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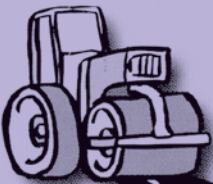
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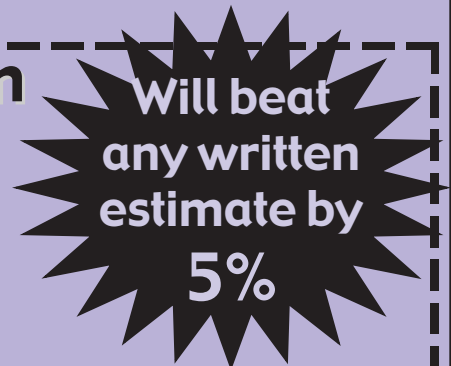
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Positive News for a Change!



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Working For Our Incumbent Senator In Dist. 16

Due to the 2011 Legislative Reapportionment Senate District 16 has new constituents in new areas. The population demographics have changed a bit and it is imperative that we who live in the district work hard, starting now...to help our incumbent Senator Jeanne Nicholson get reelected next November. Her running opponent has obstructionist and tea party leanings that do not reflect the ideas, beliefs and progressiveness of most of this district's population.

Having recently finished up an historic session, Senator Nicholson reached goals to create jobs, enhance public education, providing health care for more and improving our environment. Over the next few months it is the Highlander's goal to highlight Jeanne's sponsored bills that passed and were signed by the governor. The majority of the bills had bipartisan sponsorship showing how well our Senator Nicholson can reach across the aisle to work for us all and get things done.

This summer and fall Senator Nicholson will stay busy serving on several interim committees, walking door to door meeting with new and existing constituents and holding stakeholder meetings to prepare for the 2014



session. Your early seed money is essential in giving her the resources necessary to win re-election. You can go to her website - www.senator-jeannenicholson.com - to donate or to volunteer in whatever capacity you can to help in her ongoing efforts to continue to represent like minded mountain and urban voters.

Next session Senator Nicholson plans to tackle the broadband issue from a different angle and carry more health promotion legislation. She anticipates a busy 2014 session while working on re-election, but also knows there will still be more work to do in 2015 and beyond that will take her skills and ability to cross the aisle instead of obstructionism that is often in play in politics these days.

As Senator Nicholson said to us in Coal Creek Canyon at a past meeting about the Moffat Project: "It is better to be proactive in politics instead of complaining about things after they happen." This is your chance to be more proactive, help our local mountain resident get re-elected so she can keep working for those of us that want safer, healthier forests to live and work in. Your donations or volunteerism in her efforts can provide a progressive leader in our State Senate for another term.

By A.M. Wilks

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Brick & Mortar

By Melissa E. Johnson

Promise Yourself . . .

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind. To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends make them feel that there is something in them. To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, work only for the best and to expect only the best. To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and to press on to the greater achievements of the future. To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile. To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

~The Optimist Creed, Optimist International

I once quit the Optimist Club because it was too negative. Ironic, but it's true.

New to the Gulf Coast of Florida, I had looked for a good civic group to join that would be meaningful, engaging, and helpful in learning about my community while meeting like-minded others. Hey, I'm an optimist, I thought; what better group to join than the Optimist Club! Then one day, a few months in, the President of the chapter came up with this "brilliant" idea to increase membership: we would take turns carrying around a brick until each member brought in at least one new member. Now I'm sure this doesn't represent all chapters of this wonderful club, but WOW! What a heavy load! I barely knew anyone in town-part of the reason I had joined the group in the first place-and after an unsuccessful attempt to get a waiver from this dismal approach, I quit.

Not entirely surprising because I tend to run from the negative, choosing instead those friends and associations that lift me up and inspire with positivity. A bit of a dichotomy, really, when I consider the way that I have to approach my work as a lawyer-looking at the contract, deal or business strategy with a critical eye, which allows me to consider all potential outcomes-good and bad-and advise my clients of the consequences of their decisions. Yet for much of my life, when making personal decisions,

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I brushed aside anything negative, focusing only on the great and wonderful outcomes that would surely follow my next great step. This is a poor business plan and a terrible life strategy because when things run amok, as they sometimes do, instead of working out as I envision, I have a tough time adjusting to the reality.



I read somewhere once that having an over-abundance of optimism in the “it-won’t-happen-to-me” sort of mindset can be detrimental to our sense of wellbeing, and as harmful to longevity as high blood pressure and cholesterol! In fact, studies have shown that those who operate with extreme optimism experience more difficulty rebounding from set backs, which I have experienced first hand, because we get stuck on a mental track of “I can’t believe that happened to me! Why me?”

So a little worry can be helpful when channeled into productive action, like having a Plan B or creating a Will or making peace with getting older while you’re still young—all great building blocks for our peace of mind; and very different from dwelling in the negative, which we know causes excessive stress, impacts our health and affects our mind and spirit in often undesirable and unintended ways.

What kind of bricks are you carrying?

(Photo of Connemara Pony in Ireland by MJohnson.)

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

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Agencies Face Limits Of Sportsman Funding

By Sarah Keller

June's edition of Wyoming Wildlife magazine describes how mule deer have been declining in parts of the West for decades. For the Wyoming Range herd, poor habitat conditions, drought, harsh winters, and energy development may all be to blame. But pinpointing exactly what's harming one of Wyoming's largest herds requires capturing them by shooting a net from a helicopter, giving them physicals, and fitting them with radio collars.

The project isn't cheap, but it's important-and in the future similar research could be at risk because, like many agencies in the state, the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish lost 6.5 percent of its budget for fiscal year 2014. That's \$4.6 million dollars that would have gone to hiring staff, funding wildlife research and monitoring, upgrade fish hatcheries, stocking fish, restoring habitat, providing hunter access to private land, and running wildlife and conservation education programs in public schools. Even the agency's award-winning Wyoming Wildlife magazine is getting pared back.

According to Wyoming Wildlife Federation director Steve Kilpatrick, if the department's budget doesn't come back soon, science-based wildlife management will suffer. "If you don't maintain the quantity and quality of habitat, you don't have wildlife, and without wildlife and people

interested in it, conservation loses," he said.

The state-mandated budget cuts are especially painful because just this winter the Wyoming legislature declined Game and Fish's request to raise revenue by increasing license fees, which amounted to increases around 15 dollars, or less, for resident elk, deer and antelope tags, but more for non-residents. Wyoming's user-fees don't account for inflation, so the department periodically asks the legislature for a license fee increase to keep up with rising expenses, something that's worked in Wyoming since the 1930s.

But this year, in spite of 12 sportsmen and conservation groups like Wyoming Trout Unlimited, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and the Muley Fanatic Foundation of Wyoming asking the state to charge more for hunting and fishing, Wyoming's legislature had no appetite for putting more expenses on the backs of sportsmen. It would be a politically unpopular move in this time of intense budget scrutiny. Wyoming Game and Fish director Scott Talbot thinks there were a lot of factors at play including a down economy and diminished trust in government. Plus, "I'm not sure that we came forth and demonstrated the need," he said.

Wyoming Game and Fish's plight is indicative of a growing dilemma for wildlife management agencies in sparsely populated, but wildlife-rich, Western states. Wildlife and habitat threats are growing, and agencies are increasingly charged with managing non-game species, dealing with wildlife diseases and invasive species, overseeing controversial predator reintroductions, and helping bring young people into the outdoors. Meanwhile, the public's outdoor interests are changing and becoming more diverse. Game and fish departments aren't just hook and bullet agencies, though hunters and anglers still provide much of their funding.

In Wyoming, 80 percent of game and fish's budget comes from license fees, as well as federal taxes on hunting and



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fishing gear. But that license pool is shrinking. Ironically, wildlife managers have had to reduce Wyoming's mule deer and antelope licenses as herds have declined, cutting into the very revenue that would help with studying those declines and improving habitat for the species.

With growing demands on wildlife agencies and no sign of substantial increases in hunting and fishing license sales, user-fee increases for hunters and anglers probably don't amount to a long-term solution. Fees can only rise so high before they deter the out-of-staters who bring in the majority of license money, or threaten America's egalitarian hunting and angling ethos.

Idaho Fish and Game is also facing financial challenges, losing funding for conservation programs as license sales decline. Last summer they hosted a wildlife summit to get public input on dealing with the problem, and this winter the game commission voted to look at how other states have channeled outdoor gear taxes into fish and wildlife departments.

Montana is also showing signs that it might decide to cope with declining fish and wildlife revenues. Game commissioner Rob Moody told the Billings Gazette that they need to confront the fact that many tourists visit the state to view wildlife, but "none of those folks pay a cent to fund the wildlife, unless they buy a hunting or fishing license."

People are thinking about a whole host of alternative ways to raise funds for wildlife agencies, everything from fees levied from tourism operations, like snowmobile tours, to lottery funds, and license plates sales, or maybe getting a funding stream from mineral severance taxes.

Not everyone is open to broadening the funding base of

fish and game agencies. Some, like the Wyoming Liberty Group see the department's goal of "conserving wildlife - serving people" as "mission creep," and a sign that it's time to reign in the agency.

But Kilpatrick sees the challenge of broadening the funding base as an opportunity for hunters and anglers to reach out to other members of the wildlife appreciating and recreational community, who might also take pride in the tradition of funding wildlife conservation and management. After all, both groups share the sense that game and fish departments oversee something priceless.

"We don't judge our lifestyle based on price stickers, we base it on the ability to ramble across an open landscape and see one of the greatest wildlife resources in the nation," he said.

Sarah Jane Keller is the High Country News editorial fellow. "Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org. The author is solely responsible for the content."

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Update - Buffalo Field Campaign

Comment on Year-Round Habitat EA:

New Info, Deadline Extended

Please help us gain this ground for wild buffalo by submitting your public comments today. Opportunity for public comment is now available on Montana's proposal for some year-round bison habitat in both the Hebgen and Gardiner Basins, west and north of Yellowstone National Park. Montana has responded to our plea for an extension on the deadline for comments (good job!), which has been afforded another 30 days. **The comment period now ends on September 13, 2013.**

If you have already submitted comments, thank you! You can now send supplemental comments based on additional information learned. BFC has thoroughly reviewed the EA and consequently updated our talking points. If you have already submitted comments, you can send them again and include these new talking points as supplemental comments, and they will be counted. However, it is VERY IMPORTANT that everyone personalize your comments,

or else Montana will not include them individually. We strongly recommend that you edit our sample subject to include your name, and personalization of the subject itself. Use our sample letter as a suggestion only, and please put things into your own words so that your voice counts!

BFC Attends IBMP Meeting, Forecast for Gloomy Winter - A cow buffalo shows her snowy face, looking up from "cratering" through the snow for the life-giving grass beneath. If the IBMP agencies have their way, Winter, though challenging enough, could be the least of the buffalos' worries this season. *BFC file photo by Stephany.*

The Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) cohorts met in Polson, Montana on July 31, to discuss their ill-fated intentions for wild buffalo this coming winter, and future winters. BFC's Mike Mease attended and documented the meeting, and during the small window for public comments, spoke strongly for the buffalo and laid heavy, well-deserved criticism on the parties responsible, who wax injustice with their continued war against the gentle giants. What Mike learned is that we are in for a potentially gloomy winter. The agencies, tribes, and a federally chartered tribal organization involved with the IBMP intend to continue to grossly mishandle this special population - all to serve livestock interests - by managing for the minimum population of this ecologically extinct wildlife species. Currently, as of June, Yellowstone National Park estimates the bison population to be around 4,600 animals. This is all that remains of America's wild bison. Sadly, the agencies want to reduce the populations even further, to 3,000-3,500 animals, and keep it there, through harvest (so-called hunting) and slaughter.

In a document ironically titled *Managing the Abundance of Yellowstone Bison, Winter 2014*

Yellowstone National Park biologists recommended to their IBMP partners, "the removal of 600 bison, including 300 females (45 yearlings, 255 adults), 165 males (25 yearlings, 140 adults), and 135 calves from the northern management area [the Gardiner Basin] during each of the next three winters..." BFC vehemently opposes Yellowstone's recommendations to the IBMP cohorts; the IBMP exists to cater to livestock interests and fails to benefit wild buffalo in any way. Earlier in the same document, they mention that with no hunting or culling, the last wild bison populations could make a small rebound to 6,000 animals by 2016. But, they say it as if that were a bad thing, something to fear.

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BFC and other wild bison advocates celebrate the possibility of a tiny leap to 6,000 wild bison! Even that number is far too low for them to realize their evolutionary potential or fulfill their ecological role. BFC fully, absolutely supports the populations growing to and far beyond 6,000 animals, growing and growing, and migrating through the lands that have suffered in their absence of over 150 years. Let the buffalo reclaim their sovereignty on the landscape, heal the wounded land with true abundance, until we again have millions of wild, free-roaming buffalo filling up the Plains.



Please contact Mike Mease for more info at mease@wildrockies.org or 406-646-0070.

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Crackers

Story by Lois Hickman - Photos by Diane Bergstrom

This story began on July 23, 2013 - The person who brought you to Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center thought they were rescuing a wild goose. You, Crackers, are a Graylag Goose. Not the wild variety, which is a native of Europe, but a domesticated variety; domesticated for over 1,000 years in Europe because Graylags are the heaviest of wild geese; any heavier and they couldn't fly and heavier means meatier. It makes sense that farmers chose them as the most logical type to raise for food. They're called Graylags because 1) they're grey, and 2) when all the other wild geese had flown south, Graylags lagged behind, the last ones to leave. I only know all this because, after I'd settled you in your new home, with Isabella Pig, I had to find out just what kind of a goose you were. I needed to know how to take care of you. My Google search gave me information to add to what I'd learned about waterfowl care at Greenwood. Don't know something? Google it!


The Tuesday I took you home, I was volunteering at Greenwood, busy feeding the outside birds (the ones who have graduated from intensive care and are nearly ready to be released), and only peripherally aware of some



commotion as other volunteers and staff prepared an extra outside waterfowl enclosure. When I went back inside the building, one of the staff members asked if I'd like to see someone really cute-a goose who'd arrived the night before. Back in the waterfowl room, there you were, a beautiful, nearly grown grey goose, peeping to a duck who was recuperating from a bb shot to the spine, and who was

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Highlander Animals

taking its first halting steps. "We can't keep this goose. State law prohibits it. We either find a home for it or it has to be euthanized." There was an expectant, hopeful pause. "Could you take it? We could keep it overnight." Another hopeful pause. "Just think about it. You don't have to decide right away." After a brief, thoughtful pause of my own, I said, "I don't have to think



about it. I'll take the goose." Smiles all around. "But, I rode my bike and I'll need help getting the goose home." Two interns said they'd be glad to drive you to my farm. So I biked home, followed ten minutes later by two interns, with you, Crackers, in a large pet carrier in the back of their car and enough waterfowl food to last several days.

You easily settled down in Isabella Pig's area, with a big tub to splash in, a bowl of food, and plenty of cut grass and dandelions. A few days later, a teenage visitor to JenLo Farm gave you your name.

August 13, 2013 - Crackers, you've been here for two weeks. You and Isabella have become friends, sharing the straw-bedded lean-to at night, and sometimes snuggling for naps in the middle of the day. I've just begun opening the makeshift gate that kept you from wandering off. I was afraid you might get lost. Today, you ventured out,

introducing yourself to the ducks and chickens. You've even wandered into the chicken/duck yard, following the ducks, peeping and honking (your first attempt at grownup goose speech), flapping your majestically large wings, and unfortunately scaring the other feathered people. Lester the Duck (noble Random's offspring and alpha duck) can be a pest, and while I was in the chicken yard to freshen their water and give them their

(Continued on next page.)



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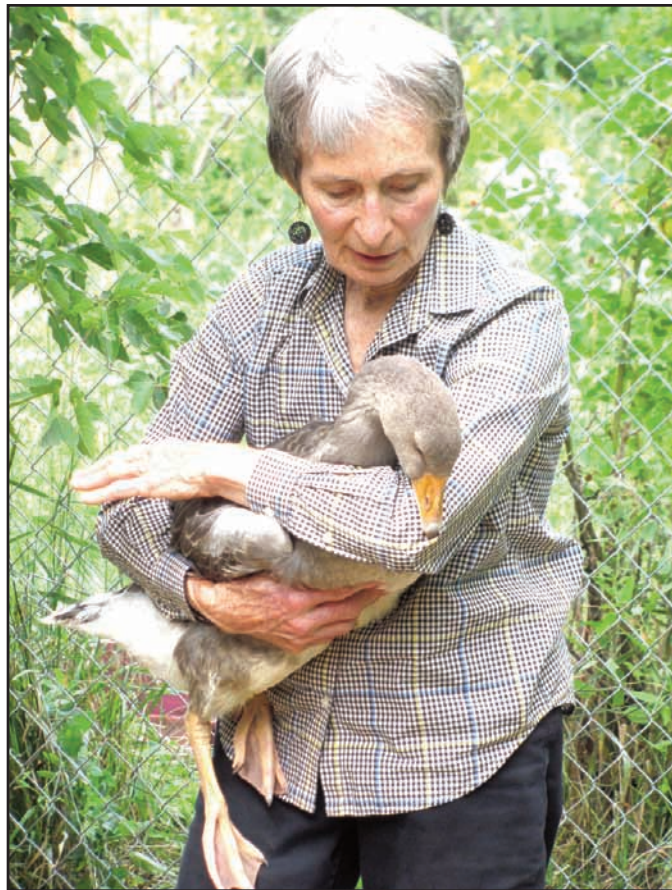
Friendly atmosphere Locally owned

Highlander Animals

dinner, he began pecking at my feet. You rushed over to give him one firm rap on his back, and Lester retreated.

You were right behind me when I walked down the path to the goat pasture to give them their dinner of goat chow, but then you panicked when you found yourself on the other side of the fence. You called a whole paragraph of loud peep-peeps when you lost sight of me, but answered my peep-peep response and surfed and struggled your way through tall grass to follow me back to the house and to the familiar safety of Isabella's yard. I filled your tub with clean cold water and brought you an offering of freshly picked dandelions and grass.

I'll keep giving you the opportunity to bond with the ducks and chickens, with your gate open to let you explore and then, if you



choose, to return to your comfortable haven with Isabella.

I'm happy that you trust me, that you can count on me to answer your call, and that you will follow me to safety. I'm still getting to know you. I'm waiting for either an egg or a loud honk to let me know whether you're a gander or a goose. You're part of the farm, and I'm glad you're here.

*Lois Hickman lives on JenLo Farm, one mile east of Lyons and just a 5 minute bike ride further east to Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.
Lois Hickman 2013 (c)*

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WIC Program - Forestry Fair - Ellie's Quest

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Dear Readers,

Colorado State Forest Service - Forestry Fair - Sept. 14
Firewise Landscaping Webinar Recordings Available
Community Forestry Sort Yard Fall Schedule - Free Slash and Log Disposal.

Forestry Tip Fall Wildfire Season - Don't let your Guard Down. As we move into the cooler fall months, we wanted to remind everyone about the dangers of wildfires during this time of year. The wildfire season is now a nearly year-round reality in many areas, requiring firefighters and residents to be on heightened alert.

Tips: 1) Don't store firewood piles on your decks or within 30 feet of your home. 2) Make sure to cut all wildland grasses within 30 feet of your home to a height of 6 inches or less.

This year Boulder County is excited to host the Forestry Fair in our own backyard at the Nederland Community

Forestry Sort Yard, on Saturday Sept. 14, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Event Highlights: • Learn about forest management and wildfire mitigation • See forestry equipment demonstrations • Fun kids' activities including puppet shows and tree seed plantings • Career exploration and networking in forestry and natural resource management.

Landowners, families, scout troops, students and anyone interested in forestry are encouraged to attend. The event is FREE and open to everyone! We hope you can join us!

The south county Nederland Sort Yard will reopen on 4 consecutive Fridays and Saturdays, Sept. 20 thru Oct. 12.

For complete details about the free log and slash disposal program please visit: <http://www.bouldercounty.org/property/forest/pages/fhsortyards.aspx> Ryan Ludlow | Forestry Education & Outreach Coordinator Boulder County | Land Use Department site: <http://www.bouldercounty.org>

Dear Readers,

ELLIE'S QUEST FOR A CURE BIRTHDAY BASH 5K - SEPT 14 CHERRY CREEK STATE PARK -9AM -
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(Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Letters

raised over \$35,000.00 for JDRF and now, Ellie's birthday wish is not for toys or presents, but to raise even MORE money to find a cure for Wolfram syndrome before it steals her life and others with this rare disorder. As you may know, Ellie and some of her friends have a rare, terminal and currently untreatable disorder called Wolfram syndrome. This has caused Ellie to have type one diabetes since she was three.

Now the symptoms of this insidious disorder are progressing and she is losing her vision and hearing. She has and will continue to acquire a myriad of other symptoms and Wolfram syndrome will ultimately steal the lives of these young people unless we find a cure soon. Although Wolfram syndrome is extremely rare and there is very little funding, the Ellie White Fund is collaborating with the Jack and J.T. Snow Scientific Research Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit organization raising money to find a cure for Wolfram syndrome. We have identified a research lab at the prestigious medical university - Washington



fellowship for Wolfram syndrome - the Ellie White Fellowship. We hope to raise the much needed money to help this powerful and cutting edge research group move forward as rapidly as possible, in time to help Ellie and the other children with this horrific disease before their lovely lives end prematurely. So, please help us and join us for Ellie's Quest for a Cure Birthday Bash and 5K - it is truly a race against time! If you would like to make a donation and for more information, please go to: www.EllieWhiteFoundation.org Your gifts will be tax deductible and go to the Ellie White Fund as part of the Jack and J.T. Snow Scientific Research Foundation (a 501c3 non-

profit organization). Please join us for Ellie's 5K! Mail a registration form or register online at: www.EllieWhiteFoundation.org

The "Hot Rods and Classics in the High Country Auto Show" and the "Show and Shine Auto Show" benefiting The Ellie White Fund was a huge success and we appreciate the love and support from everyone who attended! Your generous contributions help us move closer to finding a cure for Wolfram syndrome. Mariah Zgorski shared her heart with the crowd as she spoke about her dear friend, Ellie White.

SAVE THE DATE - Tuesday - 11/12/13 - The Ellie White Fund will host our fall fundraising dinner and silent auction with Celebrity Chef and Top Chef Winner - Hosea Rosenberg. Hosea and his friends will delight you with their exquisite culinary creations at the lovely Rembrandt Yard in Boulder. 6pm Cocktails and Silent Auction, 7pm Dinner, 8pm Live Presentation by Ellie White of "The Silhouettes," first runner up on "America's Got Talent" 2011. Tickets are \$125.00 per person in advance. Please contact the Ellie White Foundation for more information 720-217-2885. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you there! Beth, Ellie, Ryan and Matthew White



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EPA Chief Confirmed

By Cally Carswell

Gina McCarthy must have been exhausted recently when she completed her 136-day slog down the path of most resistance - also known as the U.S. Congress - to the helm of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It was the most drawn-out battle over a nominee for EPA's top job ever. But it had little to do with McCarthy herself, who has worked as a state-level environmental regulator under five Republican governors to much praise, and has a reputation for working well with both environmentalists and industry. The fight was rooted in ideological opposition among certain Republicans to an EPA they see as overly aggressive and hostile toward industry and economic growth. In the end, only six Senate Republicans voted in favor of McCarthy's nomination, including both senators from Arizona, though others admitted she was qualified for the post. Even Oklahoma Sen. Jim Inhofe, perhaps the most high-profile climate skeptic in public office, said that he "could work with her." (Nevertheless, he voted against giving her the job.)

Gina McCarthy, right, with former EPA administrator Carol Browner, celebrating McCarthy's confirmation. Now, as Time senior editor Bryan Walsh points out, the really hard part begins for McCarthy. She's saddled with the "toughest job in D.C." - namely, developing and implementing carbon pollution limits for existing power plants, circumventing a Congress that failed to do so themselves.

Which brings us to three more key nominees who may become similarly mired in a political spitting match having nothing to do with their own bonafides, or lack thereof. Whether Republican senators block these nominations, or allow the up-or-down votes that would result in confirmation, could have big consequences for EPA efforts to address climate change.

Patricia Millet, Cornelia Pillard and Robert Wilkins are President Obama's picks to fill three judicial vacancies on the D.C. Circuit Court, considered the most important federal court after the biggest legal fish, the Supreme Court. The D.C. Circuit is currently composed of four judges installed by Republican presidents and four appointed by Democratic presidents. If Millet, Pillard and Wilkins are confirmed by the Senate, the balance would tip significantly in favor of Democrats. The math is simple.

Why is that important for the EPA's climate cause?

Because the D.C. Circuit hears most cases challenging rules made by federal agencies, and has jurisdiction over all of our bedrock environmental laws - the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act. If the EPA's eventual rules restricting carbon pollution from power plants, or any other rules the agency puts in place, are challenged - and it is very likely they will be - the case(s) will be decided by the D.C.



Circuit Court.

Of course, if Obama's nominees are blocked, it doesn't mean carbon regulation is doomed. But it does mean the agency will head to court a bit less confident. The D.C. Circuit's recent environmental rulings are a mixed bag. The court struck down the EPA's effort to regulate air pollution that originates in one state but sullies the air in another. Then again, a three-judge panel that included David Sentelle, who Legal Planet calls "the most right-wing judge on the circuit," unanimously upheld EPA's authority to regulate carbon emissions under the Clean Air Act. That could bode well for future climate cases involving the Clean Air Act. Or, since we don't know what legal intricacies those cases will turn on, maybe not.

Cally Carswell is HCN's assistant editor. "Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org. The author is solely responsible for the content."

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Animals & Their Companions



Top Left: Phoenix.

*Top Right:
Phoenix, Ron and
Lotus.*

*Bottom: Chanel
poses with
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*Bottom: Mule deer buck with
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My Life Without A Dog

By Don Nelson

On my newspaper's website, there's a tab that's marked "our dogs." Click on it, and you'll find a gallery of the dogs owned by the staff. Everyone's dog but mine, that is, because I am currently dogless deep in the heart of Dog Country, and I say that as a journalist who despises the Stupidly Inappropriate Use of Capital Letters.

To say Washington's Methow Valley is dog-friendly doesn't begin to capture the truth. Dog-mandatory is more like it. And the prevailing attitude among many valley residents is: Now that we have one dog, why not two? My doglessness does not go unnoticed. There are about four dog-free folks in the entire valley, and everyone knows who we are. They don't say anything, but they know. A while back, I was looking out the front window of our newspaper office, chatting with the advertising manager, when a work-worn F-250 parked in front of the building. Bounding around in the truck bed was an odd-looking, spunky dog with a mottled coat. I pointed the animal out to the ad manager - her dog's name is Ringo - and asked, "What kind of dog is that?" "Mutt," she said. "Cowboy dog."

Sure enough, the lank fellow in the driver's seat wore a

sizable, beat-up cowboy hat, clamped down hard. They were made for each other. In the Methow Valley, you will know your neighbors by their dogs. People are familiar with each other's dogs' names, personalities, histories and maladies. If you drop into the middle of a conversation, you may not be able to tell if the talk is about kids or dogs. "Toby scraped his leg the other day" may need clarification - unless, of course, you already know that Toby is the dog, while the kid's name is Jake or Cody or something.

Anywhere you go, doorways, sidewalks and porches are understood to be recumbent dog zones. You step over or around the lounging pooches, but you never begrudge them the territory. It's not only Dog Country, it's Real Dog Country. The typical Methow dog is not just full-sized, but often big enough to hold off a bear (which may be necessary out here). Two of them might strike you as capable of pulling your rig out of a ditch. You don't see many of what my partner Jacqui calls "snack dogs" on leashes, or worse, being carried around, because there are a lot of untamed critters out here that will eat them. And they just don't look good in the back of a spattered, jacked-up, four-wheel-drive pickup truck, or hanging out the window

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Local dogs are well behaved but not docile. They are runners, jumpers, fetchers and wagers. Many of them also are, less endearingly, barkers when left alone for long periods. The police blotter usually has a few entries of people complaining about the incessant barking of a neighbor's dog(s). I don't blame the dogs. I blame the owners. But because the dogs usually shut up when their owners get home, owners often have no idea what their angry neighbors are yapping about.

Dogs have to be walked, fed, watered, paid attention to. It's not unusual for some of my staffers to take a dog-walking break during the day. Phone conversations with veterinarians are routine. Related dogs have visiting privileges with each other. Dog welfare is at the top of everyone's mind. We have some summer scorches here, and if someone leaves a dog in a hot car on the main street of my little town, they may come back to find a stern note on their windshield - or someone standing there waiting to remonstrate with them in person.

There is no escaping the dog imperative. At a gas station in town the other day, on the other side of the pump island, was an impressively dilapidated crew cab pickup; the per capita incidence of rust-ravaged, utterly woebegone pickups here must far exceed that of even some Third World countries. And three enormous dogs jostled back and forth on the passenger side of the front seat. The driver was a young fellow who pretty much complemented his ride, meaning that he looked like he by gum works for a living. In my mostly unblemished, dogless Pathfinder, I felt like a poseur. I'd actually love to have a dog - Jacqui even has names picked out - but I'm not set up to take appropriate

Highlander Animals

care of one right now. Call it fear of commitment. But one of these days ...

Don Nelson is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News (hcn.org). He is the owner, publisher and editor of the Methow Valley News, a weekly newspaper in Twisp, Wash.



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Can The Oil/Gas Industry Fix Its Public Image?

By Sarah Gilman

Recently, I drove over the mountains from High Country News HQ in Paonia, Colo., to Denver to attend the Rocky Mountain Energy Summit, an annual confab for the oil and gas industry - complete with a balloon drop wherein suited attendees throw elbows as they jockey for prizes - hosted by its powerful state trade group, the Colorado Oil and Gas Association. HCN doesn't usually attend industry conferences, loaded, as they often are with technical information more valuable to CEOs than reporters. But this one seemed different: COGA President Tisha Conoly Schuller, an environmentally-savvy Stanford-educated liberal, had brought several surprising speakers, including the chief scientist at The Nature Conservancy, Peter Kareiva, who's best known for pushing an Anthropocene-inspired pragmatism in the environmental movement.

Early one morning, before a slightly groggy, still-trickling-in-with-lattes crowd, Kareiva gave a compelling speech on the importance of factoring peoples' needs into conservation efforts to ensure they're relevant and effective, and working alongside corporations to minimize the environmental impacts of inevitable industrial development. Afterward, Schuller sat down on stage in an armchair across from the controversial scientist. "One of

the things we struggle with is spending a lot of time reacting to ... positions we view as extreme, such as banning (hydraulic fracturing)," she began. She was referring to public concern over the possible health impacts of the practice, which involves firing a mix of water, sand and chemicals down a well bore to fracture rock and release hydrocarbons, and the intense local battles it has inspired over the industry's expansion on the Front Range. "We want to have a dialog that moves to the middle. But the reality is that the press and the meetings are driven by people who have an extreme agenda. What recommendation do you have for us on how we address and interact with that reality?" "Drama (and) conflict sells. But so does vision," Kareiva replied. "Be visionary."

What does that mean for an industry that has struggled to define itself as a positive force (it is, after all, responsible for a significant reduction in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions as more power plants switch from coal to natural gas), even as fracktivists paint it as a plague on clean water and air, and a scourge on powerless communities? This soul-searching was a major conference theme, carried through several sessions by academics, state officials and industry CEOs alike, many of them emphasizing compassion, empathy and open, thoughtful engagement

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with concerned communities as ways forward through increasing polarization.

But when I asked various attendees how the industry might come to the middle itself, many felt that the necessary work was mostly a matter of reassuring concerned members of the public that fracking truly is safe, that oil and gas employees also care about the environment and the safety of their own families, and that hydrocarbons are foundational to society and the basic function of all our lives, from the polypro we wear camping to the gasoline we use to drive our kids to soccer practice. But with the exception of the fracking question, who doesn't already know those things on some level? And isn't presuming to educate condescending? To be really effective, David Ropiek, a former television journalist who now consults on human risk perception and risk communication, suggested in an afternoon presentation, companies must "give up on the idea that just how you communicate to people with words and messages and PR is enough. People take your measure a whole lot more by what you do."

Which is why my ears perked when I heard an executive from Noble Energy speak about a \$500,000 groundwater monitoring effort in Weld County. The company, one of the largest operators in northeastern Colorado's Denver-Julesberg Basin, is participating under the auspices of Colorado State University's Colorado Water Energy Consortium.

The demonstration project would complement new state rules - which call for detailed analysis of groundwater samples taken before and after drilling - with real-time, continuous monitoring of the freshwater aquifer 200 to 300 feet below 10 of Noble's multi-well pads. The probes won't test for a suite of specific contaminants, which would be too expensive for broad application and limit the number researchers could screen for, explains Ken Carlson, a CSU associate professor of civil and environmental engineering. Instead, they will retrieve data on aspects of the water's basic chemistry such as conductivity that, were they to change, could signal possible contamination and would trigger a deeper analysis.

Once the monitoring wells are drilled, the data would be transmitted to a CSU server and posted to a website accessible to the public, which researchers hope to have live in December. While 10 wells aren't enough to produce statistically significant results, once the method is proven, it could be scaled up to provide systemic monitoring that researchers hope will help settle the debate over what is (or isn't) happening underground. "We're trying to stay away from the bigger picture of whether shale gas is the right thing to do," Carlson says. "This (development) is happening. Without endorsing it or saying it's bad, let's see if we can make it better as it's going on."

Noble has a seat on the steering committee overseeing the project - which includes former Democratic Gov. Bill Ritter, the environmental group (Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Issues

Western Resource Advocates and the state Department of Natural Resources among others - and kicked in \$50,000 of the study's cost, but it cannot influence results or whether they are published or not.

What's in it for Noble? "In two words, public trust," says Manager of Government Relations Chad Calvert. "There are a lot of claims that fracking for oil and gas affects groundwater. Our engineers don't feel that way, but the public does. This is about trying to show people that these operations can be done safely." And if it shows the opposite? "Then we need to fix it," Calvert says. "We need to understand it and mitigate it. It's a learning opportunity too."

Winning that broader public trust is going to be a hard battle, though, no matter how forward thinking, proactive and responsible any given company is. "Forgive me oil and gas industry, but a lot of people think (you're) not all that trustworthy," Ropiek pointed out in his conference presentation. "And by the way, you could be 99% trustworthy in this room, but if one of you screws it up, that

taints you all. I've talked to lots of you today and you've said, 'We're heavily regulated.' Well that's awesome, unless people don't trust the regulator."

So it doesn't much help that, a few days before the conference, the L.A. Times reported on a leaked Power-Point presentation that suggested the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had abandoned an inquiry into whether water wells in Dimock, Penn., had been contaminated by natural gas development, despite staffers' conclusions, "based on data collected over 4 1/2 years, ... that 'methane and other gases released during drilling (including air from the drilling) apparently cause significant damage to the water quality.' (And) that 'methane is at significantly higher concentrations in the aquifers after gas drilling and perhaps as a result of fracking (hydraulic fracturing) and other gas well work.'" Even so, an EPA spokeswoman told the newspaper, "The sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action."

Earlier this year, the agency backed off a similar study - this one much more strongly linking contamination of water in Pavillion, Wyo., to oil and gas development. Though the agency said it stands by its results, it balked before peer review could test its conclusions, handing the assessment over to Wyoming after intense pressure from the industry and the state. In yet another instance, the EPA "abandoned its claim that a driller in Parker County, Tex., was responsible for methane gas bubbling up in residents' faucets, even though a geologist hired by the agency confirmed this finding," Abraham Lustgarten reported for Propublica and HCN in July: "Environmentalists see an agency that is systematically disengaging from any research that could be perceived as questioning the safety of fracking or oil drilling, even as President Obama lays out

a plan to combat climate change that rests heavily on the use of natural gas."

In that context, what indeed does it mean for the industry to be visionary? Perhaps it's as simple as letting go of the constant political wrangling and allowing these questions to be explored and resolved in a public, highly visible way by researchers without their own axe to grind, and then simply addressing the results, instead of denying them. How else will the general public understand what tradeoffs are and aren't involved in extracting this fuel, and make informed decisions to avoid those that cut the deepest?

Sarah Gilman is HCN's associate editor. "Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org. The author is solely responsible for the content."



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About Sea Level Rising

Dear EarthTalk: Hurricane Sandy brought more sea water onto shorelines than I'd ever witnessed before and many communities near where I live are now being required to raise their homes up. What is the prognosis for sea level rise in the years immediately ahead? - Scott Fairfield, CT

Since sea level measurements were first recorded, in 1870, global averages have risen almost eight inches. The annual rate of rise has been 0.13 inches over the past 20 years, which is close to twice the average from the previous 80 years. Future estimates for sea levels vary according to region but most Earth scientists agree that sea levels are expected to rise at a greater pace than during the last 50 years.

Predicting the amount of rise is an inexact science and depends on many factors including climate change and ice sheet flows. The U.S. National Research Council predicts a possible sea level rise of between 22 and 29 inches over the 21st century in the U.S. Sea levels are anticipated to continue rising for centuries.

According to the U.S. (EPA), land elevation changes also have a large impact on the effects of rising water levels. Subsidence (sinking) or uplift (rising) of the land can help determine the relative sea level rise. The EPA's relative sea level estimates, assuming a two foot global sea level rise by 2100, are 2.3 feet at New York City, 2.9 feet at Hampton Roads, Virginia, 3.5 feet at Galveston, Texas and one foot at Neah Bay in Washington state.

The main factors contributing to sea level rise are thermal expansion (created by an increase in ocean water temperatures) and the melting of ice caps and glaciers. Human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, combined with natural activities, have contributed to the rise of the earth's surface temperature over the past century. According to National Geographic, about 80% of this additional heat is absorbed by the oceans. The above factors are well studied, but more research is still being done on how climate change will impact large ice sheets in areas such as Greenland and the Antarctic. An extra foot of sea level rise could be a possibility depending on what happens with these larger ice sheets.

Even small changes in sea levels can have adverse effects on coastal areas. Erosion, flooding of wetlands, aquifer and agricultural soil contamination and habitat loss for fish, birds and plants are all problems resulting from rising sea levels. Also, higher sea levels usually mean more destructive weather

events as storm surges get bigger and more powerful and devastate everything in their way. Coastal communities will suffer the most, as flooding from rising water levels will force millions of people out of their homes.

As for what can be done, reducing our collective carbon footprint is no doubt the first and most important step. Individuals should drive and fly less, walk and bicycle more and take advantage of public transit. But sweeping policy changes will have the most impact: A recent commitment by the Obama White House to require coal-burning power plants and other large industrial operations to minimize greenhouse gas emissions should finally help get the United States started on the right track, but many wonder if such moves represent too little too late. *U.S. National Research Council, www.nationalacademies.org/nrc; EPA Climate Change Future, www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/future.html National Geographic Sea Level Rise, ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/critical-issues-sea-level-rise/ earthtalk@emagazine.com*

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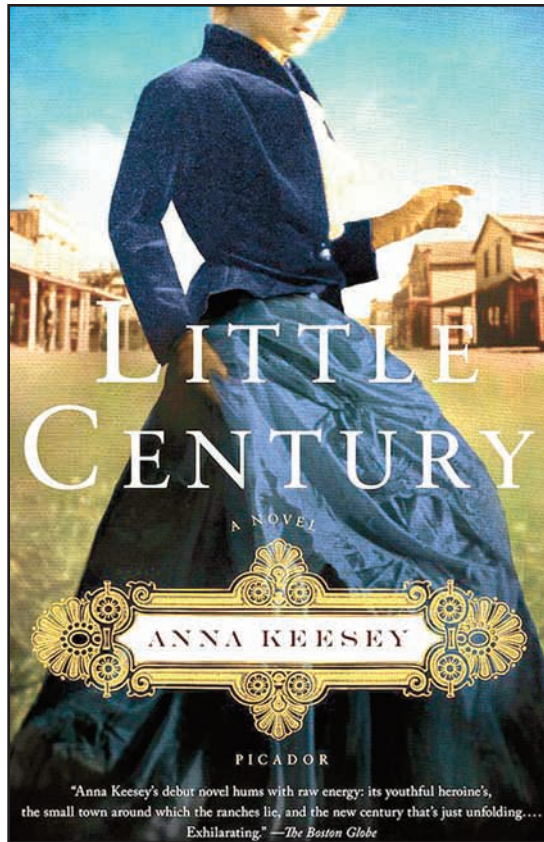
Justice Is Hard To Come By

By Jenny Shank

Little Century, Anna Keeseey, 336 pages, paperback, \$16. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.

When Esther Chambers moves to central Oregon from Chicago in 1896, she finds herself caught in a range war between cattle ranchers and sheepherders. Anna Keeseey's elegant debut novel, *Little Century*, resurrects the complex West of those early days, in prose that captures the rhythms and diction of a hundred years ago.

Esther's mother died a few months earlier and her only surviving relative is a distant cousin, Ferris Pickett, known as Pick, who owns the Two Forks ranch outside of Century, Ore. Pick persuades the 18-year-old to swear she is 21 in order to file a claim on a plot of land that includes a playa



lake called Half-a-Mind.

Water is scarce in this arid country, and Pick wants to graze his cattle at Half-a-Mind, although sheep ranchers also use the free-range land nearby. "You've had a hard time," Pick tells Esther. "But this is a good country for someone alone. We're all equal out here, and everyone makes his own luck."

Esther settles down on her claim and begins to adapt to her new life. She befriends a few of the locals, including Century's shopkeeper, Joe Peasley, who loans her books and the use of his typewriter, and its schoolteacher, Jane Fremont, who also lives on a claim.

Esther is initially perplexed by the tensions and alliances between the townspeople. But before long, she realizes that those who behave coldly to her often do so because she has unwittingly thwarted their

hopes or ambitions.

Pick is the community's most respected member, and when he asks Esther to consent to "an understanding" that they will one day marry, she agrees. But expedience has a way of trumping morality on the frontier, and the conflict with the sheepherders escalates into wagon burnings, livestock killings and murder. Even the upright-seeming Jane and Pick have secrets. Liberated by her own claim's isolation, Esther indulges in a forbidden friendship with a young sheepherder.

"Justice is hard to come by," Esther thinks, and the plot of *Little Century* echoes this notion. Keeseey has fashioned an authentic story out of the moral compromises Western settlers made in order to live and work with one another.

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Engineered Animal Highway Crossings Work


By Katie Mast

For three years, researchers from Montana State University spent their summers collecting bear hair. The samples, collected on both sides of the 50 mile stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway that cuts through Banff National Park, prove what the researchers had suspected: wildlife underpasses and bridges were helping enough bears move back and forth across the highway to keep the populations healthy.

The Trans-Canada Highway stretches nearly 5,000 miles across the country, rolling through each of the nation's 10 provinces and connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The 100 miles that pass through Banff National Park is a blip in the entire stretch of highway, but a potentially deadly obstacle for the wildlife that live in the park. Demand for a bigger, faster road system prompted a widening of the highway in the 1990s. During construction, engineers lined the highway with fencing and built underpasses and bridges for animals to cross, with the theory they would reduce collisions and provide animals safe passage. However, the decision was controversial as there was little data to backup the hunch.

An overpass in Banff National Park, built just for wildlife, helps reduce highway collisions and connect fragmented habitat. (See Photo next page.)


Construction of animal crossings has skyrocketed since they were first implemented in the 1970s, and Rob Ament, director of the Road Ecology Program at Montana State University says that research has shown as much as 80 to 90 percent decrease in vehicle-wildlife collisions in areas with the structures. Yet without proof that wide crossings are crucial to wildlife, planners have been reluctant to keep building them, especially overpasses, which are more costly and time-consuming than underpasses. MSU's bear hair study proves that not only do animal crossings benefit humans, but also that both (Continued on next page.)



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Highlander Wildlife

underpasses and the more expensive overpasses may be critical to some species' survival.

While deadly run-ins with vehicles is a gruesome end for many animals, the fate of about 1 million vertebrates each day, fragmentation of habitat has brought some species near extinction. Whether unable or unwilling to cross a road, animals living on one side that can't encounter animals on the other side means isolation of genes, what biologists call the "island effect."

The crossings in Banff National Park include two wide overpasses covered in vegetation that helps them resemble the surrounding habitat. Underpasses provide the cover cougars and many small mammals need, while the bridges and overpasses let moose and elk traverse in their preferred open-sky habitats. Cameras at each of the passageways have recorded hundreds of thousands of crossings for many different species, including bears, wolves, lynx, deer, elk and moose. A wolverine made the news when a camera captured its walk across an overpass, becoming the first such venture recorded for its species. But cameras couldn't

help scientists collect data about individual crossings. "We could show that there were a lot of crossings, but what did that mean? Was it one bear crossing 100 times or 100 different bears crossing once?" Ament and the researchers at MSU wondered. Answering this question was critical to understanding overall health of the animal communities.

What the researchers discovered was encouraging. Over the three-year study, 15 different grizzly bears and 17 different black bears used the crossings. While those may not seem like huge numbers, they represent a significant portion of the populations. Using estimates of the populations of grizzlies and black bears in Banff, these individuals represented close to 20 percent of the population for both species. Previous research estimates that, for large mammals like bears, about 10 percent of a population needs to cross back and forth to ensure a healthy ecosystem. Comparing samples from year to year and in different locations, the researchers can begin to construct family trees for the bears and observe genetic diversity in offspring.

To collect the hair samples, researchers set up lines of barbed wire by several of the crossings. As bears passed, the barbs would snag a bit of hair. To learn about the bears' movement once they crossed, the team also set up wires near trees that the bears used as scratching posts. Finally, they doused piles of wood 8.5 miles from the highway with cow blood and fish emulsion, a stomach-turning scent for us but an enticing curiosity for the bears. Again, when the bears came to investigate, barbed wire nearby would help keep track of which bears visited.

Over three years, the team collected more than 10,000 strands of bear hair. In addition to finding out that the passageways helped keep the populations healthy, the researchers learned that grizzlies preferred the wide-open overpasses while black



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bears primarily used the underpasses. Roughly equal numbers of males and females for both species used the crossings, and the genetic sampling lets biologists know more about the population's family trees. While the team could have chosen any number of species to monitor, they knew there were enough bears to collect significant data and, since scientists are concerned about their declining populations, the data could be relevant in broader studies.

While animal crossings have proven successful in reducing wildlife collisions on highways and now, in connecting fragmented habitat, they're not the cure-all for animals who need continuous open space to roam. Crossings won't solve the challenges faced along the

pronghorn's 120-mile migration by development. And, as noted, the fences and crossings don't manage to keep every animal off the highway. However, as China develops its highway system at a rate of 5,000 km per year and Mongolia constructs its first paved highway, Ament is pleased that these countries are looking to Montana State University for expertise. "We are trying to encourage them to not do it like us," he says, but rather consider the ecology as an important component to their construction plans. *Katie Mast is an editorial intern at High Country News.*

"Cross-posted from High Country News, hcn.org. The author is solely responsible for the content. Image of Banff Wildlife Overpass courtesy of Adam Fagen via Flickr."

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Becoming Pronghorn

By Carol Ann Bassett/High Country News

Jim Yoakum peers through a spotting scope across a broad sagebrush valley. Here at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, a pronghorn doe has just squatted into a familiar position, about to give birth, Yoakum observes. As a legendary pronghorn biologist, Yoakum knows about these animals; he has spent more than seven decades roaming this fault-block range in southeastern Oregon. He understands the language of the pronghorn antelope, its flared nostrils and the sleek curve of its haunches in flight.

Soon, a tiny fawn plops from the doe's belly and lands on the ground. "Here comes another!" he exclaims. Within minutes, the twins rise on wobbly legs, shake off the afterbirth, and begin suckling. They must gain strength as quickly as they can and learn to run almost immediately to escape hungry coyotes, cougars, bobcats and golden eagles. It's an instinct hard-wired into their genes.

Yoakum, who is wearing loose jeans and a camouflage

jacket, continues watching. Seven decades of riding horses on this mountain have left his legs bowed. Today, he uses a walking stick, wears hearing aids and breathes oxygen from a respirator. Even as Yoakum observes the miracle of birth, he knows that his own life is waning.

James Solomon Yoakum was born June 15, 1926, in Templeton, Calif., son of a hunter-father. As a student at Oregon State, he would help his professor monitor pronghorn fawns on Hart Mountain. Yoakum's dog, a Labrador retriever named Tad, assisted by pinning them down and licking the sweet mother's milk off their muzzles. When Yoakum graduated in 1957 with a master's degree in wildlife management, the Bureau of Land Management hired him as the agency's very first wildlife biologist. During his 28-year career with the BLM, Yoakum was a steadfast advocate for wildlife conservation and habitat restoration. His book, *Pronghorn: Ecology and Management*, is a 903-page masterpiece containing nearly everything that's currently known about his beloved species.

Antilocapra americana is the swiftest mammal in North America; it can run faster than 60 miles an hour. Its namesake refuge, the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and its sister refuge just over the border in Nevada, the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge, are classic sagebrush-steppe Great Basin landscapes — perfect pronghorn habitat.

I first heard about Yoakum when I volunteered to dismantle barbed wire fences with the Oregon Natural Desert Association on nearby Steens Mountain — the first designated "cow-free" wilderness in the United States. We were giving the land back to the pronghorn, without

boundaries. In 2010, I traveled to Hart Mountain to meet up with Yoakum; Bill Marlett, the former executive director of the association; Marlett's wife, Terry Gloeckler; their friend, Matt Holmes, and Yoakum's friend and colleague, Jorge Cancino, a pronghorn biologist from La Paz, Mexico, who studies the endangered Sonoran pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana sonoriensis*).

It's May, and an unexpected snowstorm has dusted the hillsides white, burying our tents at Hot Springs Campground. A frigid wind rips through the valley. At dinnertime, we wrap Yoakum in sleeping bags before a blazing fire, and someone pours him a warming cup of bourbon. I ask Yoakum about his relationship with the pronghorn.

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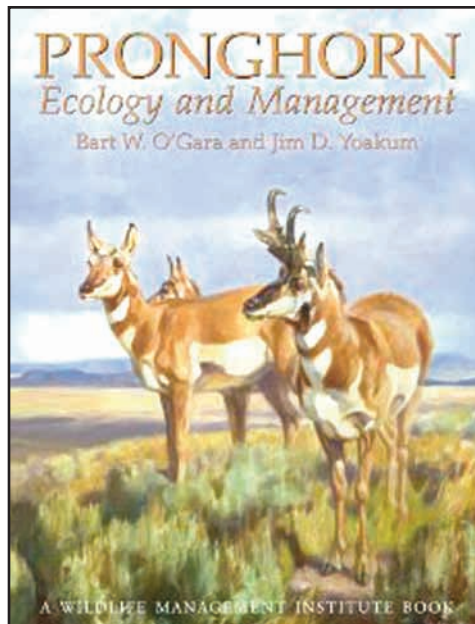
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“I still belong to the pronghorn family,” he replies, his face ruddy in the leaping flames. “I talk to them every day, practically.”

“What do they tell you?” “They tell me what they like and don’t like. They don’t like fences. They don’t like roads. They don’t like railroads. They tell me what they like to eat. They tell me they want lots of water. They don’t like to be too close to cattle, because sometimes they get diseases from them. They get diseases from domestic sheep, and they have problems with wild horses that eat the same food they like. The adult doe must provide enough food to maintain her health and support two fawns.” The doe bears twins, he explains, because normally only one fawn survives predation. “They tell me these things.”

But on Hart Mountain, coyotes and eagles weren’t hampering pronghorn recovery; instead, herds of cattle were competing for limited pronghorn food. Yoakum, a maverick in biological diversity, believed the species could be restored successfully on the mountain. In the 1990s, he worked with conservationists and won a lawsuit to kick the cows off the refuge. Without them, grasses and forbs flourished, and so did pronghorn and sage grouse. Last year, the pronghorn population reached its greatest number ever - a rise from about 3,700 animals in the 1990s to over 6,200 pronghorn in the Hart and Sheldon refuges.

Back in camp, Yoakum ticks off the tasks he still wants to



accomplish, then adds: “I have to live 84 more years. I have lots of things to do.” But Yoakum never got the chance to return to his beloved Hart Mountain. He died Nov. 20, 2012, at age 86. This summer, Marlett and other friends, who shared and still share Yoakum’s dreams, will scatter his ashes where his spirit can forever behold the galloping herds.

Carol Ann Bassett is a professor of environmental writing and the author of three books, two of them finalists for the Oregon Book Award in Creative Nonfiction, including Galapagos at the Crossroads: Pirates, Biologists, Tourists, and Creationists Battle for Darwin’s Cradle of Evolution.

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

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When It's Time To Jump Off A Cliff

By Paul Zaenger

People who study peregrine falcons wake up early. It's hard to roll out of the sack at 4 a.m., well before the summer sun comes up, but over the years I've done so gladly, privileged to join several early-bird researchers in western Colorado's Black Canyon National Park.

In July, the eggs have long since hatched and the young are getting ready to fledge - to take flight and begin a new life out of the nest. Peregrine falcons maintain a seasonal home territory in which they establish an eyrie, or nesting site, and their spring migration brings them back to it year after year. Shortly after a pair migrates north in the spring, the birds scratch out a depression into the shallow soil of a cliff shelf, and the female lays her eggs. The chicks, usually up to four, all hatch within 48 hours of each other.

Perhaps because all are born within a short time span none becomes especially dominant, and sibling rivalry is limited. Nobody gets pushed off the cliff in a fit of jealousy. They eat voraciously. As summer advances, they get hungrier every day, and it becomes important for the adults to succeed at catching the plump larger birds, such as rock doves. The hunger of older chicks, much like that

of starving teenagers who suck the contents out of a refrigerator, seems to be bottomless.

Fledging, that moment when the young finally take wing happens in mid or late July. The consternation felt at the eyrie might be similar to that felt by human parents when they first sit in the passenger seat of a car and let their teenager get behind the wheel. The young birds have watched many times as a parent takes off effortlessly from the ledge to fly into the unknown. And children have watched drivers many times before they put the key into the ignition themselves. In both cases, the young are more than ready to take off on their own. Imagine the scene for the falcons, squeezed onto a tiny ledge. The precipice descends thousands of feet. They have never known flight. The male and female model correct behavior, standing erect and flapping their wings to demonstrate the process.

A lot of squawking and screeching is involved. The adults let out a shriek, the fledgling cries back. The young falcon, its juvenile feathers all grown in, steps to the edge, where the slightest mistake could mean disaster and heartbreak, and (the parents watching and holding their breath) it flaps its wings and takes flight. It makes a ride around town with

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a new driver seem almost relaxing in comparison. The parents continue to protect their fledglings until they can hunt for themselves. It takes about a month and a half for the young ones to learn to fly acrobatically - power-diving at over 200 mph, rolling, soaring, and ultimately hunting for and catching their own meals.

Once, when I was with a couple of colleagues looking into a particularly steep part of Black Canyon, we disturbed a fledgling near the edge. Its cries signaled the parents, and they zeroed in on us like a pair of F-15 fighter planes. Their dive-bombing hastened our quick retreat. We learned then that fledging doesn't end once the young have made their first flight. Could it also be true for humans? The leap off the precipice seems something like high school graduation. But that doesn't ensure success or complete independence. Witness parents who drop off a young one headed for boot camp and a career in the military, or watch parents walk away from a college dormitory where their fledgling is a freshman.

Like the peregrines, parents are there to guide, cajole, squawk and screech all along the way, only now from a



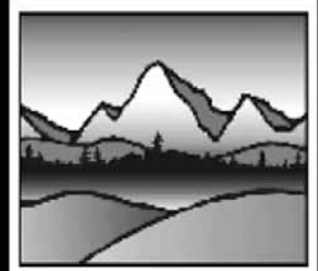
distance. Peregrine adults devote enormous energy to guaranteeing that their young have all they need for a successful flight and a successful life. The adults and juveniles will spend the rest of the summer hunting, nurturing and socializing. The adults pass on all they know. The young learn how to be peregrines.

Next year, the adult pair will be back to lay a new clutch of eggs, raise new chicks and undergo yet more screeching and crying. Their young may well be

starting new families nearby, in Unaweep Canyon or Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area - places that never used to host peregrines. Sitting next to a cliff at Black Canyon in the earliest hours of daylight, in the stillness of the dawn, researchers can see the turning of time. They feel the sense of the cycle of life from one generation to the next.

Paul Zaenger is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News (hcn.org). He has been a supervisory park ranger at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park since 1993, working previously at Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. File photo of Peregrine chicks.

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SEPTEMBER
2013

POWER UPDATE



Important Safety Message from United Power

When access to your electric meter is blocked, cluttered, or otherwise restricted, our meter readers safety is at risk and their accurate and timely reading of your meter is affected. Please help by providing them with a clear and safe pathway to your electric meter.



Is Your Phone Number Accurate?

Occasionally, United Power will try to contact members via the phone to notify them of planned outages, or emergencies.

If the phone number on file with United Power is not up-to-date, United Power is not able to alert you to these events. Please verify that the phone number on your account is correct by calling Customer Service at 303-637-1300 or logging into your e-bill account at www.unitedpower.com. You may be missing important information!

We'll Pay if You Have That Old Fridge Hauled Away

When an old refrigerator is moved to a garage or basement, it takes twice as much energy to keep your food cold and can cost over \$130 a year to operate.

United Power members qualify for rebates on new Energy Star® refrigerators and a \$75 refrigerator/freezer recycling credit is available for members who send their old refrigerator or freezer away for proper disposal by a reputable appliance recycler. Reselling or donating a refrigerator does not qualify as proper disposal.

Visit www.unitedpower.com for the rebate application and details on refrigerator recycling. Proof of haul away by a retailer or a receipt from a reputable appliance recycler is required with the rebate application.

UNWANTED Appliances offers curb-side pick-up of refrigerators and freezers and is willing to pick-up from select areas in the United Power mountain territory. Contact UNWANTED Appliances at 1-888-8-UNWANT (1-888-886-9268) to schedule an appliance pick-up, or to get details on the closest facility available for drop-off. Request a receipt from UNWANTED to submit with your rebate application as proof of recycling.

Don't move that old refrigerator to the garage, recycle it to save energy and money!



Customer Service: 303-637-1300

Coal Creek Office: 303-642-7921

www.unitedpower.com

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