts. What if returning her to the Salish Sea was the wrong thing to do? It was wrong that she was there to begin with, but what if we were wrong on all sides on what to do with her?

I drove out to the lighthouse on Key Biscayne. I rolled up my pants and waded in the ocean. I looked out to the water and asked for an answer. As rarely ever happens, an answer came: In 1970, when Tokitae was taken, the courts didn’t see her abduction as a crime. But if the capture was carried out today, the perpetrators would be arrested and prosecuted, and the whales would be released. We have ended the practice of orca abduction because it is brutal. Now it’s time to take another step. If the blackfish want their whale moved, and we move her, they will grant us power; the power to heal our relationship with the natural world. You can help free Lolita, by urging the parent company of the Miami Seaquarium and Marineland Antibes to retire her to a seaside sanctuary, and finally have some semblance of a natural life. Go to PETA.org to fill out a brief form which may free Lolita. *Rena Priest is a poet and a member of the Lhaq’temish (Lummi) Nation. Her literary debut, Patriarchy Blues, was honored with a 2018 American Book Award.*

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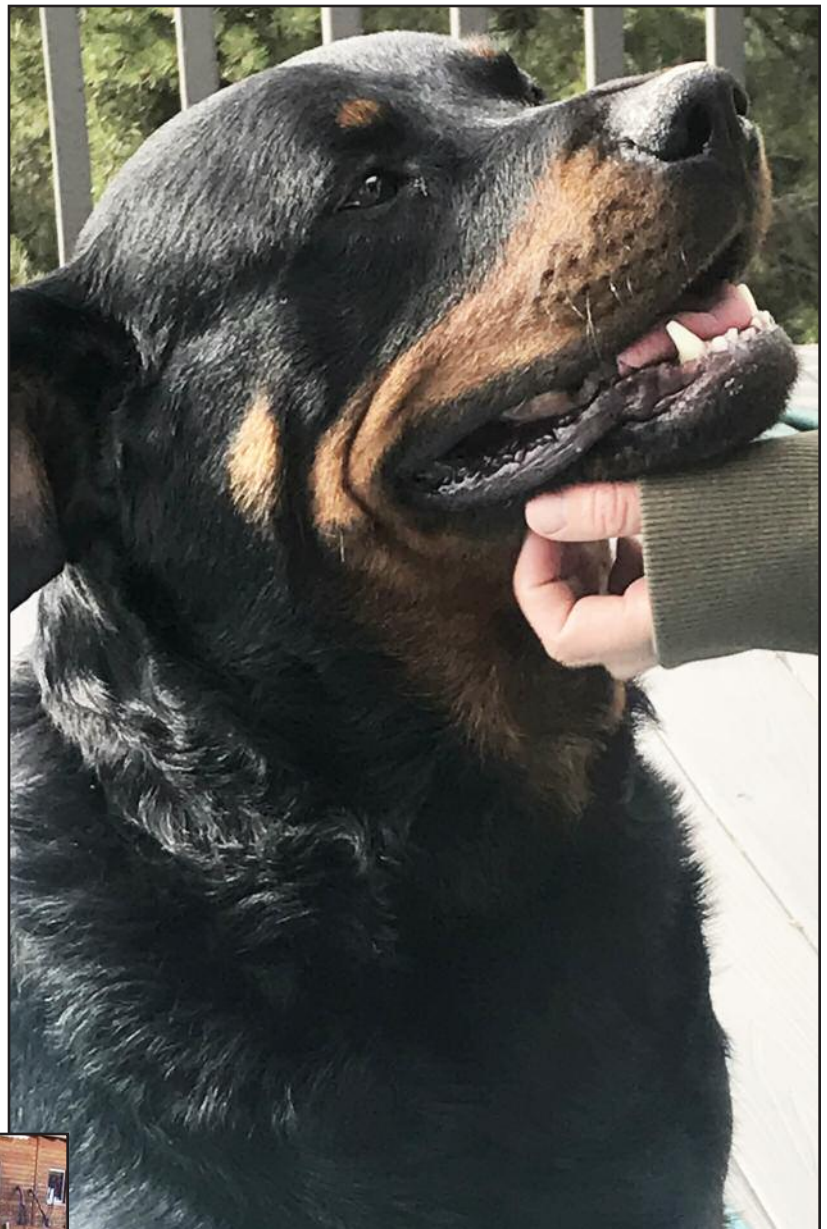
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*Previous page top: Foal with Mare.  
Left: Husky Face.  
Bottom: Cat on Couch.  
This page top right: King from Matthew.  
Top left: Cool Cat.  
Bottom left: Summertime grazing pose.  
Bottom right: Teddy from Julie.*

# Vehicle Accidents & Repairs

From State Farm Insurance – Jim Plane

Mobile help and quick tips for after an auto accident, Mobile apps allow you to alert your agent and your insurance company within moments of having a crash.

Although no two auto accidents are alike, there are preparation and post-accident steps that every driver should take — like downloading your insurance company’s mobile app. Apps like the State Farm® mobile app allow you to notify your insurance company after a crash to start the claims process. Be prepared by taking the following steps.

### Steps to take before an auto accident

First, remember ABP: Always Be Prepared. Check to see if your insurance company has a mobile app. Download the mobile app and register your account. The State Farm mobile app also enables you to have an accessible digital copy of your insurance card as well as agent contact information.

Place a copy of your insurance card and registration in your vehicle. Know how to use your mobile phone’s camera or keep a disposable camera handy to document any post-accident damage.

### Steps to take if you have an auto accident

First, ask yourself: Is anyone hurt? If so, immediately

contact emergency services for help.

Second, always call the police, no matter the severity of the accident. If the accident is minor, you may be asked to file a police report on your own, which you should do. Even if an accident happens on private property, contact the police to report the incident. Depending on the severity of the accident the police may or may not come out to make a report. It’s always in your best interest to contact the police.

### Get out of the way, if you can

If the vehicles are drivable, move them to a safe spot on the shoulder or otherwise out of the way of traffic.

Turn on your hazard lights and set up emergency cones, if you have them.

Get out of the vehicle, unless it is unsafe to do so. Use the mobile app to contact Roadside Assistance for towing help. Roadside service from State Farm® is available 24 hours a day.

### Record all the details

Use the mobile app to alert your insurance company you’ve been in an accident. Open the mobile app to share information, such as contact details and insurance details, with anyone else involved in the accident.

Ask other drivers to share their details, too. That information will be needed once fault and financial responsibility are established. Make sure to record if they are the car owners.

Using the mobile app, take notes about what you remember of the accident, and upload photos, too. (You’ll find photo reminders of what to take and how many images are needed in the app.) Ask for and keep a copy of the police report.

### What happens after you report an accident

The mobile app will allow you to alert your insurance company and/or agent that you’ve been in an accident and help you to begin the claims process. Coverage levels and determination of fault will help outline who is financially responsible for repairs and other costs, including medical bills. The mobile app by State Farm allows you to track the



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**4 auto repair questions to ask a mechanic**

From ordinary oil changes to clanking noises you can't explain, auto service is a fact of vehicle ownership. These questions can help you navigate mechanic lingo so you can protect your car and your wallet.

**What's your experience with cars similar to mine?**

Some repair shops specialize in particular makes and models of vehicles — especially if they're older, less common or more expensive to repair — while some mechanics take more of an all-make, all-model approach. Ask ahead of time to establish your mechanic's familiarity with your vehicle.

**Do you have references and professional memberships?**

The best referrals often come from coworkers, friends and family members who have had a positive vehicle repair experience. Online review sites may also provide some insights. In addition, mechanics may obtain professional certifications such as the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) seal, which indicates training and testing minimums. Or they may belong to organizations such as the Automotive Service Association

(ASA), which encourages members to adhere to a code of ethics.

Use the resources of the State Farm® Select Service® program: It's a network of vetted auto repair shops that must meet performance standards. Shops within 70 miles of you are listed on the Auto Repair Shop Locator. (The program is not available in all states.)

**Can I have a copy of the estimate?**

The answer should always be yes. The estimate should be signed by the mechanic and include all parts and labor totals. Ask the repair shop to go through each line item with you and explain it clearly — and don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something. Also find out whether the repairs are recommended or essential.

**What are my options for parts, and can I choose what you use?**

There are often different price points for some car parts — tires, for example, come in varying ranges according to their material and quality. Some car parts may be made by the manufacturer (often referred to as original equipment manufacturer or OEM parts), while aftermarket parts are made by a different company.

And some parts may be covered under a warranty; ask about that, too, and get the details in writing. When it comes to these decisions, you should have a say in what the mechanic uses. In addition, if during the repairs the mechanic runs into something unexpected that wasn't on the original estimate, they should always get your approval.

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# Extinction Looms For S. Calif. Mtn. Lions

By Mary Papenfuss

**A study presents a choice: Allow the big cats to vanish in 50 years — or build modest wildlife corridors.**

*This article was originally published by HuffPost and is reproduced here as part of the Climate Desk collaboration.*

Two populations of mountain lions in Southern California face a significant threat of extinction if actions aren't taken to protect their environment and safeguard animal transit routes through increasingly developed areas, a study warns. While the species isn't currently in danger of statewide extinction, the big cats in the Santa Ana and Santa Monica Mountains (a total of about 42 animals) have as much as a 21% chance of vanishing in the next 50 years, according to the study published in the journal *Ecological Applications*.

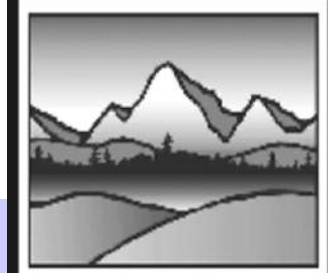
The mountain lions face increasing dangers from highway accidents, as well as death by rat poison, wildfires and shooting if an animal attack pets or livestock. But the biggest danger over the long term is a dwindling genetic pool as their territories are carved up and movements blocked by roads and development, the study warns. Yet judicious changes, particularly concerning protections of travel routes, could save the animals.

The "optimistic message" in the model presented in the study reveals that "these populations can persist with relatively modest increases in landscape connectivity," lead author John Benson of the University of Nebraska said in a statement. "If we can maintain healthy populations of mountain lions – a species that roams widely and requires such large spaces – in greater Los Angeles, that bodes well for our ability to conserve large carnivores anywhere."

Researchers, including from the University of California at Los Angeles, UC Davis and the National Park Service, analyzed DNA samples and 15 years of data from both areas to create population viability models to predict extinction based on genetic and environmental risk factors. The "greatest long-term threat to both populations appears to be the rapid loss of genetic diversity associated with their isolation from mountain lions in surrounding areas," the study concludes. But even a single newcomer into either group could increase chances of long-term survival, the researchers say.

Some wildlife officials are considering trucking animals across highways so they can mate. But the study suggests a system of protected wildlife corridors would be a more

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efficient way to protect the cats as well as other animals.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors passed a groundbreaking new law protecting “wildlife corridors” and other land use restrictions to safeguard movement of the animals through the region. The wildlife passages are now part of the zoning law in the area next to Los Angeles County.

“We urgently need state-led action to build wildlife crossings and improve habitat connectivity,” J.P. Rose, attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity, told HuffPost. “Southern California’s mountain lions have out-survived American cheetahs and saber-toothed cats, but they are no match for the network of freeways and sprawl we have built through their habitat. But we can prevent their extinction by quickly investing in wildlife crossings.”

Wildlife advocates are pushing for the \$60 million Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing over Highway 101 that would connect the Santa Monica Mountains to the Sierra Madre Mountain Range.

Corridor construction could begin as early as 2022 if money is available.

*High Country News*



*An uncollared female mountain lion in the Verdugo Mountains in southern California rubs her cheek against a log. Later, adult male P-41 visited this same location and took notice of the scent. National Park Service*

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# Strategies To Promote Better Sleep

By Suzanne Bertisch, MD, MPH

Sleep is a reversible state marked by a loss of consciousness to our surroundings, and as members of the animal kingdom, our brains have evolved to respond to dangers by increasing vigilance and attention — in other words, our brains are protecting us, and by doing so it's harder for us to ignore our surroundings.

Despite the threats from the outside world and any rapid and pervasive disruption to our daily lives, many of us are in a position to control our behaviors and dampen the impacts on our sleep. Cultivating healthy sleep is important; better sleep enables us to navigate stressful times better in the short term, lowers our chance of developing persistent sleep problems in the longer term, and gives our immune system a boost.

### Daytime tips to help with sleep

Keep a consistent routine. Get up at the same time every day of the week. A regular wake time helps to set your body's natural clock (circadian rhythm, one of the main ways our bodies regulate sleep). In addition to sleep, stick to a regular schedule for meals, exercise, and other activities. This may be a different schedule than you are used to, and that is okay. Pay attention to your body's cues and find a rhythm that works for you and that you can maintain during any "new normal." Make this a priority for all members of your household.

Get morning light. Get up, get out of bed, and get some light. Light is the main controller of the natural body clock,

and regular exposure to light in the morning helps to set the body's clock each day. Natural sunlight is best, as even cloudy days provide over double the light intensity of indoor lighting. No matter what area you are living in: an area exposed to the outside light - try to expose yourself to natural light by stepping outside, for at least 20 minutes.

Exercise during the day helps improve your sleep quality at night, reduces stress, and improves mood. Fit in exercise as best as you can. If you need to go outside for exercise, pick a place away from distractions or one that provides nature or wildlife. Online videos allow for group exercise activities. Many gyms and yoga studios are now "at home" and offering virtual programs at low or no cost.

Don't use your bed as an escape. While the gravity of negative issues certainly makes us all tired, try not to spend too much time in bed during the day, especially if you are having trouble sleeping at night. If you must take a nap, try to keep it short — less than 30 minutes.

Avoid caffeine late in the day.

Helping others may help with feelings of uncertainty or unease. Even if you do not work in an "essential" industry, your role could be to create virtual opportunities that engage your mind and others'. If you would like to be more actively involved in helping people, seek out ways to contribute your skills, donate money, or leverage your social capacity locally, such as providing virtual social connection to your loved ones by checking in on elderly family members or a friend, or providing in-kind



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donations. Doing altruistic acts may provide a sense of purpose, reduce helplessness, and alleviate some of the uncertainty contributing to sleep problems.

**Nighttime tips to help with sleep**

Prepare for bedtime by having a news and electronic device blackout. Avoid the news and ALL electronics at least one hour before bedtime. Avoid the news and ALL electronics at least one hour before bedtime. (Yes, it's so important, I am saying this twice!) The nonstop news cycle seldom provides new information in the evening hours that you can't wait until morning to hear, and will likely stimulate your mind or incite fear, making it harder to fall and stay asleep. Remind yourself by setting a timer or putting your television on the sleep setting. Make a pact with your family members to respect these parameters.

Cell phones, tablets, and all electronic devices make it harder for your brain to turn off, and the light (even dim light) from devices may delay the release of the hormone melatonin, interfering with your body clock. If you need something to watch to help you unwind, watching something that you find relaxing on TV from far away and outside the bedroom is likely okay for a limited time. You can also curl up with a book or listen to music.

Minimize alcohol intake. While alcohol can help people fall asleep, it leads to more sleep problems at night.

Set a regular bedtime. There are certain times at night that your body will be able to sleep better than others. If you feel sleepy but your brain is busy thinking, it can't shut off and go to sleep. It may be helpful to sit down with a pen and paper in the evening and write down the things that worry you; you can review this list in the morning and attend to any important concerns. If you have a bed partner, enlist their support to helping you stick to your schedule.

Reduce stress. The evening and bedtime hours are also a good time to perform some relaxation techniques, such as slow breathing or yoga. There are many free resources available for bedtime meditation.

Create a comfortable sleep environment, a place that is cool, dark, and quiet.

Don't spend too much time in bed during the night (or the

daytime). Minimize spending time in bed in which you are not sleeping. If you are having trouble going to sleep or staying asleep, don't stay in bed for more than 20 minutes. Get out of bed and do a quiet activity — read a book, journal, or fold some laundry.

What if I am doing all these things and I still can't sleep? This may be a sign that you have a clinical sleep problem, such as insomnia disorder or sleep apnea. If you are doing all the right things, and still have trouble falling or staying asleep, you should discuss your sleep problems with your doctor.

**What if I have been diagnosed with a sleep disorder?**

If you have a history of insomnia and take sleep medications and can't sleep, contact your doctor for medical advice, including questions about making changes in your medication. Many doctors are doing virtual visits now and they can review your current sleep problems and changes to management.

**You can also consider online programs for insomnia, such as Sleepio.**

If you have obstructive sleep apnea you can check out the American Academy of Sleep Medicine guidelines for related questions.

**Remember, don't stress out about sleep**

Disrupted sleep is a normal response to stress, and it is okay to have a few nights of poor sleep as you adjust to new routines and big changes to your work and personal life. But with some simple measures you can preserve your sleep and improve your well-being during any uncertain times. We can't control what's happening in the world but we can control our behaviors and dampen the impact of negative issues on our sleep.

**Make your bedroom dark, even if it is moonlight, your closed eyes need complete darkness.**

Do whatever you must to cover windows, close doors and remove light from the place where you sleep.

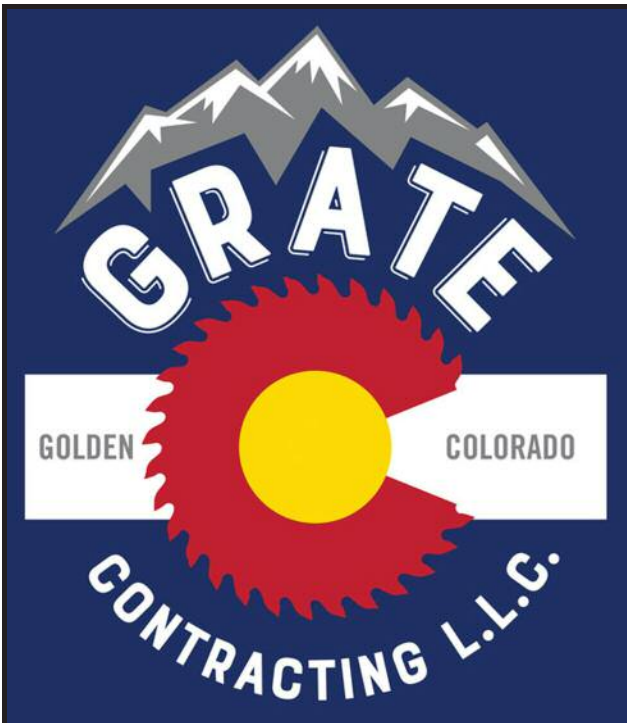
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## Update: BuffaloFieldCampaign.org

After the killing of 1/5 of the entire herd of buffalo in the Yellowstone ecosystem, the next challenge starts to take place for the imperiled Central herd. Spring weather continues to hold back the much-needed green grass the buffalo need. Snow levels still limit the migration and habitat for the buffalo to come and give birth on the west side of the Park, in Montana's Horse Butte calving grounds. Along the edges of US Highway 191, some grasses have attracted many herds to walk up and down the highway for their survival. Our daily patrols warn traffic with signs and bring attention to the hazard. At night is when the situation gets crazy. For the last two weeks, I have had the honor of being on our Night Rove patrol. We head out about two hours before sunset, looking to see how many buffalo there are, and where they are along the highway. In the past two weeks, this number has been anywhere from 20 to 100. The poor animals are starving and trying to make it over the last leg of Winter, finding what little grass is available along the highway. All day they walk up and down the road, eating what little grass is there, all the time BFC patrols are there warning traffic, keeping the buffalo safe. As day turns into night, the problem grows. Getting buffalo off the highway and into safe areas becomes our patrol's focus.

Asking buffalo to move off the highway is a fine art, and when done with patience, kindness, and listening to the buffalo, it has saved many lives — both human and buffalo. This is a tactic we call "shepherding."

As we slowly walk with the buffalo, guiding them to areas where they have food and enough bare ground to stay the night, we have been able to save hundreds of buffalo lives. The hardest part, for me, is sleeping after our night's work. I wake up and call morning patrol to see if any buffalo were hit over night. Until Monday, all calls had good news.

But a few days ago, we found one pregnant mom who was hit by an eighteen-wheeler. As all of our BFC family mourn with the Buffalo, we feel defeated and hurt by the tragedy. At our nightly meetings, we gather, and I remind everyone that if we were not out there doing all we do, many more buffalo would be dead. We hug each other and regain our strength, after which, I grab my night gear, and my patrol partner and I head back out to do our best to keep them alive. Though we are all tired and out patrolling all day and night, we are all honored to help our buffalo family. Thanks to all of our supporters who give us the



ability to continue this effort to do the best we can to save these sacred beings! It is the honor of my life.

With the Buffalo, Mike Mease  
BFC Cofounder & Campaign Coordinator

**UPDATE:** Members of Congress will be in their home states until May 4 or later, when they are scheduled to return to Washington, D.C. H.R. 4348 now has 122 cosponsors! We encourage you to contact the local offices of your U.S. Representative to cosponsor HR 4348. This is a critical time to take action for imperiled species! **Your actions matter — keep it up!**

The issue: Over 1,600 species are threatened or endangered and at risk of extinction in the wild. In 2019 the current administration adopted final rules gutting Endangered Species Act protections for recovering threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend for survival. Ask Congress to secure the full recovery of species who urgently need our help. Support passage of HR 4348 – the PAW & FIN Conservation Act. View BFC's "Endangered Bison, Endangered Migration" ad.

**ACTION STEPS can be accessed at our website.**

# Bird Tracker On Bike

By Frosty Wooldridge

*“Have you ever observed a humming-bird moving about in an aerial dance among the flowers - a living prismatic gem.... it is a creature of such fairy-like loveliness as to mock all description.” ~W.H. Hudson, **Green Mansions***

Individual passions glide on America’s highways in different forms. Some folks pursue their quests of visiting all National Parks within a summer. Others carry kayaks to challenge rivers from Maine to Oregon. Still others climb mountains in pursuit of their Holy Grail. Fly-fishermen-women pursue that speckled trout in high mountain streams. Somewhere out there on the roads that crisscross the planet, an adventure-seeker pursues his or her individual dream with an exceptional sense of determination.

When you meet them, they look normal, they seem normal and they may act normal. That’s where normal ends! Those “outliers” carry a nonstandard, burning passion within them that surpasses normal imagination.

One such individual graced our door in Golden, Colorado. Talk about high energy! New York City could harness his high-voltage life to their power grid to run it for a full year.

Dorian Anderson, lean, black-haired, brilliant smile and replete with a vigorous personality, set out on January 1, 2014 on a cold snowy day in Boston, Massachusetts to bicycle 15,000 miles around America in search of every bird species in the lower 48 states. He called his quest “The Big Year” which allows him to seek out and photograph as many of the more than 700 species of birds thriving in America.

After Stanford, he attended New York University where he completed a Ph.D. in Developmental Genetics. He studied how cells in the early embryo polarize and how this polarization event functions to control subsequent morphogenetic movements during gastrulation. Ironically, it was in the most urban of environments that his birding

interest became obsessive.

After NYU, he accepted a post-doctoral position at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston to investigate the molecular mechanisms that control neural plasticity.

He offers brilliant bird photographs from his bicycle pursuit of our fine-feathered friends. His daily updates relieve his adventures in bird-watching.

Since we are members of [www.warmshowers.org](http://www.warmshowers.org), Dorian picked us out as hosts after he climbed Guanella Pass and summited 14,100 foot Mt. Bierstadt on the Continental Divide. At that altitude, he captured a ptarmigan at 13,500 feet. At 8,000 miles into the journey, he registered that bird as number 488 on his list.

He rolled into our house in the evening for a hot shower, conversation and bed.


Next morning, we bicycled up to the top of Bergan Park, near my house, to seek out a specific dead tree that housed a family of Williamson Sapsuckers. We heard the hungry brood calling out to their parents for more food. Within minutes, a beautiful male appeared carrying grubs in his beak. He sported black back feathers, yellow/white underbelly and red tuft on his neck. His leg feathers looked like an Indy 500 finishing flag.

As I sat there with this bird-watching enthusiast, I felt his reverence for the natural world. He spoke about preserving birds, butterflies and all living creatures.

Anderson said, “I read about folks who spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to fly to places where a particular bird has been spotted. One fellow flew 200,000 miles during his “Big Year” to gather as many sightings as possible. I would like to see bird-watchers and all Americans avoid expelling so much carbon exhaust into the biosphere. That’s why I came up with the idea of bicycling around America to find all these bird species and not pollute the planet.”

Why take such an enormous trip?

“During a “Big Year”, a birdwatcher attempts to see or hear as many bird species as (s)he can in North America in



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one calendar year,” said Anderson. “This endeavor begins on January 1st and, depending on the level of commitment, can require the birder to visit all corners of the continent during the subsequent 364 days. The most ambitious Big Years typically record between 700 and 745 species of birds while logging well in excess of 100,000 miles of plane, car, and boat travel.

“Biking for Birds is my completely crazy and hopefully fantastic twist on the traditional North American Big Year. During 2014, I will travel only by bike, foot, and kayak as I move about the continent in search of birds. My movements will be unaided by petroleum, natural gas and electricity. I will not have a support vehicle; everything I need will be carried on my person and my bicycle. This Big Year permutation will certainly add an unprecedented level of adventure to the endeavor, and it should set a new standard for environmentally sustainable travel.

“The immediate goals of this endeavor are three-fold. First, I want to find as many bird species as possible. If I can complete the proposed route, I should find between 550 and 600 species. I hope my efforts to achieve this goal will promote heightened interest in birds, bird watching, and bird conservation. Second, I hope “Biking For Birds” will showcase the bicycle as a healthy and environmentally sustainable form of transportation. Third, I have partnered with both The Conservation Fund and the American Birding Association, and I hope to raise \$100,000 (or more!) on behalf of these organizations that focus on land conservation and promotion of bird-watching.”

After spotting and photographing the sapsucker, I felt an enormous sense of



*perfect shot. Later, the mother sapsucker appeared with another beak-full of grubs. Andersons registered a Williamson’s Sapsucker at number 489.*

### Highlander Observation

adventure with Dorian Anderson. He elevated my appreciation for our fine-feathered co-travelers on planet Earth.

When you visit his site, you may enjoy lively adventure chatter, brilliant bird photography and a place to send your donations to The Conservation Fund and American Birding Association.

Later in the day, we visited Buffalo Bill’s Grave. Soon after, we traveled on our loaded touring bikes down the fabled “Lariat Loop” on Lookout Mountain into Golden, Colorado. After lunch at a sandwich shop, Dorian headed north on Route 93 toward Boulder.

He waved, “Live well my friend.” “May the birds be with you,” I said. “Thanks for the memories.” *(Photography by Dorian Anderson) Anderson pulled out his 200 mm camera lens for the*

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## *Anti-Corruption Act*

*From Represent.Us*

America is facing a corruption crisis – and our movement is mobilizing to fix it. Right now, we’re gearing up to win dozens of anti-corruption campaigns in 2020. But these campaigns will only win with your help. Our volunteer action team is calling supporters across America to build our volunteer network. This plan lets us go around Congress to fix corruption ourselves.

Politicians are supposed to represent us. But most Americans have a near-zero impact on public policy. America’s corrupt political system is a complex problem. The American Anti-Corruption Act is a comprehensive solution.

The American Anti-Corruption Act sets a standard for city, state, and federal laws that break big money’s grip on politics. It will: Stop political bribery by making it illegal for lobbyists to lobby a politician and donate to their campaign. You can lobby, or you can donate, but you can’t do both. End secret money so Americans know who is buying political power. Fix our broken elections so the people, not the political establishment, are the ones in control. Bring conservatives and progressives together to pass Anti-Corruption laws in cities and states across America.

In communities across America, **RepresentUs** members – conservatives, progressives, and everyone in between – are working together to pass local Anti-Corruption Acts. Member-led **RepresentUs** chapters are leading the fight to protect our communities from the corruption that plagues Congress. Every town, city, state, and county has a unique political makeup, so every Anti-Corruption Act is uniquely tailored to the needs of each community.

In 2018, **RepresentUs** members helped to pass 23 anti-corruption reforms across the nation—that’s more than at any other time in history. By 2022, we’ll pass dozens more, in pursuit of a tipping point where ‘a rush of state activity leads to a change in federal law.’

STUDY: Passing state laws leads to federal reform. The biggest changes in America almost always start in the states. From Women’s Suffrage to Interracial Marriage, states led the way to federal reform. And it still works today.

Every municipal and state Anti-Corruption Act creates common-sense ethics, conflict-of-interest, transparency, and campaign finance laws. State Acts create the opportunity for federal candidates from that state to campaign on the anti-corruption platform – accountable to their constituents, not special interests.

Candidates who win election on this platform have a built-in incentive to champion Anti-Corruption laws in Washington, D.C. (because that’s what got them elected).

Every state we win gets us one crucial step closer to passing the American Anti-Corruption Act in the federal government.

**Have you ever felt like the government doesn't really care what you think?**

Professors Martin Gilens (Princeton University) and Benjamin I. Page (Northwestern University) looked at more than 20 years worth of data to answer a simple question: Does the government represent the people? Their study took data from nearly 2000 public opinion surveys and compared it to the policies that ended up becoming law. In other words, they compared what the public wanted to what the government actually did. What they found was extremely unsettling: The opinions of 90% of Americans have essentially no impact at all.

Princeton University study: Public opinion has "near-zero" impact on U.S. law. Gilens & Page found that the number of Americans for or against any idea has no impact on the likelihood that Congress will make it law. "The preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy." One thing that does have an influence? Money. While the opinions of the bottom 90% of income earners in America have a "statistically non-significant impact," economic elites, business interests, and people who can afford lobbyists still carry major influence. Nearly every issue we face as a nation is caught in the grip of corruption.

**From taxation to national debt, education to the economy, America is struggling to address our most serious issues.**

Moneyed interests get what they want, and the rest of us pay the price. They spend billions influencing America's government. We give them trillions in return. In the last five years alone, the 200 most politically active companies in the U.S. spent \$5.8 billion influencing our government with lobbying and campaign contributions.

**Those same companies got \$4.4 trillion in taxpayer support – earning a return of 750 times their investment. It's a vicious cycle of legalized corruption.**

As the cost of winning elections explodes, politicians of both political parties become ever more dependent on the tiny slice of the population who can bankroll their campaigns. To win a Senate seat in 2014, candidates had to raise \$14,351 every single day. Just .05% of Americans donate more than \$10,000 in any election, so it's perfectly clear whom candidates will turn to first, and whom they're indebted to when they win. In return for campaign donations, elected officials pass laws that are good for their mega-donors, and bad for the rest of us. Our elected officials spend 30-70% of their time in office fundraising for the next election.

**When they're not fundraising, they have no choice but to make sure the laws they pass keep their major donors happy – or they won't be able to run in the next election.**

Until it's addressed, corruption will continue to block progress on every issue. **RepresentUs** has a plan to tackle corruption, and it's already winning:

**Join your state office... CHAPTERS ARE LOCAL GROUPS OF VOLUNTEERS THAT:**

Meet regularly - Share leadership across different members in the chapter - Can start with as few as three people but often grow to be much larger - Work locally to raise awareness about corruption and pass Anti-Corruption Acts. Organizing locally is easier than you think! Join our local organizing team, and you'll have access to a network of leaders, resources, and trainings.

Or go to **RepresentUs** to find out more and decide for yourself if you want to help or volunteer.

**Editor's Note:** As has been said many times before, Democracy isn't easy - it takes work and that work starts with its citizens working to keep it. Currently there is a Ft. Collins Chapter of **RepresentUs** - maybe it is time for a Golden, Boulder, Nederland or Arvada chapter/s? This publication will be glad to promote any efforts to achieve this - just write a Letter to the Editor with details.

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# Extreme Wildfires Change Western Forests

By Helen Santoro April 16, 2020 High Country News

## New studies show how high-intensity fires alter flower pollen, soil health and tree growth.

Wildfires across the West are becoming more severe. In California, for example, fires have gotten larger, and the annual amount of land burned increased more than fivefold, between 1972 and 2018. A wealth of research has shown that this proliferation of extreme blazes is due in part to climate change, which is creating hotter and drier conditions. Additionally, decades of aggressive fire suppression encouraged a buildup of dense undergrowth in forests, setting the stage for bigger and longer-lasting wildfires.

Western landscapes are struggling to adapt to these changes. Many ecological communities have evolved to withstand frequent, low-severity wildfires, which clear out dead litter on the forest floor, thereby allowing nutrients to reach the soil and stimulating new plant growth. But these immense fires make it harder for trees and other vegetation to grow back, causing landscapes to change.

Here are three recent studies that examine the ways in

which the connections within ecosystems are altered by more powerful wildfires.

The study: “High-severity wildfire limits available floral pollen quality and bumble bee nutrition compared to mixed-severity burns,” *Oecologia*, December 2019. The takeaway: Wildflowers in areas hit by severe fires have lower-quality pollen than flowers in places with milder fires. This means less nutritious food for bumblebees after a big burn.

What it means: Researchers from Montana State University compared the impact of high-severity wildfires to that of mixed-severity wildfires — fires that are a patchwork of different intensities — on bumblebee populations. To do so, they collected bumblebees and flower pollen from several recently burned plots in southwest Montana.

In areas with more severe burns, pollen had almost 28% less nitrogen than in areas with mixed-severity burns. That pattern was mirrored in the bumblebees themselves: Those from more severely burned areas had less nitrogen in their system. Nitrogen is an indicator of the amount of protein in pollen — a crucial piece of the insects’ nutrition — and bees that consume more protein are larger and more resistant to parasites and disease.

The difference in pollen may be due to the species that flourish after a powerful fire. Fireweed and heartleaf arnica, for example, while native to western Montana, are less nutritious than other plants, said Michael Simanonok, an ecologist and co-author of the study. The finding is a reminder that human-caused climate change has cascading effects. “We are contributing to an exacerbated change in the fire regime,” Simanonok said. “We should be aware of the consequences of that.”

The study: “High-severity wildfire leads to multi-decadal impacts on soil biogeochemistry in mixed-conifer forests,” *Ecological Applications*, January 2020 The takeaway: Severe wildfires change the makeup of soil, reducing the amount of organic carbon and the microbe activity within it. Both of these elements help keep nutrients in the soil and

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promote vegetation growth.

What it means: Forests in California's Sierra Nevada are experiencing bigger and more severe wildfires. To see how soil changes after such burns, scientists from the University of California, Merced examined earth from areas in the mountain range that had burned four, 13, 25 and 44 years ago.

They found that, even four decades after the blaze, the amount of organic carbon was lower in soils affected by wildfire. Organic carbon promotes plant growth and is critical for soil health: It allows the soil to act like a sponge and hold more water and nutrients, and it binds fragments of the soil together, thereby reducing erosion.

Soil microbes — including bacteria and fungi — also boost vegetation growth by breaking down decaying plants, animals and other microbes and releasing nutrients into the dirt. But severe wildfires decrease microbial activity, impeding this process. What happens belowground impacts what happens aboveground, said Nicholas Dove, a postdoctoral scholar at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and lead author of the study: "Changes in nutrient availability will impact the recovery of vegetation."

The study: "Fuel treatment effectiveness in the context of landform, vegetation, and large, wind-driving wildfires,"

*Ecological Applications*, February 2020.

The takeaway: Actions taken before a wildfire, including tree thinning and prescribed burns, can help mature trees survive even extremely big and hot fires.

What it means: Scientists from the University of Washington and the U.S. Forest Service examined vegetation for three years following the devastating 2014 Carlton Complex Fire — one of Washington's biggest fires. Parts of its footprint were treated with tree thinning and prescribed burns before the blaze while other parts were not, enabling scientists to study the effects of such efforts.

In areas that received treatment, more mature ponderosa pines survived the fire. That may not seem surprising, but the researchers hadn't expected the strategy to be so effective during such an extreme and long-lasting fire, said Susan Prichard, a fire ecologist at the University of Washington and lead author on the study.

As huge wildfires like the Carlton Complex become more common, preparatory land management will be even more crucial. Actions like tree thinning and prescribed burns help preserve fire-resistant trees that can spread seeds for future vegetation growth after a blaze. "I really hope that our study comes off as an optimistic view of what we can expect in the future if we are proactive," Prichard said.

*Helen Santoro is an editorial fellow at High Country News.*

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# Power Update

May  
2020

## 2020 Annual Meeting Recap, Director Election Results

Members joined United Power on Wednesday, April 15 for its first-ever virtual Annual Meeting amid concerns about the rapid spread of the COVID-19 in Colorado. When Adams County made the decision to close all its facilities in response to the situation surrounding COVID-19, United Power was already considering alternate options to its traditional format to account for the health and safety of its members. The virtual format offered United Power an optimal platform to educate members about the co-op's activity over the past year and thank them for their hand in its continued success.

Without the ability to host an in-person meeting, voting in this year's director election was via mail-in ballot only. Members elected David E. Rose, Virginia "Ginny" A. Buczek, James Vigesaa and Tamra K. Waltemath to serve another term as directors in their respective districts.

Complete annual meeting details, full election results and video presentations can be found online at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).



**David E. Rose**  
South District



**Virginia A. Buczek**  
West District



**James Vigesaa**  
East District



**Tamra K. Waltemath**  
Mountain District

## Project to Improve Mountain Service

United Power crews recently began construction on a large scale improvement project aimed to provide better service for members living in the cooperative's Mountain Territory. In addition to increasing accessibility for our line crews and reducing future maintenance costs, the improvement project will provide the following benefits for members:

- New power lines will be able to withstand higher winds and snow loads that frequently occur in the Mountain Territory
- Increased reliability
- Additional fire protections to mitigation plan currently in place
- Increased capacity for future growth

The terrain in our Mountain Territory can be challenging, which requires the cooperative to engage in some unconventional construction techniques to safely and efficiently complete the project. Most of the poles and conductors will need to be placed by helicopter.

We appreciate our members' patience as we work to complete this project quickly and safely. The anticipated completion date for this project is August 2020, with removal of old lines completed by November 2020. Once completed, this project will result in a safer and more reliable system for our mountain members for years to come.



## Capital Credits to be Retired in May

United Power has opted to advance its Capital Credit retirement this year due to the unique economic stresses being placed on our members because of the COVID-19 situation. The cooperative's board felt members could use the economic relief now, as many have been impacted by this health emergency - through cuts in pay, job losses or increase in health costs. This retirement provides money back to nearly all our members when they need it most.

### How Much Is My Refund?

Refund amounts are based on your length of membership with the co-op and the amount of power used during the period retired.

To reduce our members' need to go to the bank during this time, members receiving \$50 or less will see their retirement as a credit on their billing statement.

**For more information, go to [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).**





# To the Healthcare Personnel, First Responders, Critical Workers



## And All Who Have Served **THANK YOU!!!**



**6 Car Garage**

**Coal Creek Canyon**

Gorgeous Updated Log Home - 1.82 Acres  
4 BD/ 4 BA 3,817 sq.ft. **\$1,100,000**



**SOLD!**

**447 Crescent Lake Road**

Story Book Charm on 1.4 Acres  
3 BD/ 3 BA 3,089 sq.ft. **\$617,500**



**Horse Property**

**31448 Coal Creek Canyon**

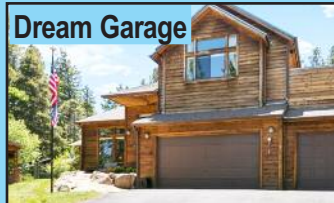
Slice of Heaven - Barn & Corral  
3 BD/ 1 BA 11+ Acres **\$600,000**



**New Listing**

**181 Hummingbird Lane**

Nicely Updated - Theater Room  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,129 sq.ft. 1.29 Acres



**Dream Garage**

**5 Ronnie Road**

Fantastic Home - Dream Garage  
4 BD/ 3 BA 3,358 sq.ft. **\$650,000**



**New Listing**

**133 Hummingbird Lane**

Fabulous Remodel - Horse Prop. w/Corral  
3 BD/1 BA 1,838 sq.ft. 1.53 Acres **\$439,000**



**Extraordinary**

**Coal Creek Canyon**

Fabulous Luxury Home VIEWS  
4 BD/ 4 BA 4,697 sq.ft. 1.5 Ac. **\$929,900**



**SOLD!**

**27036 Boulder Canyon Dr.**

Views of Lake & Divide -14.89 Ac.  
2 BD/ 1 BA 1,328 sq.ft. **\$586,500**



**SOLD!**

**44 Linn Lane**

Elegant Remodel / Timber Frame-Views  
3 BD/ 4 BA 2,243 sq.ft. **\$575,000**



**SOLD!**

**900 Camp Eden Road**

Amazing Custom Remodel  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,358 sq.ft.



**SOLD!**

**11150 Circle Drive**

Secluded Back Deck with Hot Tub  
3 BD/ 3 BA 2,048 sq.ft. 1.5 Ac. **\$480,000**



**SOLD!**

**180 Rudi Lane West**

Log Home Full Divide Views  
2 BD/2 BA 2,685 sq.ft. 2.5 Ac. **\$530,000**



**SOLD!**

**1011 Rudi Lane**

Custom Log Home 1.47 Acres  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,236 sq.ft. **\$465,000**



**SOLD!**

**Coal Creek Canyon**

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



**SOLD!**

**85 Valley View Drive**

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



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