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**Raccoons by Omayra**  
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# If Raccoons Could Speak...

By Omayra Acevedo - Nature/Wildlife Photojournalist  
Brand New Day Photography, LLC

Though I grew up in a place where the wild things walked on two legs, partied all night and created more chaos than necessary, I always found that my connection was to the wild things living in the forests. So much so, that even my dreams consist of nature and its inhabitants. I can pretty much recall every dream I ever had about wildlife. A few years ago I had a dream that Raccoons could speak, and the secrets they shared broke my heart and gave me hope all at once...

Most people think of a nuisance when they hear the name Raccoon. For others, they think rabies. If we stop and think about what rabies is (and how rare of a disease it is), anyone is susceptible to it. Just as people can also be a nuisance. In Colorado, rabies is most common in bats and foxes than in Raccoons. Forgive my bluntness, but if you ask me what comes to mind when I hear the name Raccoon? I won't hesitate to say that better thoughts come to mind than when I think of people. These bandit-masked critters do so much for our environment, it's a shame we let their hard work go unrecognized.

You can find a Raccoon just about anywhere in the world. They are extremely adaptable and opportunistic. Sows (female raccoons) are excellent mothers. Typically, a Sow will give birth to a litter of up to eight kits (babies) between the months of January through May. She prefers to keep her kits together where she can keep a watchful eye on them. Before moving them to the ground, she will nestle them high above in a tree cavity for the first two months of their lives, where she will travel to and fro countless times for foraging and feedings. Just like human babies, kits are unpredictable. Some will stay with mom for their first winter and some will leave by fall.

Raccoons are very smart and clean animals. If ever you are privileged with the opportunity to watch a Raccoon snare its food from a body of water, you can watch it wash its food before eating it. They have incredible dexterity at

prying things open, twisting door knobs and even taking nuts off of bolts. The power of their paws and claws should never go underestimated. Especially if one is cornered or protecting her young. I know people don't care about how clean or smart a Raccoon can be. All they care about is keeping them away, because they don't understand them. If we all practiced a bit of compassion for all things, everything would be a little easier to appreciate.

You can show appreciation for something by simply respecting it. There's no denying that Raccoons are cute; if nothing else, appreciate how cute they are, but don't misconstrue what I mean by this. A lot of us are drawn to cute furry creatures, but this doesn't mean you should keep them as pets or attempt to heal one. Colorado is very protective of our wildlife and you should be too. If you find an injured Raccoon, there are places like the Greenwood Wildlife Rehab Center in Boulder County that can help. If you see an irresistible cute little Raccoon, Please LEAVE IT ALONE. This is for the benefit and safety of us all!

If Raccoons could speak our language, I think this is what they would say: *Please keep us wild. We don't want to bother you as much as we don't* (Continued next page.)

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## Highlander Wildlife

*want to be bothered by you. Keep your trash inside a can and inside your home where I can't smell it. I am easily discouraged by Tabasco sauce, so spread a little diluted Tabasco sauce around your garden to keep me away. If you trap and relocate me, you are taking me away from my children. If you don't like the smell of carcass, please don't poison me either. Leave me be and I will eat the mice around your house and will also raid insect nests for tasty eggs. Let's work together and I promise you will enjoy me more than you will be annoyed by me.*

We leave our trash out in the open, we litter, we illegally "hand-feed" wildlife, then we freak out when they get too close for comfort. Sad that we first make nuisances of them, then punish them for our own negligence. Next time you come across a Raccoon, treat it like you would treat any wildlife. Give it space, appreciate it for what it does, and respect it as another living being in the home we share. What do I think of



when I hear the word Raccoon? R is not just for Raccoon, but for Remarkable!

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/WildlifeHealthRabies.aspx>

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/raccoon/> <http://www.greenwoodwildlife.org/>



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# Death By Delphinium

Article and photographs by Diane Bergstrom

"We grow flowers and plants in our yards to attract butterflies and help the bees and what we are doing could be killing them," explained a neighborhood volunteer organizer for **Bee Safe Boulder**, a grassroots movement spreading yard to yard, neighbor to neighbor, to educate people on the most effective ways to environmentally support the health of our pollinators, pets and families. One yard at a time. Neighbors who take the pledge avoid the use of all systemic chemicals. Businesses who take the pledge agree to offer flora that is free of pesticides, especially neonicotinoids. The class of pesticides, also called neonics, are rising in public awareness, from

coverage by Dan Rather on 60 Minutes to panels at CU to public hearings at McGuckin's Hardware. A timely Harvard study released findings that the mysterious **Colony Collapse Disorder**, labeled for issues causing the rapid decline and disappearance of our bee population, is largely due to the harmful effects of neonics. In separate investigations, anywhere between 6 and 39 pesticides were found in bee colonies, with no toxicological research of the complications of their interactive potency. These pesticides are used globally. U.S. beekeepers report losing between 30-50% of their hives every year, with massive die-offs also documented in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In the U.S., 40% of our agriculture production, our food supply, relies on pollination by bees. Worldwide, 75% of the food, medicine and fiber supply is grown through the help of pollinators. On 60 Minutes, Boulder beekeeper Tom Theobald told Dan Rather he'd lost close to 60% of his bees last year. "It doesn't matter how well we do our

job as beekeepers. We are sending them out to an environment that they cannot survive," he said.

Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides, a neuro-active pesticide that kills a broad range of "pests." Their marketing angle for farmers proposes they can decrease the practice of continual pesticide application by spraying. Instead, the chemical is infused into seeds - including

vegetables, grains, flowers, grasses, fruits—which are pretreated or soaked in pesticides that integrate into every part of the sprouted plant, from roots to nectar. The pollen and nectar are eaten by pollinators, including bees,



butterflies, birds, moths, flies, beetles and others. While acutely toxic, the pesticides also (Continued next page.)



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## Highlander Nature

have sub-lethal effects, meaning if they don't kill, they cause permanent damage. They affect the brains of pollinators, and bees have difficulty finding their way home to their hives, their feeding is affected, and they have trouble

grooming

themselves to get rid of threatening mites. The chemicals change the gene expression in plants, i.e. rice had been naturally resistant to the brown leafhopper but since it has been treated, its resistance has lowered and is now preyed upon. Native bees are in trouble, in addition to bumblebees and solitary bees. Their food supply is

poisoned. Pollinators are starving to death.

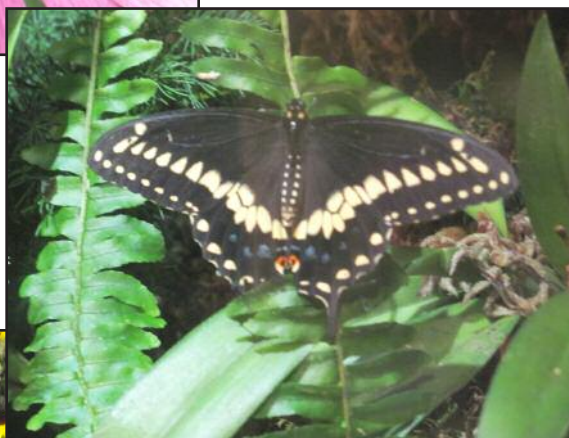
The neonics leech into the soil and do not break down quickly, seeping into our



groundwater, rivers, lakes and streams. Aquatic invertebrates, bugs and dragonflies, at the bottom of the food chain, are sustaining nervous system damage and dying. A USGS study found disturbing levels in both agricultural and urban runoff. Last year they tested nine rivers and each had high concentrations of neonics, including the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

Of the 140 pesticides on the market, most are considered by the EPA to be neurotoxins and the majorities have not been tested for developmental

neurotoxicity. Tom reported that neonics are 5-10,000 times more toxic than DDT. Dan Rather reported that the current U.S. regulations allow pesticides to go through EPA approval without the long term effects being



known, in a guideline process called "risk-benefit analysis," where hard core science can be outweighed by economic, technical, social and political factors. Tom Theobald found reports written in 2003 by EPA scientists stating the compounds were toxic to honey bees with the request for more field studies before the pesticides were released to the public. Congress approved "conditional registration" before all the environmental effects were known. The short-term perspective outweighed the threat

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of a collapse of the food chain. Dan explained that the chemical companies do their own testing by hiring their own labs to study the product safety of their own products, and then submit their own results to the EPA for review. The fox

guarding the henhouse is an understatement. The EPA is not holding the chemical companies accountable, nor are they asking the questions that need to be asked, leaving the pesticide regulation approval system severely lacking. The general public opinion assumes that because a product is EPA registered, it is safe. Wrong assumption. In contrast, the European Union is keeping several pesticides off the market until the long-term effects are known and the European Commissioner has promised to implement a ban on all neonics through the European Union. The US Fish & Wildlife Service will end all use of neonics by 2016 that are used to grow crops to feed wildlife on National Wildlife Refuge Lands. A proposed Pesticides Applicators Act is currently going through the Colorado legislature, requesting local control over the state's pre-emption clause.



herbicides at home. Avoid using any insecticides at all, but if you are having a pest problem, look for the words imidacloprid, clothianidin and fipronil, then avoid products with these ingredients—which include flea and tick treatments for your dog.” At the Boulder meeting, it was noted that more children and dogs are developing cancers from exposure to pesticides used in yards, parks and schools.

**Round Up Ready has recently been designated**

**a Class 2 carcinogen** in Europe (for animals as they couldn't test on people but what makes them sick, will make us sick). Plants are becoming more resistant to it, so growers, especially of GMO crops, are



spraying more of it. Ask what your schools are using, what your place of business is using, what your community is using in public places. Ask your tree company too as neonics have had very inconsistent results affecting the Emerald Ash Borer. Boulder hasn't used pesticides in 13 years and wins awards for landscaping, as has the CU campus. Boulder Valley School District is using integrated pest management tactics instead of pesticides. Act locally, think globally.

Next, plant smart. Do buy untreated seeds, flowers, bushes, trees, plants, and native *(Continued next page.)*

What can you do right now? Don't buy pesticides or pesticide-treated seeds and plants. Vote with your wallet. This gets attention in a market-driven economy. It's what drove Wal-Mart to stock organic yogurt and Costco of Superior to continually expand their organic line. The power of buying, or not buying, is directly in your hands. Robert Egger, at the **Conference on World Affairs** said, "It isn't what they're selling, it's what we're buying." Gandhi told 350 million Indians not to buy UK salt. Cesar Chavez said, "Don't buy table grapes." Martin Luther King said, "Don't ride the bus." Mary Reed, in the Boulderorganic supplement of the Boulder Weekly (March 26), wrote, "Don't use pesticides, insecticides, or

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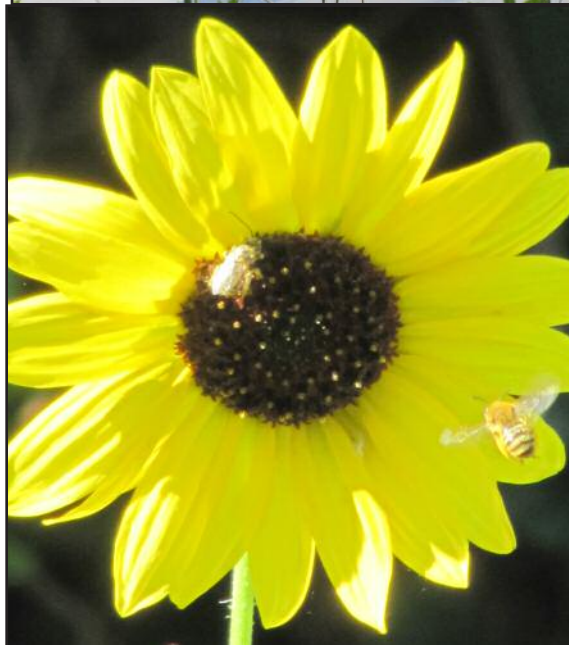
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## Highlander Nature

grasses for your yard or planters. Habitat loss is also one of the biggest threats to pollinators. Target plants that attract, feed and provide habitat for pollinators. The **Bee Safe** volunteer organizer built what she called a **Bird-Bee-Butterfly** garden complete with attractive feeding plants and a shallow water dish. Check where to buy neonicotinoid-free seeds and starts at [www.beesafeboulder.com](http://www.beesafeboulder.com).

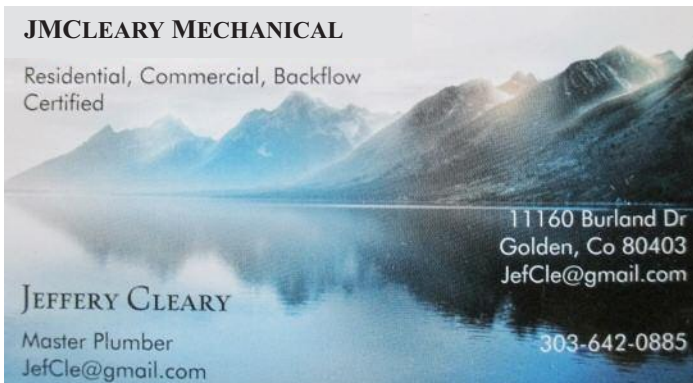
Harlequin's Gardens in Boulder is one of them. More information can also be found at [www.pollinators.org](http://www.pollinators.org), [www.xercessociety.org](http://www.xercessociety.org), [www.peopleandpollinators.org](http://www.peopleandpollinators.org), and [www.coloradobeekeepers.org](http://www.coloradobeekeepers.org). At the Boulder meeting, it was suggested we don't need more people keeping bees. We need increase forage to put more food on the bees' table so the existing bees have enough to eat versus competing with newcomers. Put in a plant variety that will offer three seasons of food, staggering blooming in the spring, summer and fall. Bees need food early in the spring and love salvia, and then look for catmint in the summer, and sunflowers late into the fall. In addition to lilacs, honeysuckle, lavender, yarrow, cosmos, asters, rabbit brush, Russian sage, and zinnias, consider native grasses and fruit trees. Annuals will provide immediate food and perennials will provide more long-term nectar and pollen. Choose organic seeds and plants. Remove the blossoms after they are done to encourage new blooms ("deadheading.") Redefine your definition of how a yard



should be; which was a weed-free marketing concept promoted in the 70's. Think of what your grandmother's yard looked like. A dandelion never hurt anyone. Lyons is redesigning their flood-swept parks and creating organic botanical gardens, complete with nesting sites, native plants and pollinator-attracting flowers. Mimi Elmore, an involved Lyons resident, also helps people create wildlife habitats through her business, **Wild By Design**, and can be reached at 303-823-0856 or [www.wildbydesignhabitats.com](http://www.wildbydesignhabitats.com). She recommended a book, **Bringing Nature Home**, by Douglas Tallamy, to learn more about reconciling ecology. She said that 96% of North American birds need insects and his focus is on restoring species, one yard at a time. The National Wildlife Federation is using his science.

On the local level, Boulder County has put back 2,000 acres into natural habitat and is collecting native seeds to reseed pollinator habitats. On the federal level, President Obama is mandating federal agencies to formulate plans for managing their lands to promote pollinator health. So act locally, think globally, and participate at the level you can, whether it be by carefully choosing your summer plants, or by organizing your neighborhood for **Bee Safe** status, or by learning more about the bills supporting the health of our food supply, people and pollinators.

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## Buffalo Field Campaign ~ [www.buffalofieldcampaign.org](http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org)

Cracker Rounds, Thowing Stones, Bull Shot! After a mid-April intense frenzy of hazing, buffalo were back on the move, returning to areas they had been forced out of. This made the weekend busy for patrols along the highway, but thanks to our hot pink road signs, no buffalo were struck by vehicles. Most of the buffalo migrated back to suitable habitat along the South Fork of the Madison River, south of Horse Butte, where the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) has zero tolerance for them. Then much to the chagrin of the DOL, more than 130 buffalo were gracing this beautiful grass-filled landscape. Another senseless hazing operation was imminent. DOL and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) agents once again descended upon the South Fork to abuse wild buffalo and displace migratory birds such as Sandhill cranes and white pelicans.

After hours of chasing two large groups of buffalo around in circles, the operation moved from the South Fork, east down the Madison Arm Road of Gallatin National Forest. The bellowing of the DOL and FWP agents, yelling "YAAAAAAA!!!" and "HEY! HEY HEY!" and even "HEEE-HAWWWW!" shouted over and over and over again, echoed throughout the forest and in all of our heads. All species: bald and golden eagles, wolves, moose, grizzly bears, elk, and more - suffer this mad cowboy disease, and there's not a single cow on the landscape.

The agents have been repeatedly hazing wild buffalo out of so-called tolerance areas, where the buffalo - so many of them just hours away from giving birth - are allowed to be. For multiple days each week, buffalo are repeatedly pushed for miles over dusty roads and fallen trees, without time to graze or even drink water. As has been the DOL and FWP's tactic this spring, the hazing doesn't end until the buffalo cross north over the Madison River. Sometimes it doesn't end there, as agents will follow the buffalo across the river, pushing them towards Horse Butte.

These agents assume that the buffalo are going to behave like livestock and stay where they are told. But buffalo don't adhere to man-made laws or stay on one side or the other of imaginary lines; they follow the power of their



ancient instincts. As soon as the agents are gone, the buffalo resume the disrupted journey back to their chosen ground. Once these Madison Arm Road hazes reach the water's edge, buffalo immediately dip their heads for a much-needed drink. The edge of the lake is thick with spring mud and the buffalo's hooves sunk in deep, but as thirsty as they are, even wet earth offers a bit of relief to a parched throat.

Bellowing with laughter and cracking jokes, the agents wait at the water's edge for the buffalo to cross. If the buffalo don't move fast enough, the bullies break out their shotguns to fire explosive rounds that scare them away. As the video on our website shows, they even stoop to throwing rocks. As the buffalo are forced to move off of their ancestral lands as these mean men laugh it up, congratulating themselves on a job well done, our heads fill with anger, our hearts break, and our resolve strengthens. After that haze, on our way back to our car, we passed through a group of about 100 buffalo, heading west towards the South Fork. We knew that they would likely be hazed.

One young female had birthing material hanging from her, but no calf. Where was the calf? From a radio-collared female we saw, we knew this group had been hazed very recently, and that this forced removal likely caused her to miscarry. Then this same group was found along the South

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A green ladder leaning against a wall. On the wall are three squares of paint in blue, pink, and red. On the floor are several paint cans and a paintbrush.



Fork and were hazed down the same path again. The next morning, checking the South Fork for buffalo, patrols found one lone and very pregnant female who was likely separated from her family during a previous haze. She was nervous and distraught about being away from the herd. Alone she is extremely vulnerable to hungry wolves and grizzly bears. We learned that while we were following and documenting a haze, a lone bull buffalo had been shot on Pat Povah's ranch, where there are currently no cattle. Inquiring with Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, we learned that Povah had been complaining, so FWP contacted a state hunter who did not fill his buffalo tag, and had him come shoot the bull. FWP says they are going to try using this new tactic to "teach" buffalo not to go onto Povah's property. It's possible they will allow a bull a week to be shot in this manner.

All these crimes against wild buffalo can end if we repeal MCA 81-2-120, the law that gives the DOL authority over wild bison in the state and classifies them as near vermin in Montana. Right now **you can do two very important things to end this war against wild buffalo:** 1) Call and email Montana state vet Marty Zaluski (406) 444-2043 / [mzaluski@mt.gov](mailto:mzaluski@mt.gov) and tell him to end the abuse of America's last wild buffalo and adhere to agreements for tolerance; 2) call and email Governor Bullock 406-444-3111 / [governor@mt.gov](mailto:governor@mt.gov) and urge him to take action to repeal MCA 81-2-120. With this law repealed, the DOL will hold no power over wild buffalo. WILD IS THE WAY!

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## RMNP - Climate Science - Angler Benefit

Dear Readers,

Rocky Mountain National Park's centennial observance continues with the following events scheduled during May. Mark your calendars and enjoy the celebration! On **May 18th**, the presentation, *Pioneers of the Peaks: Local Climbers Who Made History, The Art of Mountaineering* with James Disney, will be held at 7 pm at the Estes Park Museum at 200 Fourth Street. On **May 19th**, History Colorado will present, *Enos Mills and the Campaign for Rocky Mountain National Park*, at both 1 pm and 7 pm at 1200 Broadway in Denver. Enos Mills, a contemporary of John Muir, was the Father of RMNP, who fought tirelessly to establish and preserve the park. To buy tickets, call 303-866-2394 or go online at HistoryColorado.org. For more information, go to reservations@state.co.us. On **May 20th**, advanced adult cyclists will have the opportunity to ride Trail Ridge Road up to the Alpine Visitor Center if the road is still closed to motor vehicle traffic. The ride runs from 8 am to noon. You must bring all your own equipment. Sign up with Mark Kougl at 970-586-1311 soon as the group size is limited. Opening on **May 23rd** and running until September 4th, the Kauffman House Museum at 407 Pitkin Street in Grand Lake will present a **historic display of the**

**west side of the park**, including memoirs, photographs, and artifacts of the last 100 years. From **May 29 – 31**, the *Estes Park Western Heritage Art and Artisan Show and Sale* will be held at the Stanley Fairgrounds in Estes Park. Art showcasing traditional cowboy arts over the past 100 years and the beauty of the area will be available for purchase. On **May 30th**, Jill Baron will present *Stories from Loch Vale*, at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center in the park at 7:30 pm. She will discuss ecosystem science and the application of scientific knowledge to protect mountain ecosystems for the next 100 years.

To learn about more ongoing centennial events, go to nps.gov/romo, click on the blue Celebration icon and go to Schedule Of Events. Go enjoy the park before summer officially kicks in! Diane Bergstrom

**Dear Editor**, Climate denials are ideologically driven –

I applaud Ron Alberty and Charlie Pellerin for their guest commentary (*The science of climate change, Daily Camera, March 27*) shedding light on a misinformed letter by Martin Hertzberg (*Climate: No such thing, Daily Camera Open Forum, March 21*). Mr. Hertzberg used a bit of scientific jargon to argue that there is no such thing as a greenhouse gas effect in the atmosphere, but he would have failed his high school physics class had he been saying such things.

The effect of greenhouse

(Continued on page 16.)

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## Highlander Letters

gases on atmospheric warming is not a difficult concept to understand, and it is certainly not controversial in the scientific community. However it does seem to be controversial in the political community. I once had a Republican state legislator tell me there was “no such thing as the greenhouse gas effect in the atmosphere.” I was stunned and didn’t quite know how to respond. So often we hear a lawmaker proclaiming either that they are not a scientist and have no idea or that “global warming is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on humanity.”

So how can people who seem fairly intelligent think these things? I believe it’s ideologically driven. If you are repulsed by every possible kind of government regulation, you reject any solution to problems that actually can be solved or mitigated by government regulation. We have seen such true believers minimize problems or create doubt that problems even exist whenever regulatory solutions are available.

Consider what was said about tobacco smoke, the ozone hole, acid rain and now global warming. They all require

regulation, and in most cases have been denied by the same cast of characters for the same reason in their view: all regulation is bad. These dots are all connected in the classic book by Naomi Oreskes, *Merchants of Doubt*.

My point here is that until we elect lawmakers who are willing to consider regulation as a possible solution to some of our major problems, we will continue to hear them warn us about “scientific hoaxes” and remind us that they are not scientists. Bob Kropfli

### Letter to Editor, Buttonrock Preserve Fund Raiser Dear Fishing Readers,

On Sunday, August 2, South Creek Ltd. of Lyons will present their 9th annual Colorado Cane Conclave for angler enthusiasts and community supporters, at Planet Bluegrass in Lyons, from 9 am to 6 pm, cost \$60. 100% of the net proceeds will go toward restoring the Buttonrock Preserve Tailwater Fishery and two miles of public access areas which were among the flood casualties in 2013. Buttonrock Preserve has remained closed since the flood and this effort is to help reopen it. The fundraiser is offered in concert with St. Vrain Trout Anglers Unlimited, the local chapter of Trout Unlimited, and will target restoration of trout and aquatic life habitat.

Activities include: testing bamboo rods on private water, Fly Fishing Film Tour’s 2015 film, stream restoration presentation by Aquatic Biologist Ben Swigle, catered meal by Smokin’ Dave’s BBQ, silent auction, many varied rod makers and displays of bamboo rods, tools, and vintage tackle. Registration and pre-payment are required!

**Registration form is available on the “What’s New” page at [www.southcreekltd.com](http://www.southcreekltd.com); click on “Colorado Cane Conclave” to download your form. Your registration**


**and payment must be received by July 27.** Call South Creek Ltd. with any questions at 303-823-6402 and come join the party for fly fishers and bamboo rod enthusiasts doing their part to continue to restore the beauty of Colorado!

Local support moves it forward, and national supporters are already donating funds and auction items, including several guided trips. Diane Bergstrom

*Letters to the Editor/ Readers will be accepted via email at [news@highlandermemo.com](mailto:news@highlandermemo.com) or USPS to P.O. Box 7205, Golden, CO 80403 and must be signed. Deadline is always the 19th of the month before. Topics can be of interest to all or some, please keep your letters brief and to the point.*

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*This page top left: Caesar & Jake play in deep snow.*

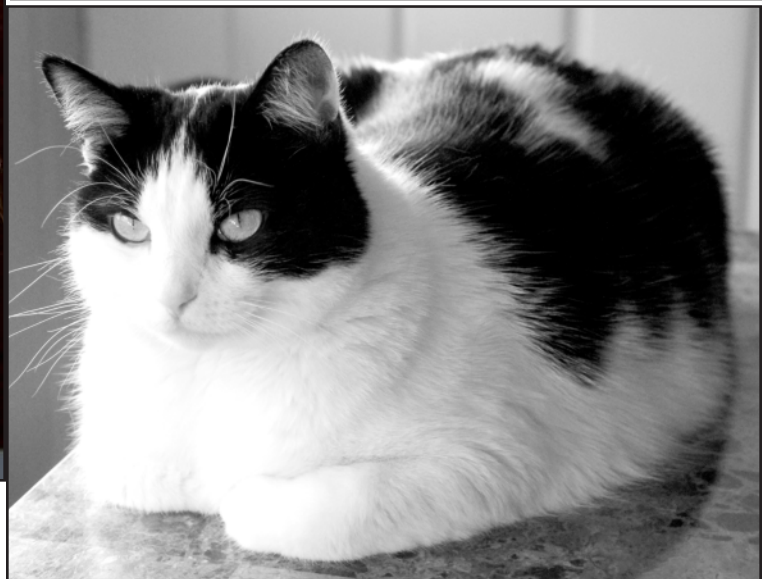
*Bottom Left: Jake's happy to be out of the barn!*

*Bottom Right: Chanel with Sassy and Rudy in background.*

*Next page: Top Left - Bear  
Top Right: Mr. Kat  
Bottom Right: Moose*

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# Five Apps To Help You Manage Your Money

From Jim Plane – State Farm Insurance

You're probably already using your smartphone for more than making calls. But did you know it can be a handy money management tool? Here are five free personal finance apps to check out—and tips for safe downloading.

**Mint (iPhone, Android)** Mint brings all of your financial accounts together and organizes them into categories so you know how you spend your money. You can then use this information to create a budget, and Mint will help keep your financial goals on track with handy tips, tools and alerts.

**Sig Fig (iPhone, Android)** This app syncs your 401(k), IRA, brokerage and other investment accounts so you can track them together in real time. Sig Fig also analyzes your accounts to create easy-to-read investment charts and generate weekly portfolio reports and investment advice.

**Manilla (iPhone, Android)** Manilla acts as your mobile mailbox by managing your bills in one secure location. The app receives, stores, and alerts you about statements from cell phone providers, credit card companies, magazine subscription services, and more.

**Credit Karma (iPhone)** This app provides free credit scores and credit monitoring. With Credit Karma, you can view your score and learn when your credit has changed.

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**State Farm® Pocket Agent® (iPhone, Android)** Monitor your State Farm Bank® and Mutual Fund accounts with this convenient app. State Farm Bank customers with at least two Internet-enabled deposit accounts can use the app to transfer funds from one eligible account to another. (This feature is not available in Canada.) Mutual Funds customers can view their account balances and a phone number that can be used to purchase, redeem or exchange shares for most personal investment accounts right from the app. Plus, if you're ever involved in an accident, the app also lets you "draw" the scene, find a tow truck and contact your State Farm® agent.

**It is also important to protect your personal information and privacy when downloading apps. It is recommended that you follow these tips. Download apps from reputable sources. (e.g. Apple's App Store, Google Play) Look for apps with higher numbers of downloads. Research the app developer.**

Review the app permissions. These outline what information the app has access to once downloaded, in case your device is lost or stolen.

Password-protect your phone and applications in case your device is lost or stolen.

Before selecting an app, decide what you want to accomplish, whether it's monitoring spending, conducting transactions or some other function. And remember, whichever app you choose, it won't do the work all on its own. If you're committed to entering, monitoring and using the data, an app can become a very convenient financial assistant.



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# Cut Firewood Available With \$20 Permit

NEDERLAND, Colo. – U.S. Forest Service contractors are expected to begin work this month on a fuels reduction project that also will improve forest health on the Roosevelt National Forest near Nederland. The work will occur on a 122-acre parcel of National Forest System land located along **Ridge Road, northeast of Nederland**. The parcel is surrounded on all sides by private lands.

This type of forestry work is designed to reduce existing fuel loading and increase the vegetative diversity across the landscape, encouraging a healthier, more resilient forest for future generations. Age and species diversity across the landscape helps make forests more resilient to climate change, disease and insect infestations, and helps reduce the spread and severity of wildfire.

This particular parcel, known as the Ridge Road Unit, will be treated to stimulate the growth of ponderosa pine and aspen over time. The work involves cutting both live and dead trees of varying sizes and species to give the ponderosa pine a competitive advantage. Aspen stands and open meadows will be enhanced and expanded, improving wildlife habitat for a diversity of species. In places where predominantly lodgepole pine grew, the treatment will jump start the growth of a younger stand of trees, creating a greater variety in the ages of lodgepole pine stands across the broader landscape.

Trees on this parcel will be cut by hand using chainsaws.

Smaller material will be piled to burn and/or chip. Larger material will be cut into four-foot lengths and left on the forest floor. Once work begins, crews are expected to be on site for several weeks, working between the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The piled material will need to cure for several years before it can be burned. **When the work is complete, the area will open to firewood collection, providing an ideal opportunity for area residents to stock up for the winter season close to home.** Only unpiled material lying on the ground will be available for gathering. **Permits cost \$20 per cord and will be available through the Boulder Ranger District office later this summer.**

Environmental effects of this project were analyzed in the Sugarloaf Environmental Assessment (2004), which was focused on reducing hazardous fuels along the wildland urban interface. This is one of the last projects to be implemented out of the Sugarloaf Decision.

For more information on this project, contact Boulder Ranger District community liaison K. Reid Armstrong at 303-541-2532. To receive updates about Boulder Ranger District happenings, email [krarmstrong@fs.fed.us](mailto:krarmstrong@fs.fed.us).



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## Street Smart Backyard Chicken

By Ari LeVaux

There are many ways backyard hens can die. If you raise them long enough, you'll see your share. But buff Orpington chickens tend to be survivors.

My first clue to their talent for living came when a Siberian husky sneaked into my backyard. A more efficient chicken-killing machine does not exist. The wolfish canine made quick work of the girls, as they ran around exactly like chickens about to have their heads cut off. The dog pinned each one down with a paw, bit hard, crushed its bones and shook vigorously, before pouncing on the next panicked hen.

By the time we chased the dog out of the yard, six hens were dead. The only survivors were the two buff Orpingtons, both of whom were named Annabelle, because we could never tell them apart. The Annabelles had survived the carnage simply by strolling into the coop through a door that was too small for the dog to fit through. I've since observed other buff Orpingtons repair to the henhouse when a dog enters the scene.

The loss of their coop-mates took a toll. The Annabelles took to wandering, I presume in search of their lost friends. One Annabelle was picked up by a well-meaning neighbor,

only to be eaten by a raccoon on the good Samaritan's back porch. Down to our last hen, we ordered another round of freshly hatched chicks. As soon as they met the surviving Annabelle, the chicks treated her as mom, and she obliged. They jumped at her mouth to get food and followed her away from the shadows of opportunistic ravens. Annabelle became my first chicken, ever, to die of old age.

Since then, every buff Orpington has been named Annabelle, including one in the current generation of spring chickens. When they were about two weeks old, I let the chicks peck around the lawn on a hot afternoon. I was putting them back into their chick box, but had trouble catching a certain chick. A big chicken can be hard to catch; pro boxers, for example, used to chase chickens as a training exercise. Baby chicks, however, are easy to catch. Usually. But this chick eluded me by running to places that were too small for me to follow. It was an Annabelle, of course, one of two in the flock.

People buy chickens for different reasons: Fancy feathers, maybe, or 300 eggs per year. The buff Orpington is pretty enough, but it's no crested Polish or silver spangled Hamburg. In her prime, a buff Orpington is a solid layer, but not an egg machine like a California white. Good-natured and non-bullying, a buff Orpington has a lot of strengths, especially in the realm of common sense, which is a challenging area for many chickens.

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Washington Post food columnist Tamar Haspel recently wrote an impassioned piece, arguing that the Rhode Island red is the best chicken. I love Rhode Island reds too. I also believe no flock should lack an Ameraucana. These large birds with feathered ears and multicolored plumage are friendlier than buff Orpingtons, and they can out-lay most hens, dropping lovely blue and speckled eggs. But no chicken has the street-smarts of a buff Orpington.

I scored my buff Orpingtons at a feed store, where this time of year it's common to find chicks peep-peeping under heat lamps.

Day-old chicks can also be ordered online, with Murray McMurray and Cackle Hatchery being the industry elders, and younger upstarts like Ideal Poultry and Meyer Hatchery gaining ground.

Or you can attend a poultry swap, which resembles a farmers market built around chickens. If you're curious

about the chicken-keeping lifestyle, or want to meet some other practitioners and perhaps bring home some poultry, it's worth a Web search to find the nearest poultry swap.



At one such event in Edgewood, New Mexico, recently, I purchased a Sicilian buttercup, a speckled Sussex and an Old English game bantam chicken, all alleged to be female, along with some really good cinnamon rolls made by a veteran with PTSD.

Having a couple of buff Orpingtons already in my growing flock gave me the confidence to purchase these random hens. In all likelihood, they will be wonderful girls, adding their quirky

personalities to the scene. But even if they disappoint me, I know that my flock will nonetheless rock on, thanks to the golden chicken that has never let me down.

*Ari LeVaux is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a column service of High Country News (hcn.org). He writes about food in Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

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## Public Lands Grazing Fees

From Tay Wiles

Twenty years ago, fees for ranchers grazing livestock on federal public lands were a major political issue, the subject of regular national debates between conservationists and ranchers. The fee program brings in far less money for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service than the agencies spend on maintaining rangeland. But thanks to the power of the livestock lobby, proposals to raise grazing fees have been stymied in political controversy for decades.

Now, the Obama administration is trying again — Interior Secretary Sally Jewell has proposed an additional administrative fee of \$2.50 per animal unit month (the forage needed to sustain one cow and calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats for a month).

The fee would provide \$16.5 million in 2016 for the BLM — a \$13.5 million net gain, considering a proposed \$3 million decrease in rangeland management funding. Currently the BLM spends over seven times as much money on rangeland management and improvement programs as it collects in grazing fees; that's \$89 million versus \$12 million. (The rangeland programs include things like permit administration, weed management, water

development and vegetation restoration.) Income from the new fee would go toward rangeland health efforts, as well as help address a massive backlog of grazing permit renewals.

Jewell's proposal would bump the feds' income from grazers by 148 percent, but, because it's a separate administrative tax, it doesn't violate the requirement that the baseline grazing fee (for the BLM, \$1.69 per AUM this year) can't increase by more than 25 percent annually. The move, which Interior has attempted in similar forms since 2012, appears to be a last resort to get around bitter political resistance to baseline fee increases. But the attempt has been repeatedly thwarted — stripped from Obama's budget before being passed each fall.

If the fee were to pass — an unlikely scenario, since it has to push through committee, including the Natural Resources Committee, chaired by conservative Utah Republican Rob Bishop — it would have a huge effect on Western ranchers. "If expenses for your business go up over 100 percent, that's a big impact," says Utah Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President Brent Tanner. And in Tanner's state, most ranchers use at least some federal land to graze their cattle, so would be affected by the new fee.

Yet conservationists have long cited the grazing fee as far



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too low, considering the ecological cost of livestock on public lands. The formula takes into account private land lease rates, beef cattle prices and production costs like gasoline and equipment. Thus, ranchers are supposed to pay more when conditions are good and less when conditions are worse. But that's not what's happened since the fee was implemented with the 1978 Public Rangelands Improvement Act. The rate crested the two-dollar mark just once, in 1981, and was at the legal minimum (\$1.35) every year from 2007 to 2014.

Grazing fees on public land were always meant to be lower than those on private land because the former often provides poorer quality forage and ranchers usually have to maintain their own fencing and irrigation infrastructure. When grazing fees were established, they were supposed to increase over time, trailing private rates. But the opposite has happened, and the gap between public and private land lease rates has increased over time.

"The 2015 fee is just 8 percent of what it would cost to graze livestock on private grazing lands," reads an economic study conducted on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity. "In 1981, when the federal fee first went into effect, it was 23.79 percent."

So why aren't public land grazing fees naturally going up? That can be traced to how cattle prices and cost of production figure into the fee formula; adding these two elements to the formula did not improve its ability to predict annual forage values, says a 2001 academic paper

## Highlander Conservation

presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Range Management. "In fact, adding these two indices ruined the predictive ability of the formula and... grazing fees have fallen further and further behind the private land lease rates through time."

Part of the reason that grazing fees have provoked such fury from politically conservative ranchers is that they're imposed by the federal government. And yet the BLM funnels 12 percent of its income from fees back to the states they came from. (For lands outside of grazing districts, it's 50 percent.) The rest of the income goes to a rangeland betterment fund and the U.S. Treasury. For the Forest Service, 25 percent goes back to the states and 50 percent to rangeland betterment.

Some conservationists, like John Horning from WildEarth Guardians, think that working with ranchers to retire grazing permits altogether may be a more realistic way to protect rangeland health than increasing fees, which at the moment, is a political non-starter. "There are two things that have eclipsed (the grazing fee debate)," Horning says, "the public lands movement, which is all about acres of protection; the second is climate change. Grazing is just barely on the radar."

*Tay Wiles is the online editor at High Country News.*



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# Supreme Court Wrestles With Air Pollution Rule

From Elizabeth Shogren

The Supreme Court is reviewing a major Obama administration rule aimed at cleaning up toxic power plant exhausts. The case puts in question both the cleanup and the court's longstanding practice of deferring to federal agencies to interpret murky laws.

Under that 2011 Environmental Protection Agency rule, by the middle of April, several hundred coal- and oil- fired power plants across the country must slash their emissions of mercury, arsenic and other toxic air pollutants or shut down.

But in response to a challenge by 21 states—including Arizona, Alaska, Utah, Wyoming, North Dakota and Idaho—and some industry groups, in late March the Supreme Court held oral arguments on the rule. At issue is whether the EPA was wrong not to consider costs—such as how much plant operators would spend to install pollution control equipment or switch to other fuel sources—before it decided to regulate under the 1990 Clean Air Act.

The law doesn't explicitly tell the EPA to consider costs, but directs the agency to set pollution standards if it "finds such regulation is appropriate and necessary" after studying the health impacts of these emissions. (The agency did

consider costs later in its regulatory process, when it was setting specific standards for types of power plants. But the states and industry argue that this wasn't adequate and costs should have played a role earlier.)

During oral arguments in the case in March, Justice Elena Kagan pushed back when a lawyer representing states and industry argued that with the words "appropriate and necessary" Congress was directing the EPA to take into account costs.

"Congress knows how to require consideration of costs, to get from silence to this notion of a requirement seems to be a pretty big jump," Kagan said.

But some conservative justices made it clear they side with industry, especially considering that the EPA estimated costs of complying with the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule at \$9.6 billion a year.

"I would think it's classic arbitrary and capricious agency action for an agency to command something that is outrageously expensive and in which the expense vastly exceeds whatever public benefit can be achieved," said Justice Antonin Scalia.

In the past, the highest court usually has deferred to the EPA to use its own judgment in interpreting vague provisions of sweeping laws such as the Clean Air Act.



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Legal experts say this case could have broad implications if the court decides against the EPA.

“It will be precedent setting if they say the word ‘appropriate’ absolutely includes costs,” says Patrick Parenteau, a professor at Vermont Law School. “To argue that absolutely requires a cost-benefit analysis, how do you get that out of the word ‘appropriate?’ What dictionary can you cite that says that’s what the word appropriate means?” Jeff Holmstead, an industry lawyer who headed EPA’s air pollution programs under President George W. Bush, said the EPA should take costs into account unless they’re specifically prohibited.

“The hope on the industry side is the Supreme Court will send a message that says you have to be more aware of the costs of your regulations,” he said. “You can’t just ignore those. That would send an important signal to EPA and perhaps other agencies as well.”

Some industry representatives say that this ruling could have implications for another major EPA rule, which would control greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards are among the EPA’s costliest regulations ever. But the EPA estimated that the health benefits would far outweigh the costs. In addition to reducing mercury and other toxic pollutants, the rule also would reduce fine particles. The EPA calculated that it would avert up to 11,000 premature deaths, 4,700 heart attacks and 130,000 asthma attacks every year. But the states and industry argued that those benefits are grossly

inflated because much of the benefits the EPA calculated are from reducing fine particles, which were not the main target of this regulation.

Most of the power plants impacted by this standard already have decided to shut down or have installed pollution control devices to capture mercury and other pollutants. But environmentalists cautioned that if the court sided with industry, companies might opt to keep their dirty old plants running longer or not use the pollution control equipment that they’ve installed.

“There are operating costs and those aren’t trivial,” said Jim Pew, an attorney for Earthjustice who was representing environmental groups and the NAACP in the case. “If the court threw it out they might not run it.”

Although the EPA likely would rewrite the rule to address whatever shortcomings the court indicated, such a ruling could delay the cleanup of hazardous air pollution by several years.

Alternatively, the court could decide to keep the rule in effect while the EPA reworks it. As for the plants that have closed or are slated to be shut down because of the rule, some utilities say it’s too late to change their plans. But by hearing the case, the Supreme Court put a question mark over the fate of the 60-year-old Carbon power plant, which is nestled into a narrow canyon near Helper, Utah. The Supreme Court will rule before its term ends in June.

*Elizabeth Shogren is HCN’s Washington DC correspondent.*

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## Part 7 - Overpopulation

By Frosty Wooldridge

Quotes that make impact on America and around the world, human starvation equates to human misery. The green revolution arrived as a result of the efforts of Norman Borlaug, who, while accepting the Nobel peace prize in 1970, said: "The green revolution has won a temporary success in man's war against hunger and deprivation; it has given humanity a breathing space. If fully implemented, the revolution can provide sufficient food for sustenance during the next three decades. But the frightening power of human reproduction must also be curbed; otherwise the success of the green revolution will be ephemeral only."

Ironically, Borlaug, not only foresaw mass human starvation, he unwittingly contributed to it. While his great experimenting with crops yielded greater gains per acre, he facilitated massive population growth that exploded the world from 2.5 billion at the beginning of the last century to our enormously hungry and thirsty 7.1 billion humans in the 21st century. He unwittingly created even greater human starvation levels into the billions when the ax finally falls as to water, arable land and energy availability. This fact remains: the ax will fall upon humanity in this century.

Dreadful, miserable and deadly! Today, we humans seem to think we can outsmart Mother Nature. We can vanquish her! As you see in this graphic series, at this point, we seem to be winning. Not for much longer!

*(One of the world's biggest refugee camps lies on Kenya's border with Somalia. The Dadaab camp, designed to*

*hold 90,000 refugees, now gives shelter to more than three times that number. Over 1.5 billion human beings cannot secure a clean glass of water daily.) Photo: BBC*



For millions of years, Mother Nature culled any species that overwhelmed its carrying capacity of water, food and resources. When we humans came onto the scene, our cleverness allowed us a small niche which became a larger niche and today, homo erectus meaning "clever ape," rages across the planet with a self-evident arrogance that we can brutalize nature in any way we choose. We think we can poison the air, water and land without harm to ourselves. We think we can encroach on the rest of the natural world and kill off endless species—yet remain unharmed and untouched by our folly. Think again! Today

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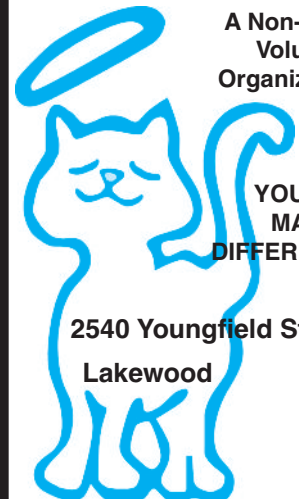
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in America, one out of six citizens suffers hunger. Source: [www.FeedingAmerica.org](http://www.FeedingAmerica.org) *Poverty in America: In 2011, 46.2 million people (15.0 percent) were in poverty. In 2011, 9.5 million (11.8 percent) families were in poverty. In 2011, 26.5 million (13.7 percent) of people ages 18-64 were in poverty. In 2011, 16.1 million (22.0 percent) children under the age of 18 were in poverty. In 2011, 3.6 million (9.0 percent) seniors 65 and older were in poverty.*

Food Insecurity and Very Low Food Security - In 2011, 50.1 million Americans lived in food insecure households, 33.5 million adults and 16.7 million children. These figures sober any American, but they do not begin to tell the story of 21st century world starvation dynamics. With our paltry 316 million human population, we also suffer the highest obesity rates in the world with over half of our citizens fat, overweight and suffering from heart disease, diabetes and other overweight medical



health issues. But we also feature 40 + million Americans subsisting in food kitchens and food banks. An astounding 47 million of them live off food stamps.

Ironically, 10 million children starve to death around the world annually according to the World Health Organization [www.WHO.org](http://www.WHO.org). Another eight million adult humans starve to death annually around the world from their sheer poverty. (Source: *Time Magazine*)

(In Africa, India and many other countries, women walk three miles for their daily water and must line up to fill their jugs. Then, they must carry them back three miles. As water becomes scarcer as Africa's population grows from 1 billion to 3 billion at the end of this century and India's races from 1.2

billion to 1.6 billion, all living hell will break out for Africans and Indians scooped up in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.) *Photography by www.WorldHunger.org*

"Children are the most visible victims of under-nutrition. Children who are poorly nourished suffer up to



160 days of illness each year. Poor nutrition plays a role in at least half of the 10.9 million child deaths each year-five million deaths." ([www.worldhunger.org](http://www.worldhunger.org))

(In Agbogbloshie, a slum in Accra, the capital of Ghana, adults and children tear away at computers from abroad to get at the precious metals inside. Left, David Akore, 18, and other foragers. At the dump, the machines are dismantled and often burned to extract metals for resale. The equipment in this digital cemetery come mainly from Europe and the United States, sometimes as secondhand donations meant to reduce the "digital divide" — the disparity in computer access between poor nations and rich.) Photo: Pieter Hugo/New York (Continued next page.) Times



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## Highlander Worldview

With all those realities, we humans continue our Kentucky Derby gallop toward the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. An average of 57 million humans die every year from all causes. We replace them with 57 million new babies and an extra 80 million more to equal 137 million babies annually. We cannot water them, feed them or begin to educate them, but we continue birthing them around the globe. As a clever species, we prove dumber than an emu.

In America, we gallop toward an added 138 million people by 2050—a scant 35 years from now. Beyond reason and without thinking, we appear to believe we can outsmart Mother Nature. We face a rude and vicious awakening long before 2050 as Peak Oil rips gasoline out of our tractors and slams us for \$10 up to \$20 per gallon.

*(Americans lining up at a food bank in Miami. A mind-numbing 47 million Americans cannot feed themselves on their wages. They subsist on taxpayer-funded food stamps. They line up at food banks and soup kitchens to eat*



*some food. If America continues its raging gallop toward adding the projected 138 million by 2050—a scant 35 years from now, the ability to feed our poor will become impossible.) Photography by www.bread.blog.org*

How will our civilization survive the raging Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse? At the moment, we charge right into their cross hairs. First, we need a national discussion-debate. We need to throw “population overload” onto the table. We need to come up with an “American Population Policy” of two children or less per female. We need to stop mass immigration. We need to encourage one-child families to overcome “population momentum” now eating up India and China. We need to be realistic and rational instead of emotional and religious. We cannot hope for good to ensue, we must act in order to create a viable civilization. This series applies to Canada, UK, Europe, Australia and most other countries of the world.

Without our immediate actions, we most certainly will become victims of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. As Borlaug said, “But the frightening power of human reproduction must also be curbed; otherwise the success of the green revolution will be ephemeral only.”

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*Frosty Wooldridge has bicycled across six continents - from the Arctic to the South Pole - as well as ten times across the USA. In 2014, he bicycled coast to coast across America. He presents The Coming Population Crisis facing America: what to do about it.*

*[www.frostywooldridge.com](http://www.frostywooldridge.com) . His latest book is: How to Live a Life of Adventure: The Art of Exploring the World by Frosty Wooldridge, copies at 1 888 280 7715*

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## A Battle For America's Trust

*From Krista Langlois*

Meet Parker. The adorably shaggy eight-year-old, clad in yellow rain gear and a floppy blue hat, is the star of a new film from the nonprofit American Rivers, called **Parker's Top 50 Favorite Things About Northwest Rivers**. The three-minute-long video is an ode to childhood joy; a montage of Parker leaping, splashing, contemplating and grinning his way through the drenched-green river corridors of the Northwest, set to the tune of a slightly manic rock song.

For Sinjin Eberle, an associate communications director for the organization, the video represents the future of environmental advocacy. "There's not one word in there about 'protect' or 'restore' or 'take action,'" Eberle told me over drinks recently in downtown Durango, Colorado. Instead, the video tells a story — the tale of a boy who has quite possibly the best day that any kid has ever had. Eberle and his colleague Amy Kober, who worked with filmmaker Skip Armstrong to create the video, hope it will appeal to people who have become inured to environmental groups' usual somber fare.

"Five percent of the population already knows that major dams kill salmon," Eberle said. "We've got those people in our pocket. We want to reach the other 5 or 10 percent" — and here he jerked his thumb toward the bartender, a

backcountry snowboarder in his 20s who's typical of a demographic that sees the effects of climate change and water issues on their lives and sports, but don't belong to environmental groups and haven't taken any action. "I want," Eberle said, "to reach that guy."

But how do you reach that guy — and others like him, who care about the environment but aren't easily brow-beaten into action or swayed by videos of "some biologist crouching by a stream talking about pollution we can't see"? Eberle says the answer lies in storytelling. Stories, more than any other form of communication, have the power to connect people emotionally to places, animals and other people they've never encountered and might otherwise care nothing about. "In three minutes, Parker made you love running around the forest again," Eberle said.

The hope is that such an emotional connection will inspire a new generation of environmentalists to take a stand. In 2013, for example, when American Rivers partnered with photographer Pete McBride to create the powerful film **I Am Red** about the year's "most endangered" river, the Colorado, it got 132,000 more views than their "guy-standing-in-front-of-a-river-talking" video about the San Joaquin, the proceeding year's most endangered river. Kober says all (Continued next page.)

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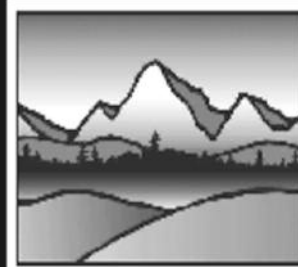
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## Highlander Environmental

those extra eyeballs led to a significant increase in the number of people who took action online or wrote their Congressmen.

In the days after watching the Parker video, I started noticing other YouTube-sized clips that could easily pass for indie film festival entries, like this series from Conservation International or this one from the National Parks Conservation Association. Aric Caplan, founder and president of Caplan Communications — a D.C.-based PR firm that crafts campaigns for American Rivers and other environmental groups — agrees that the trend is snowballing: “We’ve found that the best way to counter the slick tactics of the fossil fuel industry is through authentic stories.”


Yet environmental groups aren’t the only ones using storytelling to muddy the waters between entertainment and advocacy. Fossil fuel companies, chemical manufacturers and other industrial interests use the same techniques, often in more insidious ways — delivering their messages through carefully crafted “grassroots” organizations, for example, or dubbing a PR flack an “expert” and planting him or her in the nightly news. In some ways, this PR tug-of-war echoes the battle between Big Tobacco and health advocates in the early ’90s, but the current trend is far more sophisticated. Green groups are hiring professional PR firms, investing more heavily in communications, and working with award-winning

filmmakers, while fossil fuel companies are trying to make it seem as if they spend less on PR, adopting a less obviously slick, more rootsy look.

At stake in this battle is the social permission of voters — a vital factor in determining to what extent fossil fuel companies will be allowed to continue drilling on public lands and suburban backyards. The Fraser Institute, a Canadian public policy think tank, notes that extractive industries these days require more than government approval to drill or dig — they also need the acceptance of the general public, who have the power to tax, put warnings on, and even ban things outright. As Caplan says, it boils down to one question: “Who you gonna trust, industry or environmentalists?”

It’s not just permission to drill that’s on the line, either — it’s permission to conduct business deals that were once exempt from questions of social and environmental justice. Three decades ago, most PR firms didn’t shy away from helping deep-pocketed clients like the tobacco industry improve their image. But now there’s social pressure for major PR firms to distance themselves from clients who deny climate change, much in the same way that college students are pushing their schools to divest stocks away from fossil fuel companies. In February, the world’s biggest PR company, Edelman, dropped a multi-million dollar contract with the American Petroleum Institute (API), not long after coming under pressure from the Guardian newspaper. Edelman had worked with API for a decade, but when the Guardian reported that Edelman refused to join the ranks of other major PR companies in no longer promoting companies that deny human-caused

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climate change, Edelman split with API and professed a new stance: “We do not accept clients that seek to deny climate change.”

Yet Edelman’s hasty exit doesn’t mean that fossil fuel’s PR machine is withering. API continues to receive top-notch PR help from former Edelman subsidiary Blue Advertising, and the false-front advocacy groups that Edelman operate continue to influence public opinion. Take “The Alliance for Northwest Jobs and Exports,” an organization that appears to be a grassroots citizen group but in reality is a front for corporate coal, railroad and barge manufacturing interests. The Alliance has a Facebook page, a Twitter account and a YouTube channel, solely designed to promote new coal terminals in the Pacific Northwest.

As PR campaigns become more like stories, journalism, alarmingly, is becoming less discernible from corporate storytelling. Corporations or nonprofits can now buy segments on TV programs that blend seamlessly with regular hosted content, and the same is happening in print: Condé Nast (which owns The New Yorker), recently announced it will no longer separate editorial content from paid advertising content, and will even employ its own editors to write advertising “stories.” “The very premise of (journalism) is that it’s dangerous to have words pass straight from the mouths of CEOs or politicians to the public’s ear,” notes the Columbia Journalism Review. But today, “boundaries between editorial and advertising in journalism newsrooms aren’t what they used to be.”

Anastasia Swearingen, for example, works for oil lobbyist Richard Berman’s PR company. Last year, fronting as a “senior research analyst” for the

*Environmental Policy Alliance*, she managed to publish an op-ed in USA TODAY bashing green buildings. Later, the paper issued an apology: “After this column was originally published ... USA TODAY learned that the author, Anastasia Swearingen, is employed by public relations firm Berman and Co., not the *Environmental Policy Alliance*. The Environmental Policy Alliance, a tax-exempt group, has no employees and is housed at the same address as Berman.”

As Swearingen’s boss Richard Berman told a roomful of oil executives at a leaked Western Energy Alliance meeting last fall, “You have to play dirty to win.”

American Rivers’ Amy Kober says this is not how her group operates. “We want to connect with people’s hearts,” she says. “This wasn’t about, ‘What does market research say?’” But American Rivers and other environmental groups are operating in a world where many people no longer know which stories and videos are credible, and though connecting with people’s hearts is a laudable goal, it’s still unclear whether it’ll be enough to combat the “endless war” that Berman and his ilk are waging on environmentalists. “If you put enough information out there, (people) don’t know who is right,” Berman says. And there’s no better way than that, he adds, to ensure the status quo.

*Krista Langlois is a correspondent for High Country News and is based in Durango, Colorado.*

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[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)



## Director Incumbent Retain Seats at 2015 Annual Meeting and Election

Members celebrated the ways United Power is *Making Life Better the Cooperative Way* at the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held on April 15<sup>th</sup> at the Adams County Fairgrounds. Members cast 5,522 ballots in the annual director election that re-elected incumbents Rick Newman in the Mountain District, Tim Erickson in the East District, Brian McCormick in the West District and Bill Berens in the South District. Full election results are available on the cooperative's website [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).

Directors elected new officers at the cooperative's regular board meeting on Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. Brian McCormick was elected to serve as President for the 2015/2016 term. James Vigasaa will serve as the Vice President, Beth Martin was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer, and Bob Grant was elected to the position of Assistant Secretary-Treasurer.

Complete annual meeting details can be found online at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).

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Fully Remodeled

3 BD/ 2 BA 3,443 sq. ft. **\$339,900**



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Magical mountain retreat - Total remodel

2 BD/ 2 BA **\$222,000**



**19 Ronnie**

Well and Septic already installed

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