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Black Bear
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Only YOU Can Prevent Bears From Eating Trash

Boulder City Council approved the measure to require bear-proof garbage cans last month due to several bears having gotten into trouble from eating out of trash bins. You may have seen the video that went viral of a black bear moving a huge trash bin behind a restaurant last summer. While some resistance due to the cost of bear-proof containers continues, compliance by many will undoubtedly save bears in the long run.

What hibernation occurred this year is fast approaching its end and the bears will appear soon and after a long hard winter they will be hungry. Residents in the foothills must be most vigilant this time of year as they can easily condition bears to expect food from their trashcans unless they take precautions to not provide food by putting out bags only or trashcans that have no lids. Even if you can't afford to acquire a bear-proof receptacle you are able to do several things to keep bears out of your trash.

Waiting until the morning the trash is to be picked up is one thing. Even better is to freeze foodstuffs that smell until you put out the trash for pickup. Having an airtight lid for all your trash cans helps and bungee cording all lids helps to keep out scavengers or the wind from blowing your lid away.

The best policy is to prevent attracting any bears because once they have eaten at your trashcan you can bet they will return. We have moved into their home territory and we must adapt to their habits, not the other way around. Once a bear becomes conditioned to expect food from people, whether it is trash or ground floor windows left open – they are considered a problem and are usually destroyed. Don't be the reason a bear loses its life. You can prevent them from wanting into your vehicles too. Clean out all trash daily, make a point of removing anything that smells even remotely like foodstuffs.

Make it a habit to put fast food wrappers into the sacks they come in and then into the nearest trashcan you come across. Once you do this daily you will love the cleanliness of your vehicle too.

Taking apple cores, banana peels and power bar wrappers into the house every night upon arriving at home takes creating a new and needed habit if you live in bear country – and we all do. If this habit saves one bear it will be worth your efforts and just think how well you'll sleep at night knowing bears aren't sniffing around your vehicle.

The damage a bear can do to a vehicle is stunning and costly. Plus, if they do find a way into a car or truck you can bet they'll have a terrible time getting back out once the door shuts. Bears have good memories and will consider all vehicles a food source if they eat in just one. Same thing goes for peeling away a screen on a ground floor window if they smell goodies in the kitchen or even your indoor trashcan.

Please help be a part of prevention: making bears safe from negative conditioning that may lead to their destruction. We can live side by side with them if we all do our parts to prevent clashes of lifestyles. They only want to eat and until the berries bud and ripen the bears are hard pressed to find food in the springtime. Help them to rely on their own natural foodstuffs by not allowing them to eat your leftovers.

By A.M. Wilks



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Truck Traffic & Noise Study Findings

The continuing saga of the proposed expansion of Gross Reservoir and Dam: I received a letter from Denver Water dated March 12th, regarding the truck traffic hauling and noise study they did last August. Due to the flood they decided not to hold a public meeting up in Coal Creek Canyon.

You can go to their website to view the video and listen to project manager Jeff Martin explain their findings, they also offer to send DVD copies via snail mail.

www.denverwater.org/moffat then on that page top right side is a box that says Gross Reservoir Neighbors truck traffic and noise study. Click on the blue text to watch seven clips of their aerial and ground video of big trucks trying to navigate our narrow highway and dirt roads.

Be sure to click on the small blue word email to send your comments about their findings.

As with most Denver Water information regarding this proposed project and others, they make it sound as if it is all permitted and approved, but it is NOT. A final Environmental Impact Statement is expected this month with a comment period and even then there is a Record of

Decision that must be given at some point.

I expect at least one pending lawsuit will challenge the proposed project, the FEIS findings and the multitude of things that are probably going to be subject to breaking laws if the DraftEIS was any indicator. There were too many issues with the DEIS to list here so it will be interesting to read the final statement to see if our comments made any difference.

With the EPA stating that the Moffat Project is too close to Rocky Mountain National Park and the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area, I fail to see how they plan to mitigate those objections alone. But when dealing with a powerful utility that is used to getting its way, even when their proposed projects are proven to be bad decisions and many folks oppose them – the question remains what will it take for them to choose another alternative.

Be sure to watch the video's they have posted and reply with your comments, I had many but won't sway you with mine until you've have a chance to voice your own. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

By A.M. Wilks

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2nd Annual Rocky Mountain River Celebration

Well, fundraisers are problematic by nature, but TEG *The Environmental Group* really pulled off a nice event recently with their 2nd Annual Rocky Mountain River Celebration in Boulder. With great participation from local and regional private and corporate support they reached their event goals and had such a great turnout that this promises to be the event of the season for years to come.

Upslope Brewing Company in the Flatiron Park Taproom stepped up to provide the place where donations and contributions in addition to dedication and provocation prevailed. Great short films, honest and heartfelt declarations and common sense scientific facts with **wonderful live music** were the highlights of the night.

Besides defending our endangered Colorado River, TEG is working to produce a new educational public radio program that will air weekly across Colorado. The subjects being western water issues and the rivers we all depend upon for tourism revenues, recreation and the lifeblood of

our very way of life.

This event drew many concerned citizens together to make the statement we don't have to take the destruction of our waterways without fighting back and promoting conservation and preservation. The funds will empower TEG to be prepared when the Final Environmental Impact Statements are released for projects by Denver Water that if permitted will do further



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irreversible damage to our natural ecosystems. **The Colorado River is ENDANGERED** and Denver's major water utility, the Denver Water Board is at the heart of killing this life source for our region. They always put out four color, expensively produced brochures expounding on their projects. Propagandizing the fact that the project, (whichever one it might be) is the best thing for all and is already a done deal.

What all of the players have ignored to date is the very public fact that the Denver Water Board plays on the economic field of profits. In fact they love to brag that all their monies come from water rates and new tap fees.

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board be environmentally conscience and answer to constituents instead of accountants and how do we change that scenario?

We all need to inform and educate ourselves to the facts and watching an award-winning documentary called *No Water To Waste* is a good start.

Which to me means pro development and con conservation. Now, explain to me why a public utility that depends on revenues from rates would want to conserve?

So any talk about changing water laws seems irrelevant to how the Denver Water Board is constructed. Instead of looking at water laws that are ions old maybe we should be deconstructing how our metro water board became industry, development and revenue dependent. Was it one administration in the capitol or several? Do we have a way of turning it around to work for us instead of only being in favor of corporations and municipalities? Should our water

Bring it up on that website or TEG's website, watch and understand so you too will be willing to donate to the cause of fighting the destruction of our Colorado River. If you do nothing else this year in an effort for preservation and activism, then do this one thing! But next year attend the third annual River Celebration and gather information, make new friends, have a great time and help us all towards a sustainable future with our water resources in Colorado. Be a part of the solution. *Photo previous page: Clint Wilcox-Jonathan Sadler, this page: attendees pose with sign RIVERS UNITE US!* **By A. M. Wilks**

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People 18 and older, from all walks of life, income levels and racial-ethnic backgrounds, can participate in 9Health Fair. Results and information on how to read lab results are delivered directly to participants. Participants are encouraged to share their results with their healthcare provider for further treatment and diagnosis. All levels that are outside the reference range should be reported to your health care provider for further evaluation. Please note that screening availability varies at each site location.

Basic Screenings - Available at all 9Health Fairs

Blood Chemistry Screening (Blood Draw) This screening provides baseline information on cholesterol, blood glucose, liver, kidneys, thyroid, and more. These screenings can help you and your doctor monitor your health and prevent health issues from becoming emergencies. Information from this screening can also be used to complete your employers' Health Risk Assessments (HRA).

In order to receive the most accurate results you should fast (DO NOT EAT ANYTHING OR DRINK LIQUIDS WITH SUGAR OR CREAM IN THEM) for 12 hours prior to attending a health fair.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER DURING YOUR 12-HOUR FAST and continue to take your regular medications. If you are diabetic, do not fast.
(Cost: \$30.00)

ARVADA

- April 27 – Susan M Duncan YMCA, 6350 Eldridge St.
- April 28 – Arvada Covenant Church, 5555 Ward Rd.
- April 29 & 30 – Spirit of Christ Catholic Church, 7400 W 80th Ave.
- May 3 – King of Glory Lutheran Church, 10001 W 58th Ave.
- May 4 – APEX Center, 13150 W 72nd Ave.

BOULDER

- April 26 – YMCA of Boulder Valley, 2850 Mapleton Ave.
- April 28 & 29 – Covidien, 5920 Longbow Dr.
- May 1 – Boulder Jewish Comm. Ctr., 3800 Kalmia Ave.

NEDERLAND

- May 3 – Nederland Comm. Ctr., 750 Hwy 72 North

GOLDEN

- May 3 – Rockland Comm. Church, 17 S Mt Vernon, Country Club Rd.

WESTMINSTER

- April 25 – Front Range Comm. College, 3645 W 112th Ave.
- April 27 – St. Anthony North Hosp., 2551 W. 84th Ave.
- May 1 – Covenant Village of CO, 9153 Yarrow St.

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Be Ready, Flood Season Is Coming

By Lois Hickman

“Everyone in this room get two things. First, flood insurance. Second, a weather radio.” Garry Sanfaçon, head of Boulder County Emergency Preparedness, was addressing a large crowd of Lyons area flood survivors at Lifebridge Church in Longmont on March 11. A 158%-200% over normal snowpack in the mountains, warmer weather, and reservoirs already full to the brim has county officials, and county residents, on high alert. When asked about the highest hazard areas, his response was “Everywhere is a hazard area.” The risks are flash flooding, thunderstorm-related flooding, landslides, debris blocking creeks and rivers at culverts and bridges, and high spring runoff. This is not a usual spring with the usual expectations. We need to be as ready as possible for whatever happens. Intense and tireless cleanup efforts to mitigate flood dangers are continuing until May 1. Garry Sanfaçon asks that we all be ready to notify the Emergency Preparedness office if we notice any debris blockages, landslide issues or changes in stream flow throughout this flood season.

The next day I ordered a good weather radio, one that runs on battery, wind up, or solar power. I called my homeowner’s insurance agent who referred me to another insurance company that does provide flood insurance through the national government. (Check www.floods-mart.gov to find an agent who can help or for more information. There is a 30-day waiting period before coverage goes into effect.) I don’t live in a flood zone, but my home was flooded last September anyway when the Palmerton Irrigation Ditch behind our property overflowed when dams above Lyons breached. It has taken six months to repair and rebuild, with still more work to do. Others, as we all know, have lost everything. I’m very aware that I’m one of the lucky ones who had a home to repair. I’m getting ready for whatever this spring brings.

I hope this kind of flooding won’t happen again, but hope isn’t enough. We’ve got to be proactive. Now is the time to do whatever you can to be ready, just in case. I’m building berms, digging trenches and stacking sand bags. That’s what my land demands. Your home and your land have their own requirements but there’s more to getting ourselves, our family and our pets ready in case of flooding.

In addition to the weather radio,

flood insurance, and whatever berms and sandbags you might need, you must have: 1) enough emergency supplies for sheltering in place at your home for three days 2) emergency supplies to take with you if you need to leave your home quickly 3) a car kit in case you’re away from home when a flash flood or debris event occurs, 4) an emergency plan for your family, including evacuation routes, ways you’ll communicate and a meeting location in case you’re separated


Details about what should be included in your flood preparedness are available from the **Office of Emergency Management, 3280 Airport Road, Boulder CO. 80301, telephone 303-441-3390.** Online, you can download Boulder County’s Emergency Preparedness Guide and sign up for emergency messages at **www.BoulderOEM.com**

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Buffalo Field Campaign

With the Spring Equinox, wild buffalo calving season is barely a month away. This is a most critical time for buffalo and other wildlife that have struggled to survive the harsh winter, living on the meager offerings of sleeping grasses and their own stores of body fat. When these stores are nearly depleted most of the buffalo we are seeing appear thin with protruding ribs, backs, and hump bones. Being forbidden access to lower elevation winter range takes a huge toll on the bison.

In the past few months more than 630 wild buffalo have been killed by humans and winter kills will also be significant. Though snows are quickly melting, green-up is still weeks away and now is the time when only the strongest will survive. There is danger even in the new ultra-rich spring grasses that will come as the digestive systems of buffalo (and elk), used to breaking down coarse, dry winter-fare, are vulnerable to overindulgence in the green grasses they so desperately need. Meanwhile, treaty hunting has continued. Twenty-three more wild buffalo, including pregnant cows, were harvested recently. Thankfully, no wild buffalo have been killed since then. We anticipate that treaty hunts will finally be over soon, though it is difficult to predict.

Yellowstone National Park issued a press release announcing that three buffalo were poached in the Blacktail region of the park, shot and killed. While this news is very disturbing, we find great hypocrisy in the fact that the Park Service can capture and send hundreds of buffalo to slaughter while condemning others for

committing similar crimes against the buffalo. Closure signs are still in place all around Yellowstone's Stephens Creek bison trap, and we have noticed a few more horses arriving to their corrals.

While capture and slaughter operations may have ceased



for the time being, we are ever vigilant for hazing (harassment) operations to take place. Livestock interests are attempting to turn year-round habitat for buffalo into a slaughter agreement. Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Department of Livestock met in March to discuss a draft proposal that would exchange wild buffalo lives for access to year-round habitat in the Hebgen Basin west of Yellowstone National Park.

Essentially, if there are 4,000 bison or more, no additional tolerance will be given, and so-called tolerance would only be given as the population declines. The



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406-444-3111- telling him you reject slaughter-for-habitat, and urge him to step up and take a meaningful leadership role for America's last wild, migratory buffalo. It is, after all, Montana's livestock industry anti-bison policies that currently drive all of the mismanagement of the world's most important bison populations. Though the buffalo are up against incredible odds, there is a new BFC video on our website that shows they have awesome friends in many places.

WILD IS THE WAY ~ ROAM FREE!

Buffalo Field Campaign

P.O. Box 957

West Yellowstone, MT 59758

406-646-0070

<http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org>

proposal is unacceptable to Buffalo Field Campaign, as we will not compromise the buffalo or make them pay a blood-sacrifice to gain ground. This proposal shows that broad public support for year-round buffalo habitat has been corrupted by ranchers to force an agreement, a public buy-in, for slaughtering buffalo and driving the population down to a few thousand. The proposal is still in draft form and we are currently reviewing its details.

In the meantime, please send a letter or make a telephone call to Montana Governor Steve Bullock: PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620 - toll free # 855-318-1330 or

Editor's Note: Last month a BFC volunteer committed civil disobedience for the buffalo being caught for slaughter by chaining himself to a gate to their holding pens and was arrested. Go to the BFC website to see video.

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The Road Repair Warriors & US 36

Article and Photographs by Diane Bergstrom

Maybe it's because my mom had a fascination with heavy equipment and can spend more time watching it than her continuous news channel. Maybe it's because one of my favorite childhood books was Digger Dan, about a steam shovel digger who learned to love his work after seeing the results of his labor. Maybe it's because I witnessed a flagger barely jump out of the way of an RV barreling down a seaside street. Maybe it's because while parking for hours during construction on the Parks Highway in northern Alaska, I listened to a young flagger's frantic radio call about a grizzly bear that had walked onto his road section. His calm, experienced coworker responded, "Clayton, can you get to your truck? Yes? I want you to walk, DON'T RUN, and radio me when you're in it." He did. Bear encounter averted. Maybe all of these memories have influenced my appreciation for road construction, the road warriors on the job, and propelled me to understand the post-flood repair work underway between Lyons and Estes Park. The millions of Rocky Mountain Park visitors planning to travel Highway 36 soon will want to know too.

Black bear, moose, elk, mule deer, gravel spray from spinning tires, being clipped by vehicles, are just some of the interactions from their past experiences that traffic controllers Eric and Roy shared with me. Roy told me the #1 rule is "Be aware of your surroundings." Good advice. Flaggers and traffic controllers from three different companies are working together to direct the high volume of traffic and heavy

equipment vehicles through the two work sites northwest of Lyons and around Pinewood Springs. Eric Millard, Traffic Control Supervisor for Work Zone Inc., has worked on various locations around the west including Trail Ridge Road, elevation 12,183', in Rocky Mountain National Park. He reported that people here, for the most part, have been nice, especially once they see the magnitude of the damage and the scope of the repair work. "I like playing with the public," he stated as an enjoyable part of the job, and added that everything has been going smoothly with no mishaps or accidents.

He suggested the public could assist by paying attention to signage (take Hwy 7 to Estes through Allenspark), not passing vehicles in the canyon, and resisting the urge to tailgate a slower-moving 20,000-pound trailer/truck pulling a load of 100,000 pounds of rock. A variety of vehicles are on the road so slow down! Eric explained that after the larger crews leave at night and the temporary traffic lights are in place, drivers need to realize that there are still other companies doing work, "You never know who's up here at any given time." The county is removing fallen trees from the riverbeds and dams. Poudre Valley REA is restoring cable and electrical connections. SaBell's Inc. is cleaning up the landscape around dams and retaining ponds. Several contractors are repairing the county roads.

The sheer synchronization needed in the vicinity of County Road 80 and the pit, where material is being delivered, staged, sorted and removed, is impressive. It's a continual confluence of local traffic, road repair vehicles, and equipment including: a trackhoe equipped with a rock





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the top layer and level it so that a trackhoe with a hydraulic drill can be driven to the top to drill holes for explosives. The 75' hillside near the pit has to be taken apart in three separate 22'-25' blasts, to be done over a week. Once a

hammer to break apart rock on top of hills to be scraped; loaders with front buckets to push, straighten and dump rock; trackhoe excavators with buckets to scoop rock; a backhoe with a bucket on front and drag box on back to smooth, grade and level soil; tractors with side dump trailers which can dump from either side; loaders; and stacks of blast mats, weighing approximately 1,000 pounds each, made of shredded tires, steel plates and steel cables. They hold banks or rocks in place, protect bridgework from blasts, and are placed over explosive-filled holes to direct the blast impact horizontally and downward. One of the days I photographed the area, high winds whipped up dry topsoil and dirt devils spun between the loaders. Over the last month, the workers have contended with snow, sleet, rain, hot sun, and high winds. In the same high-activity area, the road is being moved further away from the river onto bedrock to avoid future washouts of the supporting soils. This will require hillside removal.

“Scaling the mountain,” in construction terms, means to scrape off

a dirt ramp was carved into the hillside, a Caterpillar D10 tractor driven by a veteran equipment operator was used to level the top. In an area seemingly no larger than a single parking space, he pushed loosened rock and soil down the dirt ramp, while the front U blade blocked his view of the edges of the ramp and hillside. All of (Continued next page.)

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this is dangerous work any way you look at it. After the holes have been drilled, inverted orange construction cones were inserted to hold the soil back. The placement, depth, angle, and amount of charges are calculated by drilling and blasting experts and geologists, who quickly evaluate the blast results and make any necessary adjustments. Every blast in fractured rock face is a learning experience, and how the rock



explodes, falls and positions is studied. The blasting expert who walked me through a smaller previous blast, which he referred to as “dental work,” explained, “We can’t predict Mother Nature,” and that explosives were necessary where equipment won’t go. As he briefly explained the procedure and products, he mentioned that they must also be careful around lightning. After the traffic was safely held up, and the explosives were in place, a five minute warning was sounded by air horn, then a one minute warning, then the radio call transmitted, “FIRE IN THE HOLE!” (*They really say that*), and rock came down creating a growing dust cloud. The explosive experts walked straight through the rising dust to approve the area, and then the front loaders arrived in seconds and cleared the road in less time than it takes me to

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workers extensive labor, planning, partnership, education, skill sets, certifications, training, cooperation, knowledge and experience, is an understatement. It demands it.

The flood repair project between Lyons and Estes was the first mountain corridor chosen to begin and finish the long term road repairs, and will set

the tone for other permanent repair projects in the state. The personnel working together to complete the US 36 project represent a unique situation for a variety of organizations. The caliber of work,

innovation, interaction, and cooperation has made a widespread impression. Central Federal Lands, CFL, a division of the Federal Highway Administration, has partnered with CDOT, Colorado Department of Transportation, to help. Yenter Companies Inc. and RockSol Inc. are also working on the project. Julian Maskeroni, Project Engineer for CFL, stated that he has witnessed good government between the state, federal (Continued next page.)

clear out my car. As one supervisor simply put, "They hustle." After the rock is cleared, some is pushed over to reinforce the river bank and some is transported out, a forklift fitted with a "broom," a rotating circular brush made of nylon, plastic and metal, is used to sweep remaining debris off the road until the striping and edge of the road are visible. After final determinations were made to remove the first 25' tier of the hillside near the pit, a few more holes were drilled to set the explosives in place. The loosened earth ramp didn't offer enough traction for the trackhoe to travel entirely up the hill so blast workers threw bags of ammonium nitrate over their shoulders and hauled them up the rest of the way. Then they went back for buckets of gravel to fill the holes. After that blast was set off, a boulder the size of a medium Tuff shed landed on the road, and within minutes was moved off by a loader and excavator working in tandem. The same procedures will be used at "Deadman's Curve," (see next page) where a tall wooden cross placed in mourning testifies for the need for corrections. The road will be widened, the curve straightened, and the fatalities reduced. To say that in order to provide us with safe roads, the project requires of the

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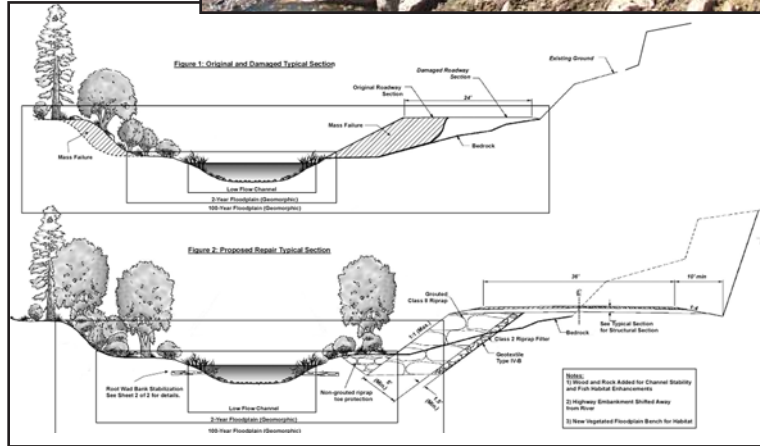
and all the different agencies that came together to partner up. He gives “big kudos” to CDOT for leading the way. He has also worked closely with American Civil Constructors, “ACC are top of the line and very good contractors to work with.” He commented that it was unbelievable how the project has tied road construction to environmental stream restoration. CFL has relationships with the Division of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, and Fish and Wildlife. A Stream Team was formed by environmentalists, the Division of Natural Resources, and a CFL environmentalist. The



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team is giving CDOT information and designs to improve the health of the ecosystems within the river, including rock designs to form fish habitats and the riverside habitat of the endangered Preble’s Meadow Jumping mouse. “It’s a very different approach for CDOT,” said Abra Geissler, CDOT Project Engineer, “We’re used to building roads and now we’re looking at the whole system.” (Bravo!) Geotextile fabric is being used to line high impact riverbeds before rocks are tiered or riprap (angular rock) is replaced to reduce soil erosion. Roads are being moved on to bedrock, they are working with environmentalists, they’re promoting riparian habitat, and they’re considering bounce back in fish populations and armoring road embankments. “We saw what the river did to the road and now we’re looking at the road to see how we can help the river.” She explained that the collaborative partnerships are moving the project along much faster. This corridor repair work was originally projected to take between two to five years to complete. She said that through the stronger, better, faster work accomplished by the partners, the project should be finished by fall. Phase I is on target: by Memorial Day, the goal is to have the road in good

driving condition, including a bottom layer of asphalt in place. Phase II will start in June, go possibly to Labor Day, and will include building up the asphalt layers, striping the lanes, putting up signage and permanent guardrails. A passing biker asked me to inquire about bike lanes and here's your answer: Pre-flood, the road had (2) 12' vehicle lanes and the new construction of the 4 mile stretch will have (2) 12' driving lanes with additional 6 foot shoulders. Bike on! A 10' rock fall ditch will also be added to trap falling rocks. So where is the excess excavated rock going? The crews have moved over 245,000 cubic yards of rock and dirt so far. Some has



been used to stabilize the riverbed slopes as now the "historic high water line" has been adjusted since the September 2013 flood. The riprap is being stacked 5-8 feet higher than the pre-flood levels. The rest of the rock is being given away to local communities including Boulder and Larimer Counties, the Stream Team, Jamestown, Lyons, and is being used for work on Hwy 7, the Longmont Dam Road and US 34.

"Everybody loves the convenience when it's finished but no one can tolerate the time it takes to build it," said my friend Matt Ungefug regarding road repair, while he shared his 30 years of heavy equipment operating experience to teach me about the various vehicles and their uses. Thank you, Matt! I want to thank everyone on the project that spoke with me, for their friendly patience, observations and expansive knowledge. Abra also wanted to share: "Thank the public for

being so patient in working with us! This project has never been done before. It's been a big undertaking in a small amount of time, in doing so that people and their kids will never get trapped again. Building back and building smarter."

So, take Hwy 7 to get from Lyons to Estes Park. It will help everyone. The paving on Hwy 7 and US 34 will not begin until US 36 is done. That's good planning. Check CDOT's website for updates at ww.coloradodot.info/projects/floodrelated-projects. Give the road warriors a wave, give them some love, give them some space, because as a local Lyons woman wisely said, "Try to travel without these people!" (Chart diagram at left by Thomas Parker of CFL.)

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Top Left: Deanna Bowles on Whiskey.

Top right: Cedar ignores Chanel.

Bottom Right: Deanna grooms Whiskey.

Bottom Left: Emailed

Readers, please send your favorite photos to see them on these pages - to news@highlandermo.com



Top Left: Emailed.

Top Right: Dog at Rocky Mountain River Celebration!

Bottom: Emailed photos.

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How Do I Know If My Animal Is In Pain?

By Dr. Amy LeRoux, DVM – Homeward Bound Animal Hospital

Having practiced veterinary medicine for a number of years, one of the hardest questions veterinarians are asked is, “How do I know if my animal is in pain?” Traditionally, it has been thought that animals do not feel pain, or that they feel pain differently than people. In fact, research and experience has shown that the traditional concept of pain in animals is false. Animals and people have similar, if not identical, neural pathways for the perception of pain. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that pets feel pain very similarly to how humans feel pain. Animals tend to mask their pain as an evolutionary necessity in order to ensure survival in the wild. Fortunately, our four-legged companions are not subject to the same dangers as their predecessors and we can help them be more comfortable by recognizing their pain and treating it appropriately.

Animals, just like humans, can suffer from both acute pain and chronic pain. Acute pain, such as that from a

traumatic injury or surgery, is often times easy to identify. Chronic pain, such as pain from chronic changes caused by osteoarthritis, can be more difficult to identify. Signs are often subtle and can be easy to miss. Behaviors that may indicate that an animal has pain are: reluctance to take walks of usual length; stiffness (that may disappear once the pet has ‘warmed up’); difficulty climbing stairs, climbing in the car, on the bed or a sofa; difficulty rising from rest; limping; abnormal gait; licking of a single joint; acting withdrawn, spending less time playing with family (which is often misunderstood as a sign of ‘aging’); soreness when touched; and rarely, aggression when touched or approached.

Once signs of pain have been identified, the next step should be to visit your veterinarian. Your veterinarian can frequently narrow down where the patient is painful and are often able to explain the cause of pain. Diagnostics such as radiographs (x-rays) or blood work may be necessary to identify the source of pain. Frequently, pain can be managed medically. However, depending on the extent of the underlying injury, surgery may be needed to correct the problem.

There are many different ways to manage pain both medically and through environmental management. Most animals with pain need immediate relief. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID’s) or other analgesic medications, such as opioids, can offer immediate relief. As these medications are not benign, blood work is often recommended to ensure no underlying liver or kidney disease exists before starting these medications. Most importantly, human medications are not safe to give to

animals and under no circumstance, should a human pain medication be given to an animal without first consulting your veterinarian.

There are also a number of nutraceutical supplements available that work to decrease inflammation and have disease modifying properties. These agents are typically more effective if started early in disease progression. Such products include glucosamine/chondroitin, omega-3 fatty acids, SAME, methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) and anti-oxidant and free-radical scavengers to name a few. An important point to keep in mind is that animals metabolize medications and supplements differently than people do. There are a number of quality supplements specifically designed for use by animals that are

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recommended. Again, your veterinarian will have recommendations as to which products they trust and that are specifically tailored to your animals concerns.

In addition to traditional medications and supplements, there are a number of complimentary therapies that work well in conjunction with other therapies or as stand-alone treatments. Acupuncture, laser therapy, massage, and physical therapy are easily integrated into a pain management program. They have all proven effective in helping to decrease the amount of prescription pain medication needed in responsive animals. Additionally, massage and physical therapy can be performed at home with instruction.

Weight reduction or healthy weight management is an important factor in keeping chronically painful animals comfortable. Dogs should have a nice, slightly concave waist. It is not unusual to see a hint of ribs in a dog with an ideal body weight. Cats should also have a waist but their ribs should be easily felt under the fur. Cats are very susceptible to illness due to rapid weight loss, so be sure to consult your veterinarian before initiating any weight loss program for your dog or cat.

Depending on the cause of your animal's pain, moderate, controlled exercise can be beneficial for many chronic conditions. Every animal needs an individualized exercise program determined by the severity of condition, weight, age and physical condition. Talk to your veterinarian to determine the best exercise program for your animal.

Lastly, environmental management at home plays a very important role in keeping painful animals comfortable. For example, going up and down stairs, jumping up and down, and squeezing through small doggie doors can all be painful. Making adjustments for your pets will help ease

their pain. Ramps are very useful for stairs, loading into cars and access to elevated surfaces. Keeping your pet warm may make him/her more comfortable. A pet sweater will help keep joints warmer. A heat lamp may be considered for 'outside only' dogs to help keep their enclosed area warm. Heating pads are not recommended as they can burn the animal. Orthopedic foam beds help many dogs with arthritis. Orthopedic foam distributes weight evenly and reduces pressure on the joints. A slightly elevated bed may be appropriate for larger dogs to make it easier for them to lie down and get up. Be sure to place the bed in a warm spot, away from drafts.

In conclusion, each animal will need to have a management program specifically designed for his/her needs. What helps one animal with pain may not help another. Your veterinarian will work with you and your pet to determine the best course of action for treating their pain. Also keep in mind that as your pet ages, the program may need to be readjusted to compensate for worsening or improvement of your pet's condition.

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Native Birds In Cities

From Ben Goldfarb

Ours is an increasingly urban nation – over 80% of the U.S. population now dwells in cities and towns, a figure that’s only rising. Nowhere is that trend more pronounced than in the West: Phoenix, Salt Lake City and Denver are among the country’s fastest-growing cities. Our metropolitan migration has environmentalists and planners dreaming of efficient high-density housing and a public transportation revolution. But before we wholeheartedly embrace urban living, it’s worth asking what the growth of American cities means for our wildlife.

Two recent studies approach that question in very different ways. The first, published last month in the journal *PLOS ONE*, suggests that cities could be hazardous to the health of animals dwelling in and around urban areas. To arrive at that conclusion, researchers at Arizona State University trapped house finches – small, crimson-breasted birds native to southwestern deserts – across a range of habitats in the Phoenix area, from the heart of downtown to a park twenty miles outside the city, and examined them for parasites and a disease called avian poxvirus. What they found was troubling: Finches that lived in areas with higher human populations and greater habitat disturbance were more likely to be infected.


What explains the urban illness? One possibility, says Kevin McGraw, the study’s senior author, is that bird feeders encourage high population densities and unhygienic conditions that lead to infection. “When you’re around many other members of your species, you’re more likely to get infected,” explains McGraw. “Dirty birdfeeders themselves might also be a route of transmission.” The pollutants, pesticides, and junk food that urban birds encounter may also make the creatures more susceptible to illness by putting stress on their bodies. “Anytime you’re stressed, you could be immunologically compromised,” McGraw says.

Madhusudan Katti, an ecologist at California State University, Fresno who has studied birds throughout the Southwest, proposes a fourth hypothesis. “Because food is readily available in cities, birds that might die in the wild survive,” says Katti. “You can cause an unhealthy population to persist.”

Katti’s own research suggests that the relationship between birds and cities is immensely complicated. To wit: Abert’s towhee is a large sparrow, native to the Sonoran Desert, which ordinarily sticks to riparian corridors. In Phoenix, however, where manmade features like sewage ponds and groundwater recharge basins provide watery habitat, Katti found that the towhee sometimes strays miles from stream channels. “Desert birds take advantage of any water, anywhere,” he says. “Cities create urban oases, which bring in a lot of opportunistic species.”

But those opportunists don’t always flourish. Cities and other human-altered habitats can become ecological traps that lure wildlife with the promise of easy food and shelter, and then suppress reproduction and survival. After all, cities, with their cats and collision-inducing windows, are perilous places for birds, and our well-intended aid may not help. “We attract them with bird feeders, but I wonder about the nutritional value of the food we’re giving them,” says McGraw. “They’re eating the equivalent of bird candy.”

The task for planners and conservationists, then, is to ensure that cities function less like traps and more like




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oases. Another study, published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* recently by researchers affiliated with U.C. Santa Barbara's National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS), offers a partial solution to that challenge. The paper, a sweeping analysis of urban plant and bird biodiversity in 147 global cities (including some in the American West like Los Angeles, Tucson and Seattle), found that cities retain a surprisingly rich suite of native species. Sure, urban areas can't match the diversity of undeveloped landscapes, but they're not homogenous wastelands of pigeons and starlings, either: the median city contained 112.5 bird species, only 3.5 of which were exotic. (If you don't think 109 native birds is impressive, try naming 50 in your hometown, and your neighbor's cockatiel doesn't count.) "Most people think of cities as concrete jungles that aren't important for conservation, but they actually support 20% of bird species worldwide," says Myla Aronson, a Rutgers University biologist and lead author.



The NCEAS study also demonstrates that if an urban area's vegetative cover increases, so does its species density. "That's a message to urban planners about the value of green space," says Frank Davis, director of NCEAS. "What you plant, the way you design streamside corridors – there are ways to make urban areas more friendly to biodiversity."

To be sure, increased green space isn't a panacea for wildlife health: Although habitat loss has been associated with the spread of animal disease elsewhere in the world, an extra park or two likely won't prevent birds from crowding around dirty feeders stocked with non-nutritious seed. The presence or absence of high-quality green space habitat, says McGraw, still lies within the "big black box of stress" — meaning it's a variable that could compromise birds' immune systems, but, compared to other factors like feeder hygiene, is so complex that it's hard to directly connect to animal health. "We still don't understand a great deal about disease dynamics in urban areas," adds Katti (who's also one of the authors of

the NCEAS study).

When it comes to retaining native species, however, creating green space is still the best tool urban planners have. Los Angeles' Debs Park, site of a new Audubon nature center, hosts over 140 different avian species, and surveys on the green space-rich Berkeley campus suggest that avian diversity hasn't declined in the last 75 years. "We go to cities and appreciate the language and culture, but there's another side, and that's their nature," says NCEAS' Davis. "It may be diminished biodiversity,

but it's still native biodiversity, and we can't give up on trying to restore it." *Ben Goldfarb is an editorial intern at High Country News. He tweets @bengoldfarb13. "Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org. The author is solely responsible for the content."*

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Why We Garden

By Ari LeVaux

With the days getting longer, a gardener's thoughts inevitably turn to that blank patch of dirt where he or she will spend an inordinate amount of time come summer. Why do we do this? If all you want from your garden is the calories, there are much easier ways to get them. But if you enjoy the exercise, the fresh air and the connection with the natural world and with your food, that's another story.

A garden is like a toy farm. All of its parts work, and it's capable of delivering the same benefits and risks as its big brother, the diversified vegetable farm. But because there's so much more at stake with farming, it's more intense, including the feelings of joy, harmony and productivity as well as the aches, pains and moments of futility.

Josh Slotnick, a farmer in Montana, believes that farm work makes you a better person: "Small groups doing humble labor with tangible results is a transformative experience," he told me. His debut collection of poetry, *HomeFarm* (Foothills Publishing), is a glimpse into the life of a farmer. The highs and lows he traverses are so dizzying that the book could have been called "Manure-Splattered Double Rainbow." He compares his vegetable farm to

making a mandala, a Buddhist tradition that's part meditation and part performance art. Tibetan monks periodically visit the University of Montana, Slotnick explains, and spend a week or so creating a 10-foot-square painting out of carefully arranged grains of colored sand.

The finished product, ornate and dazzling, is cheerfully tossed in the river. The making and letting go of the mandala is an embrace of impermanence, Slotnick explains. As a farmer, he can relate: What was brown in the farm's off-season is a diverse ecosystem by the end of July. A few months later, though, it's brown again. "You can walk into the corn, cover your eyes, and feel the humidity swell, and if you stop moving and stand rock still, the sound of bees fills your ears, the squash becomes an impenetrable sea of spiky green, the flowers, carrots, all of it, fill every sensory level, and then come fall, we mow it down and till it in - pour the sand into the river - and it's a flat sameness once again."

In between, Slotnick is fixing what just broke, dealing with angry neighbors about a messy pig slaughter, and haggling with a shaggy customer at the farmers market who wants to save a little beer money by using the bargaining skills he learned in Central America to shave pennies off the price of broccoli. An evening spent moving irrigation pipe with his teenage son gives Slotnick an opportunity to reflect on the bittersweet fact that the nest will soon be

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empty:

*How many evenings have you and I done this,
 while the sky goes pink to orange
 the mountains flatten to silhouette in the west
 we flop lines of pipe from one side of the mainline to the
 other
 juggle end caps, T's and elbows
 soak the big squash for hours
 keep the seedbeds damp
 the mowed beds dry
 where I will till on Sunday*

If farming does amount to a form of meditation, then some recent research on the effect of meditation on the brain provides a ray of insight into why farming - and gardening - might make you a better person. It has to do with the possible effects of meditation on the brain's cortex. A thinner cortex, in certain areas of the brain, correlates with lack of empathy and a greater risk of depression. There is some evidence that people who meditate regularly have a thicker cortex, the outermost layer of the brain. It certainly wouldn't surprise me to learn that most farmers have thicker cortices than ordinary pencil-pushers like me. Luckily, I have my garlic mandala - formerly known as my garden - to fall back on. It's basically a garlic patch with a year's supply of garlic, planted every fall and then

harvested the next summer. Each spring, I toss an assortment of seeds between the emerging garlic plants - carrots, radicchio, amaranth, romaine, corn, melon, borage - whatever seeds I have lying around. If the plants don't belong, they die. The ones that live in the shade of the garlic plants take off in July when the garlic is pulled. The garlic mandala comes and goes, leaving a stash of bulbs in its wake. Does it also make me a better person with a thicker cortex? Who knows? It certainly makes me a happier one.

Ari LeVaux is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an op-ed syndicate of High Country News (hcn.org). He writes about food from Albuquerque, New Mexico.



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Tracking America's Ice-Age Pioneers

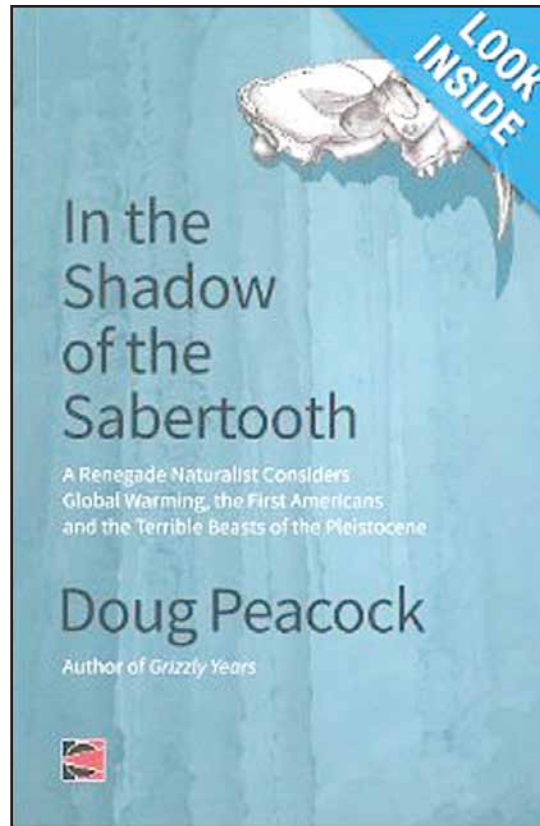
By Michael Engelhard
High Country News

*In the Shadow of the Sabertooth:
A Renegade Naturalist Considers
Global Warming, the First
Americans and the Terrible Beasts
of the Pleistocene*

Douglas Peacock - 200 pages,
paperback:\$15. AK Press/
Counterpunch, 2013.

Doug Peacock, author of *Grizzly Years and Walking It Off*, once walked point as a polar bear guard on an Arctic expedition, armed with only a homemade spear. He still loves large predators and new territory, and in his latest outing asks us to accompany him on “the Greatest Adventure” ever, the peopling of the New World. Roughly 20,000 years ago, scouts on a ridge in Beringia got their first glimpse of the “unending wild country that encompassed two continents uninhabited by humans.” Five thousand years later, at the very end of the Pleistocene, the climate changed, oceans rose, and the Bering Land Bridge flooded. The formerly ice-barred interior of the Americas opened, allowing passage south. “I can’t think of a richer, wilder, more perilous time to live,” Peacock writes.

There are parallels as well as vast differences between that time and ours, Peacock says. He is curious about how *Homo sapiens* perceives risk and how our species might survive and adapt to climate change, dealing with our own saber-toothed foe in the bush. The “bold migrations” of the past, he concedes, are “impossible in the 21st century” as a



solution. But that original migration still offers us “challenging illustrations of courage and caution.”

Blending archaeology and paleontology with memories of childhood arrowhead hunting, and evoking a keen sense of place, Peacock explores some of the colonists’ likely waypoints: Siberia’s tiger-tracked Amba River, the Yukon’s Bluefish Caves (one held a mammoth bone spear point), a 13,000-year-old burial site on the Yellowstone (yielding “ten five-gallon buckets of artifacts”), 10,000-year-old human teeth in British Columbia, and Baja California’s 8,000-year-old shell middens.

The book suffers from some sloppy editing and repetition, but Peacock’s accounts of

archaeological finds ring with the excitement of discovery. His descriptions of dire wolves, lions on steroids and leggy, short-faced bears, “monsters of the plains,” can raise the hairs on the back of your neck. “We evolved to deal with the predator,” he writes. And therein could lie the rub: “In comparison, present day ‘global warming’ seems distant, harmlessly incremental or something that happens to remote strangers.” Still, Peacock seems confident that a species that overcame flesh-and-blood threats like dire wolves can somehow manage to confront this latter-day, more nebulous foe.

This review originally appeared in an issue of High Country News (hcn.org).



Rare Pacific Fishers Threatened

From Christi Turner

The Pacific fisher, a small, carnivorous forest-dwelling mammal, is a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act this year, and big wildfire could be to blame – or rather, the lack of it.

Ecologist Chad Hanson’s recent research on the fisher population of the southern Sierra Nevada shows that the animals – aptly described as “the love child of a ferret and a wolverine” – actually seek out post-fire habitat, especially areas that have burned at higher severity, where most of the trees are killed. In a 2013 study, the first to ever examine the relationship between fishers and fire, Hanson used dogs trained to detect Pacific fisher scat, tracking where they eat, sleep, raise their young and otherwise use forest habitat. He has yet to decipher exactly why fishers need post-fire habitat, but he suspects that the combination of downed

logs, standing burned trees and natural regrowth create an ideal environment for the small mammals that fishers prey on.

The idea that there might be a wildfire deficit might seem odd in a time when the consensus among fire managers appears to be that we are experiencing increasingly frequent and more intense wildfire in the West. But a study released last month, co-authored by Hanson, says that contrary to commonly held belief, the majority of Western forests actually had more high-severity fires before fire suppression began 100 years ago than they do now. It seems ironic, then, that current Western forest management practice is based on the belief that only low- to moderate-severity fire was common before fire suppression, and that high-severity fire is a product of that suppression, exacerbated by climate change, and is largely damaging to wildlife and habitat. So high-severity fire – which burns

(Continued next page.)



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70 to 100% of woody vegetation and climbs from the ground to the treetops – is prevented as a matter of policy.

The means of suppression can include tree thinning designed to prevent high-severity fire, which Hanson said often means intensive commercial logging that removes up to 80 and even 90% of the trees in a given area. Managers think of this type of suppression, Hanson said, as “a sort of lesser-of-two-evils approach” for the fisher.

“There’s acknowledgement that the logging projects are not good for fisher habitat – that it actually degrades it,” he said. But forest managers typically think that thinning is necessary to save the species from the greater harm of fire.

Before Hanson, nobody had tested the assumption that high-severity fire is harmful to fishers, and his research shows that the post-fire forest is in fact a significant part of the fisher’s home range. This has to do with what ecologists call the “bed and breakfast” phenomenon.

“(Fishers) get certain habitat requirements from the dense old forests,” like denning and nesting, Hanson said. “But they also get certain habitat requirements (like food) from the complex early seral forest – what we call snag forest habitat – created by high-severity fire. It’s the juxtaposition of those two things that really gives them that range of what they need.”

But the dense forests of Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity counties in California are posing a second major threat to the fisher. Illegal marijuana growers in what’s come to be known as the “Emerald Triangle,” the largest cannabis-producing region in the U.S., replace patches of dense forest with marijuana plantations, and use an anticoagulant rat poison to keep rodents away from their weed. (Rats are probably drawn to camp trash and food, but will also chew on the pot plants themselves.) Research by wildlife pathologist Mourad Gabriel shows that the rat poison is also killing fishers, who eat dying poisoned rats and possibly even eat the poison directly. Gabriel has spent years tracking fishers deep in the remote forests of California, and a recent Mother Jones story reported that at least 48 of the 60 fishers collected by Gabriel tested positive for the rodenticide. Death by this poison is unmistakable: the anticoagulant properties cause blood to pool in the fisher’s stomach, and the poison is detectable in its blood. The illegal pot plantations are the only nearby source of the poison, which is banned for agricultural use. Gabriel has said that on a single plant, he’s seen growers use up to 50 times more poison than would kill a 500-pound lion.

It’s possible that the absence of post-fire snag forest habitat may even be pushing fishers to seek food around the illegal pot plantations – where there are plenty of rats to eat – hidden in the type of dense forests fishers typically use for their dens and nests. But despite the acute danger from rodenticide, Hanson said that the greater threat is still the ongoing lack of high-severity fire. Indeed, past

petitions from environmental groups to list the fisher as an endangered species emphasize historic habitat loss due to logging and fire suppression as the underlying threat.

It's still unclear whether the combined impact of too much rodenticide and too little high-severity fire will be more than the species can handle. Limited relocation efforts have been underway for several years. California's Northern Sierra Fisher Reintroduction Project, for instance, relocates fishers to habitat in the southern Cascades and northern Sierra Nevada, where an agreement between a private timber company and U.S. Fish and Wildlife offers them protection. But these fragmented efforts are not an ideal solution. Manson said the stress of relocation can be traumatic, and it could take years to determine whether a relocated population will survive. "All species are adaptable in some sense, but I don't think we can call the fisher a habitat generalist," Hanson said. "Based upon the data, it's actually quite specific in its habitat."

In the meantime Hanson wants to see the fisher make the federal endangered species list. And such a listing might just carry enough weight to start to tip wildfire management policy in a new direction across the West, by adding to a growing group of species known to depend on snag forest habitat, like the threatened northern spotted owl and imperiled black-backed woodpecker. Hanson's fire-severity study recommends a policy shift toward reintroducing high-severity fire on public forested land,

while creating a safe buffer between public forests and private housing.

Fishers are already listed as endangered in the state of Washington and as "sensitive" in Oregon, but are not listed at all in California. A federal endangered species listing decision probably won't be made until September of this year. Hopefully the Pacific fisher won't be left high and dry, between wildfire and weed.

(Photo on page 27 courtesy USFS.)

Christi Turner is an editorial intern at High Country News.

She tweets @christi_mada. "Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org. The author is solely responsible for the content."

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It's All The Rage

By Melissa E. Johnson

*Anybody can become angry—that is easy,
but to be angry with the right person
and to the right degree
and at the right time
and for the right purpose,
and in the right way—
that is not within everybody's power
and is not easy.*

~ Aristotle

Picture it: You're stopped at a red light waiting for it to turn. Green. You barely have time to lift your foot from the brake when the car behind you starts blaring the horn. Maybe she's trying to tell me something, you think. Is something wrong with my car? Stunned, you haven't moved through the light yet when the driver in the car behind you approaches. You roll down the window, curious about what she has to say. She starts screaming at you then punches you in the face. In self-defense, you cover your



face with your hands, but then she grabs your wrist and bites off your middle finger—at the knuckle, through the bone—before fleeing the scene.

Sounds crazy but it's based on a true story that happened in my aunt's Northern Virginia neighborhood. Aside from the obvious questions, like what allows a person to bite through skin and bone and blood vessels to remove part of a finger? And once bitten, what do you do with it? Spit it out? Throw it in the owner's car? Leave it in the street? I have to ask: What are we so angry about?

You're better than that. You're not an angry person, not the fighting kind. You're a volunteer, your son's baseball coach, a Sunday school teacher at church. Just last month, you attended a community fundraising event and donated money to support a local homeless shelter.

And yet you have these moments where anger gets the better of you—where ugliness turns you inside out and the worst parts of your nature are revealed; moments when your frustration builds to a fury and explodes in ridiculous ways as you burn those around you with your annoyance.

Like yesterday when you got stuck in the wrong line at Whole Foods. You had stopped on your way from work, in a hurry to get home and make dinner. You only needed three things, which should have taken five minutes from door to door. Instead, the woman from Minnesota in front of you decides to write a check for her groceries. Slowly. And of course, the cashier couldn't figure out how to enter an out of state check into the system, which led to multiple cries for help on the

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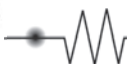


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P.A. system that went unanswered, followed by more failed attempts to process the check. You're ashamed to admit it, but you were huffing and puffing and on the verge of throwing your money at the cashier and storming out with your groceries.

Then, as you're headed home, there's a guy driving slow in the pass lane, blocking the free flow of traffic. As you try to pass him on the right, you see that he's talking on his cell phone and completely oblivious to the fact that there are other people on the road. You make a point to give him the stink eye with your face just centimeters from your window as you pass, and nearly rear-end the car in front of you because you're blinded by your rage. Now you're

laying on your horn, screaming some shameful obscenity that your offender can't even hear and, which, in any other moment you wouldn't dare speak. One look in the mirror and you would see the reflection of a crazy person.

The scary thing is—you're not alone. There are a lot of "you" out there. Take a look around. We're all losing it over something or another. Our anger boils over in our

politics and religions, in our music, in our schools and sporting events, in our jobs. We rage over inconveniences. We shake our fists with righteous indignation when others don't do what we want. Why?

Have we become a culture so entitled to ease that we steamroll anyone or anything that gets in our way? Are we simply scared of not getting what we want, afraid that we can't handle it if things don't go our way? Perhaps we're so accustomed to expressing our feelings and anger that we can't keep it in check anymore. Or maybe we're suffering from a spiritual starvation that demands to be fed yet we don't even realize what we're hungry for?

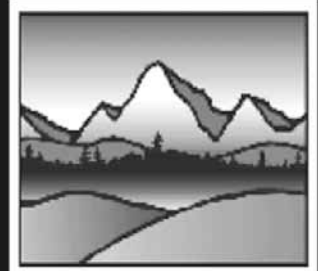
It's not an easy question to answer.

For starters, there just aren't any clear-cut ways to judge how pissed off people really are, and why. Perhaps we can ponder this the next time we're recovering from a meltdown. It's all the rage. *(Photos: Laughing Men, English Bay Beach, Vancouver, BC.)*

Melissa is a writer, photographer, artist and lawyer. Read more on her blog at www.HeartLaw.blogspot.com.



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Living With Less Water

From Krista Langlois

Let me start right off by saying that I failed. Miserably. Last summer I moved to western Colorado after spending most of my 29 years in exceptionally rainy places, and amid discussions of water rights and fights and rivers drying up and unraveling, I decided it would be a good idea to limit my own water footprint. For one week, I'd live on just five gallons of water a day. Then I'd write about it.

I could envision two possible endings: Scenario One: While standing naked in the bathtub, smugly dribbling water over my head from a cup dipped in a bucket, I conclude that I must be in the 99th percentile of environmentally conscious Americans because living on five gallons a day requires little sacrifice. My houseplants thrive, I remain clean and good-natured, and the brilliant essay I planned to write suffers because it was too easy.

Scenario Two: One week into my experiment, I am ragged and filthy. My plants have withered and I've been shunned at work for peeing in a chamber pot under my desk. I am desperate for a hot shower, and when I finally turn on the faucet and step into the tub, I experience deep revelations that lead to a brilliant essay about limiting my water supply.

Scenario Three never made an appearance in my day-dreams, but this is what really happened: It's Monday night - a mere three days after my resolution to live for a week

on limited water - and I am sitting in bed freshly showered. I did not shower with a bucket. In other words, I didn't even make it to the end of the week.

For me, five gallons a day was a quirky experiment. For the 17 California communities on a list released recently by state health officials, it may become reality: As drought tightens its grip on the state, each community is at risk of running out of drinking water within 100 days. Officials are discussing trucking in water as a possible solution.

In one such place, a town of 1,200 called Lompico, water comes from underground aquifers replenished by rainwater. The problem is, there hasn't been much rain lately: California received an average of just 7 inches in 2013, compared to their usual 22, and the Sierra Nevada snow-pack that feeds many reservoirs is at 12% of normal. Lompico residents have been asked to cut their water usage by 30%, but as Water District Board president Lois Henry pointed out to the San Francisco Chronicle, "We live in the Santa Cruz Mountains. People don't have lawns. They don't have gardens. How are they going to conserve 30%?"

California isn't the only state to face water shortages; residents of Magdalena, N.M., might be able to offer a few water-conserving suggestions. Last June, Magdalena's sole well ran dry, and for several weeks Socorro County officials had to truck in water from the county seat, 30 miles away. The medical clinic shut its doors. Restaurants



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switched to disposable plates. Tourism effectively ceased, and some people living in rental properties packed their bags and moved on. It was like a glimpse into a drought-wracked dystopian future - or a not-so-distant future, if predictions that the California drought will persist for several months or longer prove accurate.

Dara Machotka-Hafey and her husband, Jonathan, wanted to stay in Magdalena. The year before, they'd bought the only Laundromat in a 60-mile radius, added a mercantile where locals could buy fresh produce, and were renovating an Airstream trailer to live in with their 4-year-old daughter, Nia. The Laundromat drew customers from as far away as the Navajo reservation and the town of Datil, 40 miles west. The Machotka-Hafeys were still living paycheck-to-paycheck, but they had hope. "We were struggling," Dara says, "but it was getting better, you know?"

It's arguable whether Magdalena went dry because of drought, poor planning or a combination of the two, but on June 4, after a protracted dry spell, utilities manager Steve Bailey checked Magdalena's water supply and was 'dumbfounded.'

So the town went without. Nurses couldn't wash their hands, elderly residents couldn't run swamp coolers, and Dara and Jonathan were forced to close their business, which used up to 24,000 gallons of water a month.

It's a stark difference from Palm Springs, Calif., where the average comes to 736 gallons a day per person which

itself is a big jump from the 79 daily gallons that residents of East Palo Alto, Calif., use. Water use in California varies greatly with climate (desert towns use more water than the foggy coastal regions), local policies and socioeconomics (rich towns use more than poor), but overall, the state guzzles the most water in the U.S.

Not far away in New Mexico, the arid climate has forced many residents to cut back. Though the changes may not be by choice, You put one more struggle into the basket and they can do it.

I thought I could do it too. I'd spent a year in a developing country, a winter in an off-grid cabin and many months in the wilderness collecting water from streams. But I was uninformed about American toilets. A toilet built after 1994 uses 1.6 gallons of water or less, so the first morning of my experiment, I flushed without hesitation. Then a friend informed me that my toilet is like the 1969 Cadillac Deville of toilets - definitely a pre-'94 model. He examined the tank and concluded it may use five gallons per flush. Five gallons! I'd just flushed my entire daily ration down the drain.

And brushing my teeth later that night, it wasn't until I was in the midst of spitting into a stream of rushing water that I realized what I was doing. This using-less thing, I realized, is going to take some doing.

Krista Langlois is an editorial fellow at High Country News. She tweets @KristaLanglois2. "Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org.

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 Homeward Bound Hosp. pg 21 303.981.4663
 Vet Tech Pet Sitting pg 27 303.642.0477

APPLIANCE

Hi-Tech Appliance pg 30 303.665.0951
 ProTech Appliance pg 29 303.642.7223

ART

Tri-County Mtn Crafts pg 6 303.642.1422
 The Silver Horse - pg 16 303.279.6313
 The Rustic Moose - pg 16 303.258.3225

AUTOMOBILE

Carl's Corner pg 24 303.642.7144
 Kysar's Place Inc. pg 8 303.582.3566
 Mountain Muffler pg 23 303.278.2043

BANK

Mutual of Omaha Bank -pg 27 303.216.9999

BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION

ACE Indian Peaks Hardware pg 5 303.258.3132
 Alpine Engineering - pg 14 303.642.7438
 Arrow Drilling-pg 28 303.421.8766
 B & H Asphalt Paving ins cov 800.753.2010
 Keating Pipeworks, Inc. pg 30 720.974.0023
 Meyer Hardware pg 7 303.279.3393
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 Peter Palombo, Surveyor-pg 20 720.849.7509
 RedPoint Construction pg 23 303.642.3691
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 Summit Up Prop. Maint/Rep. pg 17 303.582.5456
 Trademark Const. & Design pg33 303.596.6984
 WCD Inc. -Mitch Heuer pg 25 970.948.9492

BUSINESS SERVICES

Graphics Galore 303.642.0362
 Michelle Marciniak, CPA pg 26 303.642.7371
 Wondervu Consulting Serv. pg 31 303.642.0433

CHIMNEY SWEEPING

Indian Peaks Stove/Chimney pg21 303.258.3474

CLOTHING

Mountain Man Store pg 22 303.258.3295
 The Rustic Moose - pg 16 303.258.3225

COMPUTER SERVICE & REPAIR

Mike's Mobile Comp. Serv.pg 21 303.642.8306
 Wondervu Consulting Serv. pg 31 303.642.0433

ELECTRIC

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 United Power - Inside Back Cover 303.642.7921

ENTERTAINMENT

CCCIA pg 25 303.642.1540
 KGNU Radio pg 33 303.449.4885
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EXCAVATING

Silver Eagle Excavating - pg 10 303.642.7464
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Forbes Farrier Service 303.725.8471

FIREWOOD & FOREST MANAGEMENT

Lumber Jacks - pg 26 303.642.0953

GIFTS

The Silver Horse - pg 16 303.279.6313
 The Rustic Moose - pg 16 303.258.3225
 Tri-County Mtn Crafts pg 6 303.642.1422

GROCERIES

B & F Mountain Market pg 20 303.258.3105

HEATING

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HEALTH & FITNESS

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 Naturally Chiropractic - pg 32 303.420.4270
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 Redpoint Construction pg 23 303.642.3691
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Town Center Liquors pg 15 303.940.5735

PLUMBING

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 Keating Pipeworks, Inc. pg 30 720.974.0023
 Morgan Rooter Service pg 22 303.642.3166

PROPANE

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 Gail Kirby-Keller Williams pg 4 303.475.9370
 Mock Realty-Kathy Keating -Back cov 303.642.1133
 Summit Up Property Mgt. pg 10 303.618.8266

RENTALS

Arvada Rent-Alls - pg 24 303.422.1212

RESTAURANTS

Malones Clubhouse Grill pg 14 303.940.1800
 Ralston Road Cafe pg 12 303.420.6650
 Sundance Cafe pg 4 303.258.0804
 Westfalen Hof - pg 17 303.642.3180

RETAIL

ACE Indian Peaks Hardware pg 5 303.258.3132
 Arvada Rent-Alls - pg 24 303.422.1212
 Golden Mill pg 18 303.279.1151
 HiTech Appliance pg 30 303.665.0951
 Meyer Hardware pg 7 303.279.3393
 Mountain Man Store pg 22 303.258.3295
 The Silver Horse - pg 16 303.279.6313
 The Rustic Moose - pg 16 303.258.3225

STOVES/SERVICE

HiTech Appliance pg 30 303.665.0951
 Indian Peaks Stove/Chimney pg21 303.258.3474

TAXES

Michelle Marciniak, CPA pg 26 303.642.7371

WATER & WELL

Arrow Drilling pg 28 303.421.8766
 Colorado Water Wizard pg 13 303.447.0789
 Doctor Water Well - pg 24 303.438.6669

APRIL
2014

POWER UPDATE



75th ANNUAL MEETING & Anniversary Celebration

APRIL 16, 2014 ♦ ADAMS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS



Join Us!

APRIL 16, 2014 ♦ ADAMS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

4 - 6:30 PM REGISTRATION, DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT
6:30 - 8 PM BUSINESS MEETING, DIRECTOR ELECTION RESULTS,
75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & PRIZES!

Fabulous Prizes!

REGISTERED MEMBERS • MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN



2014 Director Election

YOUR CO-OP...YOUR VOTE

FOR 75 YEARS, MEMBERS OF UNITED POWER HAVE HAD A VOICE IN SELECTING THE LEADERS OF THEIR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BY VOTING IN THE ANNUAL DIRECTOR ELECTION. PLEASE WATCH FOR YOUR COOPERATIVE BALLOT!

BALLOTS ARE MAILED TO ALL MEMBERS. PLEASE CAST YOUR BALLOT BY RETURN MAIL, PLACE IT IN A BALLOT BOX AT ANY

CO-OP OFFICE, OR VOTE IN PERSON BEFORE 6:30 P.M. AT THE ANNUAL MEETING ON APRIL 16TH. MEMBERS HAVE ONE VOTE FOR EACH MEMBERSHIP WITH UNITED POWER. ONLY THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS ON THE UNITED POWER ACCOUNT IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. BE SURE TO VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE IN EACH DIRECTOR DISTRICT AND SIGN YOUR BALLOT.

VISIT WWW.UNITEDPOWER.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

**UNITED
POWER**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Customer Service: 303-637-1300

Coal Creek Office: 303-642-7921

www.unitedpower.com

HAPPY SPRING Everyone! Come join us at the CCCIA sponsored EGG~STRAVAGANZA for the children's Easter Egg Hunt! The event begins at 10am on Saturday April 19th – See you there!



2280 Forest

Warm, welcoming & accomodating!

5 BD/3 BA+ legal 2 BD/1 BA apt. **\$739,000**



10982 Twin Spruce Road

Come See All the Changes!

3 BD/ 3 BA Garage/RV Pk'g **\$319,000**



10653 Twin Spruce

Road improvements complete!

2 BD/ 3 BA 1,896 sq. ft. **\$245,000**



0 Coal Creek Canyon

1.63 Ac Bldg. Site – Motivated Seller

In High End Neighborhood! **\$29,000**



102 Black Bear Trail

Privacy in the Pines!

2 BD/ 1 BA 1.39 Ac. **\$203,000**



125 Moss Rock Place

IEWS! IIEWS! IIEWS!

3 BD/ 3 BA 2-Car Garage **\$389,000**



33966 Nadm

Private, Backs to National Forest

1.08 Acre **\$75,000**



11578 Ranch Elsie Road

Sunny & Great Location!

3 BD/ 2 BA **\$329,000**

NEW LISTING!



38 Elliot Lane

Level Lot, RV Parking

3 BD/ 2 BA 2-Car Garage **\$225,500**



NEW PRICE!

11547 Shimley Road

Dramatic City Views 1.15 Ac
in Coal Creek Heights **\$29,000**



30 Wonder Trail

Historic Wondervu Cabin An

Original Get-Away! 1 BD **\$84,000**



NEW LISTING!

2924 Lake Park Way

Beautiful Updates

5 BD/ 4 BA 2-Car Garage **\$349,900**



64 Damascus Road

Beautifully wooded, flat site backs to Golden Gate St. Pk. 1.87 Ac **\$49,000**



0 Damascus Road

Adj to #64 Damascus Rd. 1.86 Ac site.
Thorn Lake privileges. **\$49,000**



Coming Soon!

8819 Blue Mountain

Sweeping Views of the Valley!

3 BD/ 4 BA 2-Car 1 Acre **\$529,000**



0 Circle Drive

Gently sloping 1.89 Ac site.
Great Solar Potential **\$39,000**



11568 Overlook

Foothill Views!

2 BD/ 1 BA 1,258 sq. ft. **\$224,000**



NEW LISTING!

992 Karlann

Nice blend of old & new - Remodeled

3 BD/ 2 BA **\$219,500**



NEW PRICE!

830 38th Street

Friendly Neighborhood

3 BD/ 2 BA 1,427 sq. ft. **\$469,000**



Buy or Sell a home with us and use our moving truck for FREE!



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