



VITAL NEWS

Photo by Galen Rowell

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E V I T A L G R O U N D F O U N D A T I O N • S P R I N G 2 0 0 6

Conserving Habitat and Livelihoods—

New Vital Ground Conservation Easement Protects Grizzly Habitat and a Working Forest in Montana

Deep in the pine and fir woods of Montana's Swan Valley, Bud Moore's cabin sits on a low ridge overlooking a quiet pond edged with alder and willow. Every visitor is greeted like an old friend: ushered into the bright log home and made welcome at the kitchen table. With a cup of coffee steaming in your hands, it's not long before you're swept away on tales of Bud's life as a wilderness ranger, a forester, and especially of his years caring for "Coyote Forest," this 80-acre piece of wildlife heaven (see map, page 6).

At 88, Bud Moore is as vigorous as a man 30 years his junior. In 1974 he retired from a long career with the Forest Service to write *The Lochsa Story*, a chronicle of his years as a ranger in the rugged backcountry of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The book also gives voice to Bud's deep and abiding land ethic—an ethic that is put to work at Coyote Forest.

On retiring, Bud and his wife Janet (the first professional staff woman in the Forest Service's Division of Fire Control), purchased this property in the Swan, bordered by National Forest and Plum Creek Timber Company lands. They built their cabin and began working a small "mom and pop" sawmill operation for special-order timbers, boards and mantel pieces. Yet true to his vision, Bud has a holistic approach to harvesting trees on Coyote Forest. Rather than managing only for timber,

he manages for the entire ecosystem, for all the land's values.

"You look out the window and you can see values of all kinds right there in front of your eyes," Bud explains, as a whitetail doe and yearling step out of the trees and pick their way along the water's edge. "We realize that all those values are intertwined and dependent on each other."

During his career with the Forest Service, Bud experienced a more piecemeal approach. "I call it the 'Safeway' approach. We went out and cruised it, found out how much the trees grew, and, well, that's on the shelf—we can harvest that much. Wildlife biologists counted the elk pellets and the cow-calf ratio and then we could take out this many elk, or beavers, or whatever they're concerned with. And so on. But we didn't have the knowledge or perception of how interdependent that whole mess is out there. If you're focused on only one thing on the shelf, then other things fall by the wayside."

So Bud is preparing an "ecosystem management plan" for Coyote Forest. He wasn't sure such a thing was feasible for a small 80-acre tract, until he realized he could plan for each type of habitat on his land—the ponds, riparian areas, wooded uplands, and the cabin and mill sites. "I'm trying to make a plan that will focus on that interdependence so we can come closer to doing no damage," Bud says. "A place-based plan that tries to recognize the interdependence of all these things puts you in a whole different world. It's amazing what you see when you shift your mind-set."

Coniferous woodlands, three ponds, seasonal streams and a channel of the Swan River create a mosaic of habitats for wildlife at Coyote Forest. On the uplands, western larch and Douglas-fir mix with lodgepole pine and an occasional ponderosa pine. Spruce, alpine fir and cotton-

Continued on page 3

Bud Moore places easement on his "Coyote Forest."

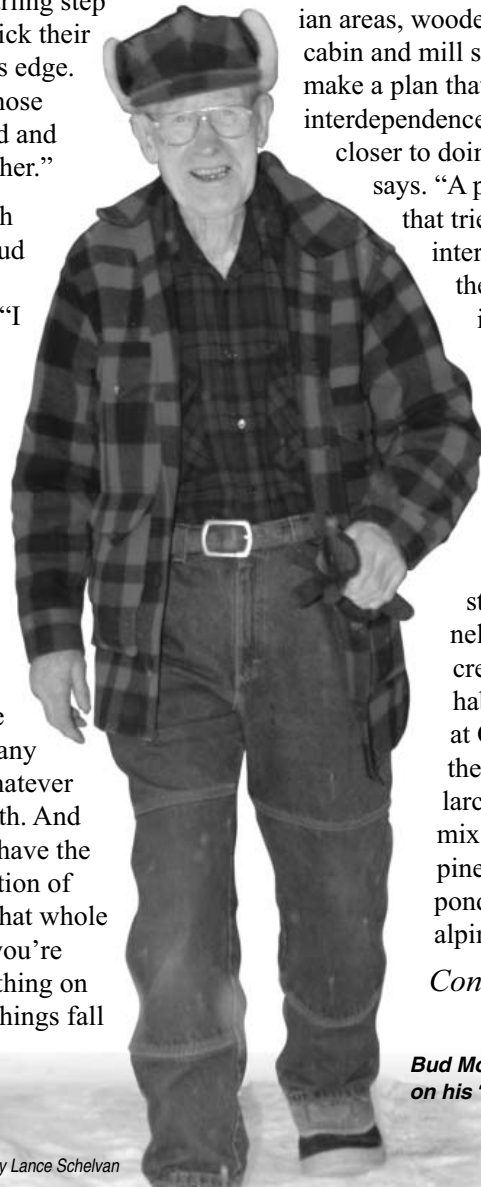


Photo by Lance Schelvan

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear friends of open spaces and wildlife,

Spring in Washington, D.C. is erupting as I write. The bright yellow forsythia and daffodils will be followed by cherry blossoms in multiple shades of pink, white pear and dogwood, and then the brilliant displays of azaleas and rhododendron. Most of us will start thinking about shedding that winter baggage before swimsuit season hits.

Almost 2,000 miles away, grizzlies emerging from hibernation are feeling quite the opposite. Pangs of hunger drive them from their mountain dens in search of anything edible. And that search often takes them out of protected federal land and onto private acreage where they are not always welcome.

In the spring, the land that we have protected together is truly vital ground for bears. Mid-elevation meadows and timbered tracts, river and stream corridors, and fertile valley bottoms provide essential nutrients for wildlife before the snow melts at higher elevations. Safe passage and foraging are all the more critical when wildlife concentrates in the same areas.

During 2005, you helped us protect Coyote Forest, in Montana's Swan Valley, through a permanent conservation easement. In northern Idaho, we protected one of six properties on Bismark Meadows—a wetland providing key spring range—as well as a forested Kootenai Valley parcel, both through fee title acquisition.

We also joined with longstanding conservation partners to complete multiple transactions in southwestern Alaska and on Afognak Island, part of the Kodiak Archipelago; to retire sheep grazing allotments on a 74,000-acre parcel located just outside Yellowstone National Park; and to complete a conservation easement on a key 160-acre parcel in northwestern Montana's Yaak Valley.

All of these transactions occurred during a year in which the organization relocated from Utah to Montana, and in which we hired three new staff members to support our new executive director, Gary Wolfe. It was a very busy and successful year!

Now that 2006 is underway, we are working on another series of transactions concentrated in northern Idaho. In Bismark Meadows, we continue to pursue land acquisitions in the hopes of eventually consolidating the entire wetland meadow and surrounding land under one owner. We are also working on developing conservation easements on over 1,600 acres along the western slopes of the Cabinet mountain range called the Clifty View Foothills, as well as on the 400-acre Canyon Creek Preserve in the Kootenai Valley.

In Montana, we now participate on the Swan Lands Coordinating Committee. This will generate increased involvement for Vital Ground in land conservation within the Swan Valley where we completed our first project a few months ago. We monitor the transactions of our conservation partners within grizzly recovery areas and are ready to join forces when the need for immediate action arises. We also remain involved in the Salmon Conservation Initiative, participating in the protection of key salmon spawning streams in southwest Alaska.

Vital Ground's efforts are only made possible through the loyal and growing support of our members. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I wish to thank all of you for your dedication to our mission and your ongoing generosity!

Hope you enjoy your Spring!

Banu Qureshi

THE MISSION OF VITAL GROUND IS TO PROTECT AND RESTORE NORTH AMERICA'S
GRIZZLY BEAR POPULATIONS BY CONSERVING WILDLIFE HABITAT.

Bud Moore (from page 1)

wood grow in wetter spots, along with willow and alder at the water's edge. Whitetail deer find abundant cover here. The ponds are home to myriad ducks. Black bear, coyote and mountain lion cruise through, and grizzlies find safe harbor here.

Coyote Forest sits adjacent to one of the federally-designated "linkage zones" that span the Swan Valley to connect grizzly habitat in the Swan Mountains with the Mission Mountains. Biologists are learning that although grizzlies do not cross from one range to another as much as originally believed, bears from both ranges mingle in the Swan Valley. Both populations use valley-bottom habitats in spring and summer, and bears move up and down the valley. Where bears mingle there is gene flow—critical to keeping these populations viable.

It's not unusual for Bud to see a grizzly at Coyote Forest. One early November day a short while back, he decided to take an afternoon hunt not far from his cabin. He was sneaking up quietly on a small group of whitetail when the deer began to move out quickly. Suddenly, he heard a powerful hiss behind him. "About twenty feet away was a huge grizz, and he was turning around too—we were about in the same spot!" The bear started to move away from Bud, but then decided he really wanted to go where Bud was going. "Even though I'm standing in the trail, he went around me about 40 feet distant at a steady walk. He never looked at me again—he just went right around me in that old grizzly shuffle and back onto the trail, about 50 or 60 feet away." As he thinks back on the story, Bud explains that he feels that he needs to sustain something of a trust with the local grizzlies. "Those are my friends—the bears."

When Vital Ground moved to Missoula, Bud called up Gary Wolfe and asked about a conservation easement to protect Coyote Forest into the future. Vital Ground was able to arrange a bargain-sale transaction in which the



Photo by Lance Schelvan

Coniferous woodlands, ponds and streams create a mosaic of wildlife habitats at Coyote Forest.

landowner donates a portion of the easement value and the organization purchases the balance of the value.

We sincerely appreciate the work and contributions of the Montana Land Reliance for initiating the project and providing the preliminary appraisal. Initial financial support for the project was generously provided by the Wildlife Land Trust, the Cinnabar Foundation, and Montana Coffee Traders. Over the next few months, Vital Ground will continue to raise funds to complete the easement purchase.

The easement agreement protects Coyote Forest from future development, while allowing traditional forest management to continue to provide income through the sawmill operation. Bud is clear that Coyote Forest is a for-profit operation, but that doesn't rule out conserving habitat for wildlife.

"The way I see our conservation easement is as a long-term partnership with Vital Ground to try to live a little better with the Earth. I see that as a partnership between Vital Ground and my heirs."

The Coyote Forest easement will go one step further. Because the easement combines wildlife habitat protection with sustaining a working forest and timber management operation, the

agreement meets the qualifications of the Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program. The program requires a 25% match of non-federal dollars. A three-way agreement was signed between Bud, Vital Ground and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). This allowed FWP to leverage the value of the Coyote Forest easement to secure more than \$600,000 in federal funds that the Forest Legacy Program will use to conserve other private forest lands in the Swan Valley.

There are not many like Bud Moore left in the world, those men molded by long years of intimate daily connection with wildlife and wilderness. Yet Bud has some simple advice. To understand how best to care for wildlife and wild places, he says, "Listen to the land." 🐾



Photo by Lance Schelvan

Bud's cabin.



Photo by Rita Wolfe

Discussing grizzly bear management on vital ground, Rocky Mountain Front.

Join Us for the 2nd Annual Walk on Vital Ground

August 11–13, Vital Ground will host its second annual “Walk on Vital Ground,” an opportunity to visit grizzly bear habitat conservation projects firsthand. This year we visit Montana’s spectacular Rocky Mountain Front—the birthplace of Vital Ground’s habitat conservation efforts. In 1991, our first conservation project was the purchase of 240 acres bordering The Nature Conservancy’s Pine Butte Swamp Preserve. That initial partnership between Vital Ground and TNC has now grown to six projects and 17,000 acres of habitat protected for grizzlies and other wildlife.

We will spend two days visiting Vital Ground and Nature Conservancy conservation projects in the Swan Valley and along the Front Range, and stay at The Nature Conservancy’s fabulous Pine Butte Guest Ranch near Choteau, MT (see map, page 6). We will meet with conservation partners and grizzly bear experts, and have opportunities for hiking, photography, and wildlife watching.

Trip cost of \$750/couple or \$375/single includes transportation from Missoula to Pine Butte and return, two nights accommodation at the guest ranch, and all meals. For more trip details, call or visit our website. **Space is limited so make your reservation soon!**

Vital Ground Receives \$150,000 Challenge Grant Pledge

At Vital Ground’s recent board meeting, philanthropist John C. Herklotz surprised and delighted the group by offering a \$150,000 Challenge Grant pledge.

John was one of several Vital Ground friends and donors who participated in a strategic planning session in early March. The group identified several key issues facing the organization, including the growing cost of land conservation, building organizational capacity, and fundraising.

Near the end of the meeting, John offered to provide a \$150,000 grant to Vital Ground, provided that Vital Ground raises at least an equal amount of matching funds. Another donor present at the meeting, who wishes to remain anonymous, immediately offered the first matching pledge of \$25,000!

\$150,000

\$125,000

\$100,000

\$75,000

\$50,000

\$25,000



HELP US MEET THE CHALLENGE!

This gift will be based on a percentage of John Herklotz’ Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust, and has a current value of approximately \$150,000. The pledge is revocable until Vital Ground raises the matching funds. Once the matching funds are raised, the pledge becomes irrevocable. Vital Ground now has until December 31, 2006 to meet the challenge.

John was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. He has served as the Chief Financial Officer for the Chicago Tribune’s subsidiary companies, Auditor and Controller of WGN Continental Broadcasting, a media financial consultant and broadcast station broker, and a pioneer in the cellular telephone industry. In 1990, he sold his telecommunications company to pursue his lifelong dream of devoting time and resources to charitable causes. John has also been involved with the movie industry, and in 1991 produced *Giant of Thunder Mountain*, starring the original Bart the Bear™.

Over the past fifteen years, John has established a respected legacy by helping numerous worthy causes. In addition to his work in wildlife conservation, John generously supports a wide-ranging number of interests, including medical research, children’s medical charities, education and scholarship programs, and the arts. The Vatican has conferred the Papal Knight of St. Gregory on John for his significant service and assistance to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

Vital Ground is deeply grateful to John Herklotz for this opportunity. **We have \$125,000 left to raise to meet John’s generous pledge by the end of the year!** If you would like to help us meet this challenge, please indicate that your tax-deductible contribution is for the **Herklotz Challenge Grant** match.





Image by Dave Campbell

Facts about the proposed delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear population:

- Only the grizzlies inhabiting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are proposed for delisting. Grizzly bear populations in the other recovery ecosystems (Northern Continental Divide, Cabinet-Yaak, Selkirks, and North Cascades) will retain their status as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.
- If the Yellowstone grizzly population is removed from the endangered species list, management will be transferred from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to the state wildlife agencies in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.
- The USFWS is currently reviewing more than 150,000 public comments concerning the proposed delisting. The agency is not expected to issue its final decision regarding delisting until late 2006 or early 2007.

Detailed information and various opinions regarding the proposed delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear population can be found at:

INTERAGENCY GRIZZLY BEAR COMMITTEE
<http://www.r6.fws.gov/species/mammals/grizzly/yellowstone.htm>

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
<http://www.nwf.org/news>
 Click on story dated March 22, 2006

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
<http://www.nrdc.org/wildlife/animals/bears.asp>

SIERRA CLUB
<http://www.sierraclub.org/grizzly/>

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
<http://www.wildlife.org/policy>
 Click under position statements

YELLOWSTONE ASSOCIATION'S DISCOVERY MAGAZINE
 "Delisting Yellowstone Grizzlies: Are They Ready?"
<http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org/membership/yellDiscovery.aspx>

Should the Yellowstone grizzly bear population be taken off the Federal endangered species list? The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) recent proposal to "delist" the Yellowstone grizzly population has sparked considerable debate among grizzly bear biologists and wildlife conservationists. For some, this represents a tremendous conservation success story. For others, the status of grizzly recovery is too tenuous and delisting is premature.


During my 30+ years in the wildlife profession, I cannot recall another issue that has generated such polarized reactions from the professional conservation community. There are respected conservation organizations, scientific associations and biologists on both sides of the issue. The National Wildlife Federation supports delisting, but the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council oppose it. The Wildlife Society (a professional association of wildlife biologists) supports delisting, but the Society for Conservation Biology (a professional scientific association) opposes it. Respected bear biologists and scientists have lined-up on both sides of the debate, and the American public has weighed in with diverse opinions as well. The USFWS has received more than 150,000 comments from the public on its delisting proposal.

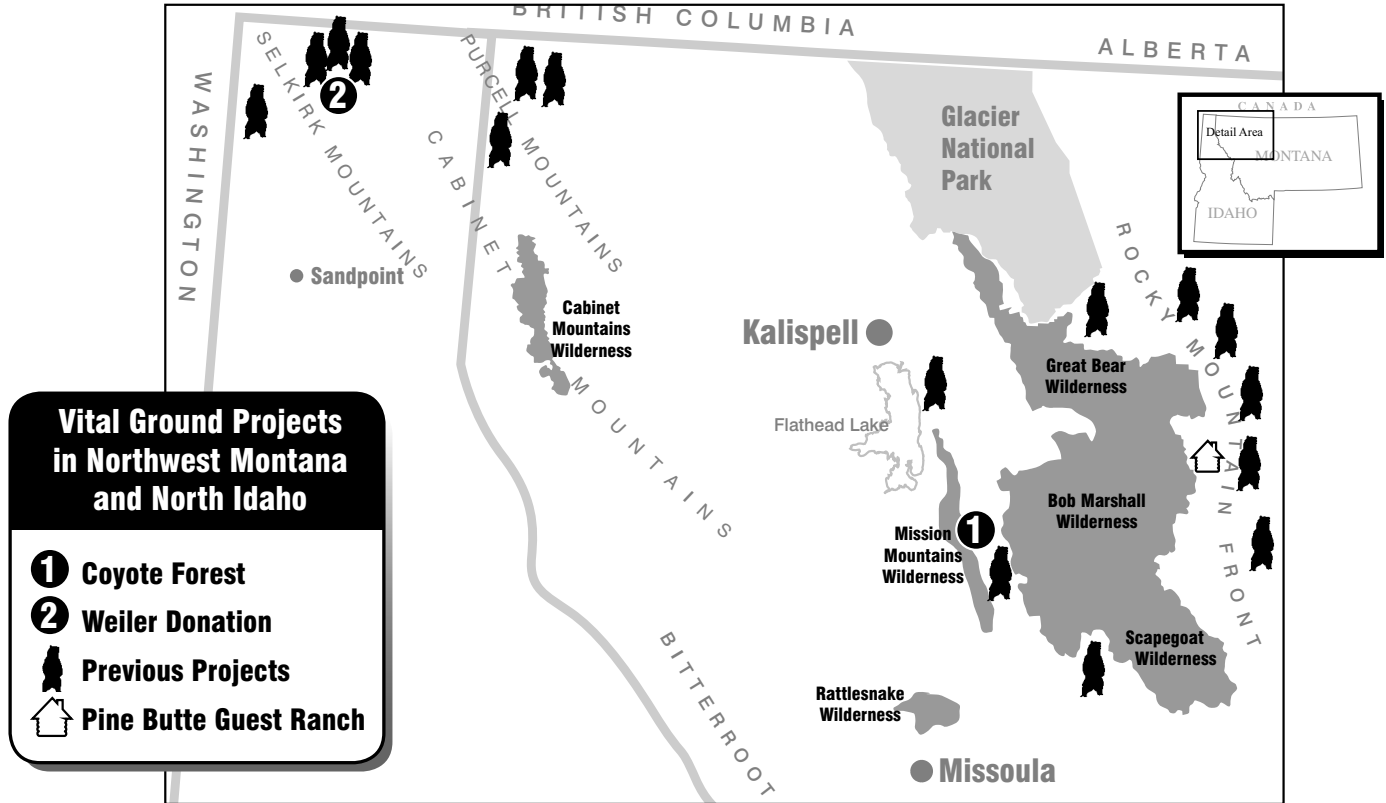
Yet one point that virtually everyone involved in the delisting discussions agrees upon is the important role secure habitat plays, and will continue to play, in grizzly bear conservation. In fact, two of the most frequently cited reasons for opposing the delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly are concerns about the lack of adequate habitat protections and the continued degradation of wildlife habitat beyond Yellowstone National Park's boundaries.

So where does Vital Ground stand on the question of delisting? Because Vital Ground is a land trust, not a wildlife policy advocacy organization, we do not have a formal organizational position on this issue. Not because we think the question of delisting is unimportant, but because we believe that habitat conservation will continue to be critical to the grizzlies' future regardless of whether or not the Yellowstone population is delisted.

If the Yellowstone grizzly is not delisted, it will be, in part, because of concerns about the lack of adequate habitat and food sources. If the bear is delisted, then protecting additional habitat on private lands beyond the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park will be even more important to the bears' future and ultimate population recovery. So either way—continued listing or delisting—Vital Ground's work of conserving essential habitat for grizzlies and other wildlife will continue in earnest.

This reminds me of the very first wildlife biology course I took at Colorado State University many years ago. During our first day in class, our professor shared a simple, but profound statement: "The three most important things wildlife needs to flourish are HABITAT, HABITAT, and HABITAT." I have to agree. The future of the Great Bear lies in our ability to recognize the necessity of maintaining complete and healthy ecosystems, understanding that wildlife needs access to secure habitat on both public and private lands, and our commitment to protecting ecologically diverse habitats—and connections between them—so that all wildlife will have a place to live.


 Gary J. Wolfe



Vital Ground Projects in Northwest Montana and North Idaho

- 1** Coyote Forest
- 2** Weiler Donation
- Previous Projects
- Pine Butte Guest Ranch

Grizzly Habitat in North Idaho Donated to Vital Ground

We are delighted to announce the generous donation of 43 acres of grizzly habitat in northern Idaho by Sig and Anne Weiler of Illinois, long-time friends and supporters of Vital Ground. This donation provides another milestone in Vital Ground’s Selkirk Grizzly Bear Habitat Conservation Initiative in the Idaho Panhandle, our program to protect essential habitat linking the Selkirk Mountains to adjacent, low-elevation foraging sites—areas of critical habitat for grizzlies (See Fall 2005 Vital News for more information on the Selkirk Initiative).

In addition to grizzlies and black bears,

the region is home to a wide array of other wildlife, including woodland caribou, wolves, coyote, lynx, bobcat, mountain lion, wolverine, marten, deer, moose, and myriad species of songbirds and waterfowl. Yet like many beautiful mountain valleys in the West, the area is attracting development that threatens essential valley-bottom wildlife habitat.

The Weiler property sits at the foot of the Selkirks, adjacent to Bureau of Land Management ground and near the Smith Creek and Boundary Creek Wildlife Management Areas, and Kaniksu National Forest lands. The Weilers originally purchased this property with the idea of placing a conservation easement on the land. However, realizing that they were unlikely to reside on the property themselves, they felt the best course would be to safeguard it permanently as wildlife habitat and decided to donate the land outright to Vital Ground. With this donation,

the Selkirk Initiative has now successfully protected more than 900 acres of vital habitat, with more projects in the works.

Sig and Anne Weiler have a long commitment to conservation and charitable work. They founded the Oberweiler Foundation, which funds programs devoted to wilderness and wetland protection, land and wildlife conservation, underprivileged children and alternative health. The Foundation has been a significant partner and supporter of Vital Ground. In Illinois, the Weilers have also undertaken a major land restoration project, saving a 300-acre farm from development and taking on the challenging process of returning the land to native prairie.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the Weilers for the donation of their property for the Selkirk Initiative, their long-time support of Vital Ground projects and their commitment to ensuring a future for the Great Bear.



Conservation Partnerships in Alaska Prove Successful

Vital Ground's conservation strategy has always relied on strong partnerships with other conservation groups to leverage resources. Several recent victories underscore the importance of building coalitions to protect critical wildlife habitat.

Perenosa Bay Finally Protected

After five years of effort, a long-standing conservation coalition is finally celebrating victory in protecting 4,400 acres on Afognak Island in the Kodiak Archipelago. In 2002, Vital Ground joined with several partners, including Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, American Land Conservancy and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, to help fund this landmark transaction.

The acreage was purchased from the Afognak Joint Venture, a group of seven Native corporations, and transferred to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The purchase permanently conserves coastal acreage in Perenosa Bay, critical for marine mammals, Roosevelt elk, waterfowl, four species of salmon and Kodiak brown bears that depend on the annual salmon run.

"It is a great day when conservation meets the goals of a landowner, a local community, wildlife agencies and the public, and the Perenosa Bay transaction does all of that," said Gale A. Norton, former Secretary of the Interior. "Perenosa Bay provides some of the Gulf of Alaska's best sea otter and marine mammal habitat, offering state and federal biologists optimum chances to sustain these species."

The coalition raised a variety of federal and private dollars to make the transaction possible, including National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants from the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and matching private funds from the Paul Allen Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Thoresen Foundation, the Johnny Morris Conservation Creel Fund and Vital Ground.

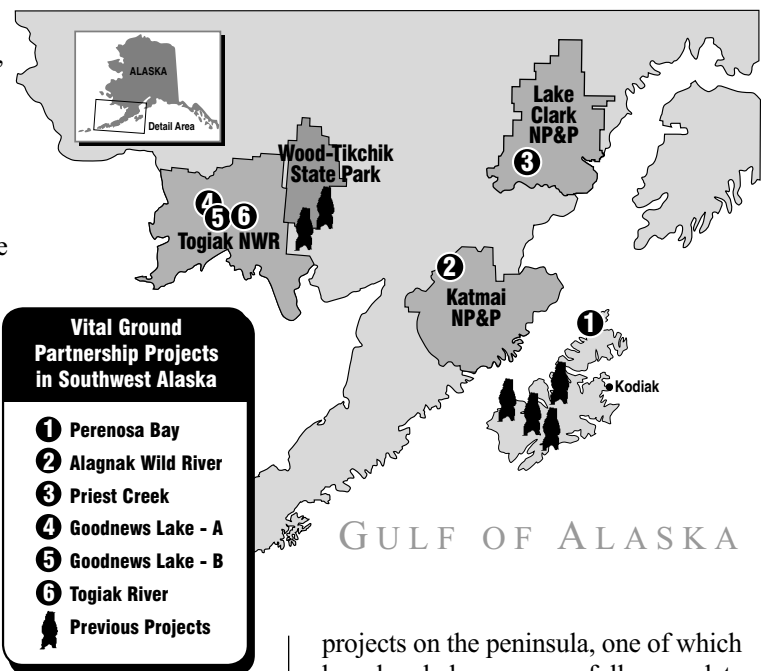
Dave Cline, chairman of Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, complimented the broad-based partnership effort in habitat protection. "It is fortunate that so many Alaskans recognize such collaborative efforts as helping to sustain the Kodiak Archipelago's wildlands-based economy," Cline said.

Vital Ground Launches New Program in Southwest Alaska

Last fall, Vital Ground renewed our partnership with The Conservation Fund's habitat program, the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Initiative. Together, we initiated a new program called **Footprints for Conservation** to assist in the purchase and protection of small parcels of critical wildlife habitat within a 40 million-acre project area that includes the Alaska Peninsula and the Bristol Bay drainages.

Vital Ground used a similar strategy of small parcel acquisition on Kodiak Island to purchase private inholdings within the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and then turn those parcels over to the refuge. With our on-the-ground partner, The Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, we were able to leverage Vital Ground funds by obtaining matching federal funds to complete the purchases.

Over the past six months, the Footprints for Conservation program funded five



projects on the peninsula, one of which has already been successfully completed. They include:

- 100 acres on the Alagnak River, part of a designated Wild and Scenic River corridor which borders, and is managed by, Katmai National Park. Purchase is in negotiation.
- A strategic five-acre private inholding, straddling Priest Creek within Lake Clark National Park, is under contract. A contribution from the Wildlife Land Trust underwrote Vital Ground's participation in this project.
- Three individual parcels located within the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge totaling 230 acres, which include: a 30-acre acquisition on Goodnews Lake, which is expected to close shortly; a separate 40-acre parcel on Goodnews Lake that is appraised and under review; and 160 acres on the Togiak River, which has been completed and purchased.

These properties all offer major benefits for brown bears because they are located in important travel corridors and feeding areas with salmon spawning streams and rivers. They also provide important habitat for a wide variety of other wildlife. In addition, the properties offer access for angling and other outdoor recreation, important to the region's economy. 🐾

Vital Ground Invited to Participate in Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative's Grizzly Bear Conservation Committee

Tucked between the Selkirk, Purcell and West Cabinet mountain ranges in north Idaho's panhandle, a coordinated effort is bringing together unique segments of the community within Boundary County to collaboratively address some of the myriad resource issues facing the region. In October 2001, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the City of Bonners Ferry, and Boundary County formed the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) by entering into a joint powers agreement securing each entity's commitment to collaboratively address specific challenges affecting the Lower Kootenai sub-basin. The mission of KVRI is to act as a locally-based effort to improve coordination, integration and implementation of existing local, state and federal programs that can effectively maintain, enhance and restore the social, cultural, economic, and natural resource bases in the community.

To date, subcommittees stemming from the KVRI have successfully involved Initiative members and the public in issues including: (1) planning associated with Total Maximum Daily Load

requirements mandated by the federal Clean Water Act; (2) developing a wetland conservation strategy; (3) offering alternatives to Endangered Species Act listing for recovering the lower Kootenai River burbot (an endangered fish); (4) coordinating involvement in the environmental impact statement for the operation of the Libby Dam; and most recently, (5) addressing grizzly bear recovery in the Selkirk, Purcell and Cabinet mountain ranges.

Launched in March 2005, the grizzly bear conservation committee holds bi-monthly meetings in Bonners Ferry. Driven, in part, by the status of the region's grizzly populations—which were designated as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species Act in 1975—members of the grizzly bear conservation committee are meeting to proactively educate themselves and the community about topics ranging from basic bear biology to the causes of grizzly mortality and the mechanics of the Endangered Species Act.

"KVRI members are hopeful that we, as a community, can use the model that was successfully developed for

the Kootenai River/Kootenay Lake Burbot Conservation Strategy...and by focusing our efforts and energy on bears instead of burbot, we can play a significant role in the recovery and management of grizzlies," said Patty Perry, KVRI Coordinator and Administrative Director for the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.

In addition to the parties to the joint powers agreement, participants in the Grizzly Bear Conservation Committee include private citizens, landowners, federal and state agencies, representatives of the state's congressional delegation, environmental advocacy groups, wildlife habitat conservation organizations, and representatives of business and industry within the area.

Based on Vital Ground's ongoing role as a local landowner and as the sponsor of multiple conservation projects throughout the Kootenai Valley, the committee has included the organization in its planning, and is rapidly proving to be an invaluable forum for helping to address the challenges facing both grizzlies and people in north Idaho. 🐾

DID YOU KNOW...



- Grizzlies have one of the slowest reproductive rates among land mammals.
- Female grizzlies do not reproduce until 4 to 8 years of age, and breed every 3 to 4 years.
- Cubs stay with their mother for 2 to 4 years before separation.
- Grizzlies produce 1 to 3 cubs in a litter (rarely 4), depending on the mother's health and food resources. The average litter size is 2.
- The removal of even a single grizzly, especially a female, can have a serious impact on a bear population.
- Because cub mortality is high, a successful female grizzly can at best replace herself with a daughter only once by the time she is ten years old. If she lives to 24, she can potentially add only 3 to 4 females to the population.
- The number of females with cubs critically affects the viability of each grizzly population, so their protection is vital.

2005 Bart Memorial Appeal Sets Record

Vital Ground's Sixth Annual Bart the Bear™ Memorial Appeal was a rousing success! Thanks to our members' generosity, we set records in both the amount raised and the number of respondents. Almost 300 supporters contributed a total of more than \$105,000 during the 2005 year-end campaign.

Vital Ground Honorary Board Member Jennifer Aniston graciously agreed to lead this year's campaign. Not only did Jennifer sign the Bart Memorial Appeal letter, she also became the 2005 campaign's first new Bart Legacy Society member by making a five-year pledge to Vital Ground through the Bart the Bear™ Challenge. Supporters who answer the Challenge make a five-year pledge of support and become Bart Legacy Society members.

The Challenge's long-term goal is to raise \$1,000,000 in annual pledges. During its first two years, the Bart the Bear™ Challenge has generated \$135,000 in contributions and pledges to help support Vital Ground's mission of conserving essential habitat for grizzly bears and other wildlife.

We are deeply grateful to this year's Bart the Bear™ Memorial Appeal contributors and our new Bart Legacy Society members. We extend a special thanks to Jennifer Aniston for the leadership role she played in this year's campaign.

"Vital Ground protects healthy ecosystems and all the wildlife within—from butterflies to bears. I invite you to make a five-year pledge like I did, and join the Bart Legacy Society, providing crucial, ongoing support to grizzly habitat conservation in memory of the original Bart the Bear™."

—Jennifer Aniston



Photo by Tom Smart

Bart Legacy Society Members:

Jennifer Aniston *

Dr. Kelly Balliet*

Bill and Nancy Coughlin*

Tom and Lynn Fey *

Dennis and Sherrie Gardner

Jean Craighead George

Jim and Megan Holbrook

Lori Kirk

Bob and Jan Koons

Banu Qureshi and Mike Jansa

Doug and Lynne Seus

Debi and Richard Strong

Kelly and Bernard Wilson

Gary and Rita Wolfe

Ed Zwick and Liberty Godshall

* Denotes new Legacy Society members



Estate Planning Can Help Protect Grizzly Bear Habitat

One of the most enduring ways to make a gift to conservation is through your Will or Living Trust. These testamentary gifts, usually credited toward the Vital Ground endowment, provide continuing support for Vital Ground's mission. They can be given as a Specific Bequest, Residuary Bequest, or Contingent Bequest, and can offer tax savings on your estate. In considering such a gift, it is important to engage a qualified attorney to discuss your needs. Please call or email our office for more information.

Corporate Matching Gifts—A Great Way to Leverage Your Contribution to Vital Ground

Would you like to double the impact of every donation you make to Vital Ground? Many companies have a Matching Gift Program through which they match their employees' contributions to select charitable organizations, often dollar for dollar. Check with your employer to see if they offer a Matching Gift Program, and if they do, ask to have Vital Ground added to their list of

qualified organizations.

Companies that currently support Vital Ground by matching their employees' gifts include:

- American Express
- Amgen
- Avon
- BP Foundation, Inc
- Centennial Ventures
- Charles Schwab
- Dun & Bradstreet Corporation Foundation
- J.P. Morgan Chase
- Microsoft
- United Eway
- Wellpoint Associate Giving
- World Reach, Inc.

Wildlife Photographer Tom Mangelsen Releases *Guardian of Knight Inlet*

Internationally acclaimed wildlife photographer Tom Mangelsen joined Vital Ground on our 2005 Wild Bear Adventure at Knight Inlet Lodge, British Columbia. Tom took this incredible photo of a black bear on the last day of the trip. Tom's field notes describe the moment:

Shortly after our arrival at Knight Inlet we boarded a small skiff and ventured out to see a few bears. Soon, we came to a dramatic rocky point where I visualized a beautiful image and said to Jamie, our guide, "Could you arrange to have a bear, preferably a black bear, stand on the top of that rocky point?" He laughed and said, "Sure, no problem, Tom."

As it turned out, we spent long days in the skiff touring the estuary and inlet, returning to the rocky point many times with no luck. It was our last afternoon and we returned to the rocky point for a final time. There, at low tide, was a beautiful black bear, feeding on mussels among the golden kelp. After an hour or so the bear walked up the escarpment, momentarily pausing at the top. Jamie leaned over and whispered to me, "Tom, maybe your picture is going to happen." It did. Later he told me that in the seven years he had been guiding there, he had never seen a bear on that point of land.

Tom has been a generous supporter of Vital Ground by donating a percentage of the sales price of select photographs to Vital Ground. Over the years, these contributions have totaled more than \$150,000.



Guardian of Knight Inlet is a limited edition of 3,000, and is available in several sizes. Tom will donate 25% of the sales price of each *Guardian of Knight Inlet* ordered through Vital Ground to help support our conservation efforts.

Available Sizes	Price (framed)
10"x14"	\$275
14"x20"	\$375
20"x30"	\$575
30"x45"	\$1,175

To order your framed copy of *Guardian of Knight Inlet*, visit Vital Ground's website or contact our office.

Artist Thom Coffman Offers Limited Edition Grizzly Print

We are thrilled that Montana photographer Thom Coffman has teamed with Vital Ground to offer a limited edition "Metaltone" print of a Yellowstone grizzly entitled *I See You*. This is the first in a special series offered by Thom to help raise funds for habitat conservation through Vital Ground.

Thom has worked in photography for over twenty years, pursuing a career in arts and news photography. In 1997, he returned to his native Montana and was drawn into wildlife photography in the Rocky Mountain wilds. Thom was also intrigued by the darkroom and over many years he and his step-father, Ted Morse, developed and perfected a new printing technique called "Metaltone."

The Metaltone print is created by using a film negative and old darkroom devel-



opment technology to print onto a metallic backing rather than paper. This patent-pending process creates a 3-D effect with the luminosity of a lighted image (an effect difficult to reproduce in this newsletter photo). The prints will never fade, break down, or crack. Because each print is developed individually, each is a unique piece of art.

Thom has compiled several Limited Edition Print series that have been offered in fine art galleries throughout the western U.S. He has also created a special series of wildlife

prints evocative of school mascots, including the Montana State University Bobcats, Rocky Mountain College Battlin' Bears, and University of Montana Grizzlies. A portion of the proceeds from the mascot series goes to the schools' athletic and scholarship programs.

Thom will donate 25% of the sales price of each *I See You* print ordered through Vital Ground to help support our conservation efforts.

I See You will be limited to an edition of 250. Each 16" x 20" print comes framed in red oak with barn wood inlay, with a maroon suede double matting. The cost is \$345 including shipping and handling.

To order your framed copy of *I See You*, visit Vital Ground's website or contact our office. Allow 2-6 weeks for delivery.

BEAR MART

BEAR MART

New Bronzes to Support Vital Ground

Vital Ground will soon be offering two new bronzes to help support our conservation work. As of press time, the bronzes had not been cast so photos are not yet available. Photos of these fine pieces, as well as purchase details, will soon be posted on our website's Bear Mart page.

Bart's Rear Paw Track

This bronze paw print comes from a casting of the original Bart the Bear's™ rear paw. This is the first time Bart's rear paw has been cast in bronze, and it will make a fine accompaniment to *Bart's Front Paw Track* (see Bear Mart), or as an individual collectable. Available July 2006.

Last of the Buffalo

by Michael Coleman

Internationally acclaimed wildlife artist Michael Coleman has offered Vital Ground a life-size bronze of a wolf standing over a buffalo skull—a truly magnificent sculpture! If we find a buyer, the artist will donate all proceeds above the foundry costs to Vital Ground. Available June 2006.

Livingston Art Show to Benefit Vital Ground

This fall, The House of FINE ART in Livingston, Montana, will host a special gallery show to raise funds and awareness for Vital Ground. The show will run from September 16 through November 4, 2006. A minimum of 20% of each sale will be donated to Vital Ground. Participating artists include Rocky Hawkins, Ed Totten, Al Feldstein, Thom Coffman, Tom Murphy, Lisa Adams, Brad Markel, and many others.

Please join The House of FINE ART, Vital Ground, and the artists for a catered reception September 16, 2006. For more information, contact, Penny Ronning at 406-579-9778 or visit www.vitalground.org

vitalground.org or www.houseoffineart.com for updated information.

Summer is Just Around the Corner...

Wondering what to give all of your children's teachers this June? You may not feel like adding to their ample collection of body lotions, candles, notepads, and dried flowers.

Instead of giving ten teachers gifts of \$10 to \$15 each, pool the money and make a gift to Vital Ground in honor of your school and all of the wonderful teachers that are educating your children.

For every gift of \$100 or more in honor of teachers, a school or other educational facility, Vital Ground will send a letter to the honoree recognizing your philanthropy, along with a copy of the DVD, *Real Grizzly*, narrated by Jennifer Aniston.

These days, many teachers are very pleased to learn that a gift was made to a worthwhile charity in their name. We hope you will agree that a donation to protect America's land and wildlife in perpetuity is a worthy investment.

Please contact us at (406) 549-8650 or info@vitalground.org for details. And be sure to provide the name and address of the school or individual for proper acknowledgement.

Java for Grizzlies



Every time you brew a cup of java, you can help grizzly habitat conservation! Montana Coffee Traders donates \$1 to Vital Ground for each pound sold of their special Grizzly Blend Coffee. Grizzly Blend is an earthy, full-bodied, medium-roasted blend of beans. It is available in regu-

lar, decaf and organic varieties, and as whole beans or one of several grinds. Prices start at \$10.50 per pound, with discounts for 5-pound bags. To order, visit the Montana Coffee Traders website at www.coffeetraders.com and click on "Special Project Coffees," or call them toll-free at 800-345-5282.

Can You Help Us Recruit New Members?

One of Vital Ground's most pressing needs is to expand our membership base. The more people who know about Vital Ground and support our habitat conservation mission, the more effective we can be at protecting essential habitat for grizzly bears and other wildlife. One of the most efficient ways to introduce new people to Vital Ground is through our existing supporters. An easy way to do this is to share *Vital News* or a membership brochure with a friend or associate. Also, many environmentally conscious businesses are willing to help distribute conservation organizations' literature.

If you would like to help promote Vital Ground in your community, we would be glad to supply you with newsletters and brochures. Please contact Shannon Foley at Vital Ground's office for more information about how you can help.

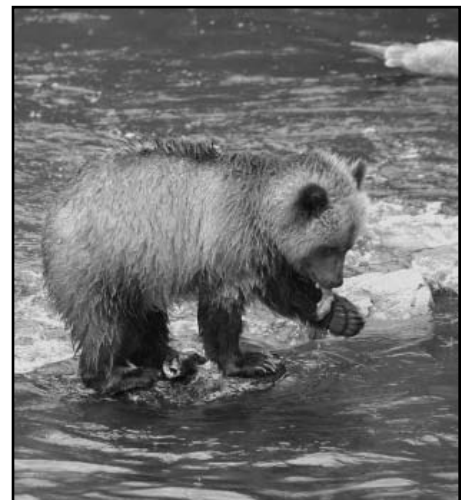


Photo by Derek Reich

High-Conflict Grazing Allotment Retired Near Yellowstone Park

The National Wildlife Federation recently finalized an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service and a prominent Montana ranching family to retire a 74,000-acre wilderness sheep grazing allotment immediately north of Yellowstone National Park. Vital Ground made a significant funding contribution to this visionary project, joining with a diverse group of conservation partners to make the project possible.

The Ash Mountain/Iron Mountain allotment is completely within the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness on the Gallatin National Forest, and is immediately adjacent to Yellowstone's highest density grizzly and wolf populations. From 1999 to 2003, more than 100 conflicts between domestic sheep and grizzly bears or wolves were documented on the allotment.

The National Wildlife Federation worked closely with the family holding the allotment to broker an agreement that fairly compensates the family for the grazing permit, allows them to secure new grazing in an area without grizzlies or wolves, and permanently retires the allotment from livestock grazing. Vital Ground is pleased to be part of such an effective program that produces practical, long-term solutions for both local livestock producers and wildlife.

John Swallow Elected to Vital Ground Board

John Swallow was recently elected to the Vital Ground Board of Trustees. John and his wife, Lori, have been long-time supporters of Vital Ground.

As Executive Vice President of Production Technology at Universal Pictures, John has worked closely with many of today's leading filmmakers, overseeing

cutting-edge visual effects work. Titles released during John's tenure include *King Kong*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Jurassic Park 2 & 3*, the *Mummy* series, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, the *Nutty Professor* movies, *Gladiator* and more.

Prior to joining Universal, John served as Executive Producer at the effects house Pacific Data Images in Hollywood, and as Vice President of Production at Apogee Productions.

John holds a degree in Design and Photography from California State University, Long Beach, and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Visual Effects Branch, serving on their Executive and Steering committees.

"For most of my life, I have worked to protect wildlife through both education and conservation. Now that I have joined the board of Vital Ground, I'm looking forward to the challenges of keeping wildlands healthy and preserving open spaces," observes John. "I particularly like Vital Ground's focus on the brown bear. Not only is this bear a majestic animal, but as an umbrella species, the grizzly is also a great touchstone for North American conservation efforts."

Bear Hugs to our Business Partners for Conservation

Vital Ground would like to thank several of our outstanding business partners who recently donated services, products or funds to assist in our wildlife habitat conservation mission.

Baer Bronze, Springville, Utah, casts the bronze footprints of the late Bart the Bear™ and *The Protector* bronze at cost for Vital Ground.

Amy Shapira, Grizzly Cove Greetings, Carondale, Colorado, donated several hundred Christmas cards and note cards, as well as numerous photos for use in illustrating our newsletters, T-shirts and member mailings.
www.grizzlycovegreetings.com

Artist Rocky Hawkins, Bozeman, Montana, donates a percentage of the sales price from every print, *Spirit of the Grizzly*, to Vital Ground.
www.rockyhawkins.com

Knight Inlet Lodge, Campbell River, British Columbia, will be donating the net proceeds from our 2006 Wild Bear Adventure to Vital Ground. This is the fifth consecutive year Knight Inlet has supported Vital Ground in this manner.
www.grizzlytours.com

Montana Coffee Traders, Whitefish, Montana, donates \$1 for every pound of Grizzly Blend Coffee sold. This generated more than \$20,000 during 2005 to help support Vital Ground's conservation projects.
www.coffeetraders.com

Ten Spoon Vineyard and Winery, Missoula, Montana, donates fine wine for Vital Ground's special events.
www.tenspoonvineyard.com

Treasure Mountain Inn, Park City, Utah, hosted our recent board of trustees' meeting and donor reception. The good folks at Treasure Mountain Inn provided wonderful service and a significant discount to Vital Ground.
www.treasuremountaininn.com

Watermark Advertising, Denver, Colorado, designed Vital Ground's website, and serves as our webmaster.
www.watermarkadvertising.net

X-Mission Internet Solutions, Salt Lake City, Utah, hosts our website and our e-mail server. Neither Watermark nor X-Mission charge Vital Ground for these services, allowing us to put more of our donors' contributions to work on the ground to secure habitat for grizzly bears and other wildlife.
www.xmission.com

Derek Reich, Zooprax Productions, Heber, Utah, donates numerous wildlife photos for use in illustrating our newsletters, advertising and member mailings.
www.zooprax.com

To learn more about Vital Ground's Business Partners for Conservation program and how your company or business can participate, visit our website or contact our office.

As days warm and winter snow melts into creek music, grizzlies emerge from their long hibernation. Mothers with cubs are the last to venture from winter dens, the cubs cautiously stepping into the light, sounds and smells of a bright new world.

Born in January or February, brown bear cubs weigh less than a pound at birth—no larger than a chipmunk—and are blind, toothless and nearly hairless. It may seem strange for the young of such a large and powerful predator to be born so small and vulnerable, but there is survival strategy in this early birth. Fat cannot pass through the placenta, but a mother bear's milk is nearly 33% fat, 11% protein, and 10% carbohydrates. Nursing allows the tiny cubs to grow rapidly within the folds of their mother's fur. By the time cubs leave the den in April or May, they are 5 to 15 pounds and by fall will weigh in at 50 to 100 pounds.

Grizzly litters can range from one to four cubs, but twins are most common. Mother and cubs usually stay near their den site for a couple of weeks after emerging while the cubs gain strength and begin to explore their world. There may be no safer place in the world for a cub than behind a mother grizzly intent on defending her family, even at the risk of her own life. Yet the first summer is a hazardous time for young grizzlies, and cub mortality can range from 13% to 44% in a population—higher than any other age group.

As the family begins to roam farther into the mother's home range, cubs occasionally fall victim to accidents or may be killed by adult males or other female bears. Cubs appear to be more vulnerable in areas where the bear population is at carrying capacity—that is, where the environment contains as many bears as it can support, and food and space is limited.

Male bears may kill cubs so a female will come into estrus again. Other large predators, such as wolves and mountain lions, also sometimes prey on grizzly cubs. In addition, the death of a mother grizzly almost inevitably means the death of her cubs. Young cubs have little chance of surviving if they lose their mother in their first year—whether to natural causes, vehicle collisions, poaching or management control actions.

For the most part, however, the cubs' first summer is a grand frolic under their mother's watchful care. Cubs play to build

strength and agility, forge bonds with one another, and learn survival skills. They wrestle, tumble, chase one another and play tug-of-war with any likely toy. They maul each other and their mom, clambering over her furry bulk and harassing her to distraction. They play footsie with sticks, juggle rocks, and examine every new item around them with

insatiable curiosity. Soaking up the world like sponges, cubs explore the neighborhood happenings—a beaver working on its dam, ravens snatching morsels from a carcass, butterflies flitting through the wildflowers.

Masters of imitation, cubs mime their mother's every move. If she rises on hind legs to get a better view of something moving, the cubs stand on tiptoe like sentries, peering from behind her.

If she digs for ground squirrels, they dig. If she strips berries from shrub branches, they mouth and mangle the shrubbery until they discover the sweet gems. While she fishes for salmon or trout with learned skill, they paw and snorkel in the rushing stream.

Over the months at their mother's heels, cubs learn the delectable offerings in their environment—where and in what season to find which kind of food. Bears have excellent memories and once a food source is known, they will return to it again and again. This is precisely why people in bear country must take great care to lock away any source of bear food, whether it be garbage, picnic coolers, pet food or bird feeders. Once cubs learn that campgrounds or homes are potential restaurants, their future is dim.

Grizzly cubs can typically survive on their own by their third summer, and as their mother comes into breeding condition again she will drive them off to fend for themselves. Female cubs usually set up their own home ranges nearby. Males disperse farther away, brothers sometimes sticking together to den through another winter. Grizzlies are usually five to seven years old before they are sexually mature. Then, if they have found a place for themselves with space, food and potential mates, a new generation of cubs will be born into the glorious, precarious grizzly world.

—Christine Paige

Christine Paige is a consulting wildlife biologist and freelance natural history writer. She dens in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana.



Photo by Tom Mangelsen



*If a countryside can still support grizzlies, it will be good and whole
and rich and wild and free enough to support all the other
creatures struggling to hold on to a place in this world.*

—Douglas H. Chadwick

Photo by Derek Reich



Upcoming Events



May 13–19, 2006

**5th Annual Wild Bear Adventure
Knight Inlet Lodge, British Columbia, Canada**

August 11–13, 2006

**Walk on Vital Ground
Rocky Mountain Front, Montana**

Sept. 16, 2006

**Vital Ground Art Show and Reception
House of FINE ART, Livingston, Montana**

Please visit our website or contact our office for details.

Our Address:

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Missoula, MT 59804**


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