

Photo: Calen Rowell



VITAL NEWS

A publication of The Vital Ground Foundation

Summer 2004

Grizzlies and Other Threatened Species Enjoy Protected Habitat in Idaho's Selkirk Mountains

This spring, grizzlies emerging from hibernation in Idaho's Selkirk Mountains can safely access food sources in newly protected wetlands in the adjoining Kootenai River Valley. Thanks to the efforts of Vital Ground, a critical 760-acre transaction closed just before year-end 2003, after three years of negotiations.

The property provides grizzlies and other wildlife with a protected habitat corridor stretching from higher elevation forests, through mid-elevation meadows, down to the lush river valley floodplain. Access to the verdant wetlands is especially important for females with cubs, as early spring nutrition is scarce at higher elevations.

Vital Ground partnered with Ducks Unlimited to secure a federal wetlands grant to purchase the property. Vital Ground will retain ownership of the timberlands,

while Ducks Unlimited will hold title to the wetlands. A second federal grant will be applied to remove levies and dykes, and restore the marshes to produce optimal wildlife habitat.

The 760 acres border a 1,425-acre preserve, the Boundary Creek Wildlife Refuge, purchased in recent years by the state's fish and game authorities, which has already undergone over \$1,000,000 of habitat restoration. The preserve lies on the border between the U.S. and Canada, immediately south of Canada's Creston Wildlife Management Area.

In 2001, Vital Ground purchased a privately-held parcel, located inside the preserve, which was offered for sale on the open market. The parcel was ideally situated to provide multiple "view lots" for recreational homes, overlooking the wetlands. Our

preemptive purchase three years ago ensured that grizzlies could access the wetlands from the mountains without confronting potential hazards such as roads, driveways, gardens, pets and residents.

The nearly 2,100 contiguous acres provide safe haven for numerous species of waterfowl in the low-lying areas. Majestic bald eagles fish from the creeks and the Kootenai River.

The neighboring forests provide refuge for endangered species such as wolverines, Canadian lynx and the woodland caribou, in addition to grizzly and black bears. Vital Ground's effort to protect this ecosystem for grizzlies thus has far-reaching benefits for several other beleaguered populations of wildlife. 🐾

Read more about Vital Ground's conservation work in Idaho on page 6.



Vital Ground works to protect landscapes such as the Kootenai River valley (background photo) from fragmentation and development. Such encroachment usually forces out resident wildlife such as (inset photos, clockwise from top left) grizzlies, lynx, bald eagles, and caribou.



VITAL GROUND

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Greetings from Vital Ground Staff

Dear Vital Friend,

In a time where environmental issues are often settled in court, unique opportunities still exist to settle potential differences on the ground. Our work in Idaho's Selkirk Mountains and Kootenai River valley is a case in point.

As the only organization in the world that deals strictly with grizzly bear habitat conservation on private lands, Vital Ground's charter leaves the contentious politics of endangered species conservation to others. For example, our conservation easements are proving that the protection of grizzlies under the Endangered Species Act and the preservation of traditional rural lifestyles are compatible, achievable goals.

Our customized conservation easements provide bears with access to the food they need in critical periods, but allow farming and ranching to continue on a slightly modified schedule. The Canyon Creek Preserve includes such an easement. (See article on page 6.)

By focusing on what works best for bears and people, we are breaking new ground and creating allies instead of opponents. History will judge our work, but Vital Ground's legacy may be one of saving grizzlies by respecting, and working with, the people who share their habitat. I hope you will agree that this is a legacy we can all be proud of.

Rich McIntyre

Idaho Program Director



Vital Events

■ July 17, 2004 (11 a.m. - 1 p.m.) 2004 American Wildlife Festival Annual Member Gathering

National Ability Center, Park City, Utah

Join Vital Ground's Ambassadors and other wildlife for this exciting family event. Learn about the habitat needs of wolves, bears, and birds of prey. View demonstrations by Karelian bear dogs. Shop for native arts and crafts. Bring your friends and family to support Vital Ground's grizzly habitat conservation efforts on this special day. *See article on page 5.*

■ September 7 - 13, 2004 Glacier Country Wildlife Safari

Glacier National Park, Montana

Come along with Vital Ground on our first-ever Wildlife Safari through Glacier National Park. This educational adventure takes place during peak grizzly bear viewing season and features scenic hikes, wildlife viewing and photography, Flathead River rafting, and even a night in tipis! *Details on page 4.*

■ May 14 - 20, 2005 Fourth Annual Wild Bear Adventure

Knight Inlet Lodge, British Columbia, Canada

Escape to a beautiful temperate rain forest with Vital Ground. Join photographers, naturalists and grizzly bear experts in an intimate setting surrounded by wildlife. Enjoy salmon fishing, hiking, boating, wildlife viewing and more from a stunning floating lodge. This trip sold out in 2004, so contact us now to make your reservation! *Summary on page 3.*

Book Your Reservation Today for

The Fourth Annual Wild Bear Adventure

British Columbia, Canada
May 14 – 20, 2005



Photo: Derek Reich

Participants on our Third Annual Wild Bear Adventure just returned from six wonderful days and nights viewing wildlife at Knight Inlet Lodge in Canada's coastal rainforest. (See the photo gallery in the Fall/Winter 2003 issue of *Vital News*.) The twenty guests who joined this eco-tour had a bear-watching experience they will never forget, complete with dolphins, seals, bald eagles, otters, and waterfowl.

Now Vital Ground is accepting reservations for next year's Wild Bear Adventure, to be held from Saturday, May 14 until Friday, May 20, 2005. Knight Inlet is the

estuary made famous by the documentary, "Growing Up Grizzly 2," and the trip is sure to sell out once again.

This popular adventure is set at Knight Inlet Lodge, in the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest, 100 miles northwest of Vancouver. The eco-sensitive, floating lodge provides comfortable accommodations and delicious meals to an intimate group of visitors. The estuary offers spectacular scenery and wildlife viewing amidst tree-lined shores and snow-capped peaks.

Our guests will observe countless grizzlies, black bears, bald

eagles and other species which flourish within the estuary. Venture into the open waters for some salmon fishing or viewing of whales, dolphins, and other marine and bird life. You can hike through the dense, moss-covered floor of an old-growth rainforest or visit the petroglyphs and ruins of native settlements along the coast.

Experience the wilderness in British Columbia with Vital Ground through our Wild Bear Adventure. Contact us at info@vitalground.org or call 435-658-0009 for a detailed itinerary and costs. Reserve your spot today for the adventure of a lifetime! 🐾



Photo: Barni Gureshi



Photo: Dave Campbell



Photo: Derek Reich



Photo: Derek Reich

Clockwise from top left: Participants in Vital Ground's 2003 Wild Bear Adventure gather at the Lodge; Aerial photo of the estuary shows approaching high tide; Guests photograph the shoreline antics of a grizzly from the safety and comfort of a guided motor boat designed for stability in shallow water; Pacific white-sided dolphin speeds alongside one of the Lodge's open sea vessels; Waterbirds flock around a grizzly foraging in the shallows.



Photo: Derek Reich



Photo: Stacey Bengtson

Granite Peak Chalet is on the Registry of National Historic Places.

Join Vital Ground's Newest EcoTour: Glacier Country Wildlife Safari

The best way to understand the importance of Vital Ground's mission is to participate in a wildlife adventure in grizzly country. For three years, we've been proud to take our members to secluded Knight Inlet in British Columbia, Canada, on our annual Wild Bear Adventure.

Now, Vital Ground is pleased to introduce our **Glacier Country Wildlife Safari** through Glacier National Park and surroundings, guided by conservation advocate, Hank Fischer, and his wife, Carol. This week-long, members-only event commences at Glacier's northwest corner, continues through the wildlife-rich plains of the Blackfeet Indian reservation, and concludes amongst the spectacular scenery of the park's highest peaks.

September is a great month to view Glacier's grizzly bears, as they feed voraciously to prepare for hibernation. Fall is also a terrific time to see mountain goats, moose, bighorn sheep and other wildlife.

Hank Fischer has worked on grizzly bear and wolf conservation for nearly 30 years and is a knowledgeable guide. Vital Ground board member and *True Grizz* author, Doug Chadwick, will also entertain the group with his fascinating wildlife anecdotes from around the world.

The adventure begins and ends in Kalispell, Montana. The price is \$2,995 per person based on double occupancy, and includes all expenses (food, lodging, park fees, etc.). Fischer Outdoor Discoveries will donate a portion of proceeds to Vital Ground.

For more information, visit www.vitalground.org and click on "Vital Events." To book your spot now, please contact us at info@vitalground.org or (435) 658-0009. *Hurry, space is limited.* 🐾

Glacier Country Wildlife Safari

Glacier National Park
Tuesday, September 7 –
Monday, September 13, 2004

Trip Highlights:

- floating the North Fork of the Flathead River
- observing grizzlies peacefully grazing in huckleberry meadows
- viewing and photographing wildlife
- overnight stays in:
 - tipis on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation
 - historic Glacier Park Hotel
 - chalets overlooking prime grizzly habitat
- hiking the scenic Highline Trail
- visiting Blackfeet cultural sites with a tribal leader
- searching for wolverines with a park researcher



Photo: C Kjell Petersen



Photo: Angelika Harden-Norman

Top: Mountain goats share the Highline Trail.

Bottom: Ornate tipis on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation have changed little in the past two hundred years.

Conservation Partnership Protects Critical Salmon Habitat

Three tracts near Alaska's Wood Tikchik State Park conserved

"Vital Ground's support is essential to protect the great salmon runs of Southwest Alaska and the robust brown bear populations that rely upon them."
 - Glenn Elison, Alaska State Director, The Conservation Fund



Photo: Charles Horan

In April, Vital Ground joined a consortium of non-profit conservation groups and conservation-minded corporations which pooled funds to purchase three properties on the Agulowak River and Lake Nerka within Alaska's Wood Tikchik State Park. The parcels total 261 acres and cost \$614,000.

Vital Ground and Wildlife Forever provided the non-profit funding. The Conservation Fund, another non-profit involved in land conservation, orchestrated the land purchase and created the consortium of funders.

Corporate donors included Columbia Sportswear, Orvis, Pure Fishing, Woolrich and Normark Rapala, all involved in outdoor retailing or fishing tackle manufacturing. Other corporate donors included Bristol Bay Native Corporation, General

Communication Inc., and ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. Some congressional funds were also secured for the purchase. The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation matched all funds contributed by the rest of the consortium.

The partnership supports the Southwest Alaska Conservation Coalition's goals of conserving wild salmon and wildlife habitat, increasing rural incomes, and securing public access for outdoor recreation.

Two of the parcels are located on either end of the Agulowak River and the third is nearby on the shore of Lake Nerka. The Agulowak provides spawning habitat for up to 200,000 sockeye salmon and an additional 1.2 million sockeye pass through the Agulowak en route to spawning grounds higher in the watershed.

At 1.6 million acres, the Wood Tikchik State Park is Alaska's largest state park. The three parcels are key access points for an area that provides 1,700 angler days of recreation targeting salmon, rainbow trout and grayling. Numerous species of wildlife inhabit the area, including moose, brown and black bears, beavers, otters, fox, wolverine, and wolves.

"Vital Ground is excited about protecting these parcels because they provide critical feeding and traveling corridors for grizzlies and black bears," said Doug Seus, founder and board member of Vital Ground. "Ensuring the annual return of these huge salmon runs will provide long-term benefits to the resident bear population, especially vulnerable mothers with cubs. Conserving these three properties achieves that goal." 🐾

Don't Miss the 2004 American Wildlife Festival!



Little Bart isn't so little any more!

Back by popular demand, Vital Ground's Third Annual American Wildlife Festival will take place on **Saturday, July 17**. Vital Ground's grizzly bear Ambassador, Bart, returns as the featured attraction for this event, held once again at **The National Ability Center in Park City, Utah**.



Showcasing a variety of wildlife species, including wolves, horses and birds of prey, the festival seeks to educate the public about the need for land and wildlife conservation. Several of the highlighted species are now extinct in Utah.

Other activities include a demonstration by Karelian bear dogs, pony rides, rope courses and an indoor climbing wall. The Center grounds will be

open free of charge from 10 a.m. through 2 p.m. Animal performances will run from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Admission to the wildlife performances is \$10. Admission is free for new and current Vital Ground members, as well as children under 6 with a paying adult. Tickets are only sold at the door. Parking

is limited, so carpooling is recommended.

Sponsor This Event!

Individuals and Businesses: Consider sponsoring this educational event and get your name in front of hundreds! For Event Sponsor information, please call: 435-658-0009 or email: info@vitalground.org.

Grizzly Conservation in Northern Idaho Protects Bears Outside of National Parks

Both Glacier and Yellowstone National Park have recently received much attention surrounding the perceived rebound of their grizzly populations. Combined, the two park ecosystems probably now contain as many as 1,100 grizzlies, a marked increase from the fewer than 700 bears remaining in 1975 when grizzlies were listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.

But outside the two national park ecosystems, grizzly populations are not faring as well.

Northern Idaho’s grizzly sub-population is the only other significant cluster remaining in

the lower 48 states. Because of habitat fragmentation, the grizzlies that inhabit Idaho’s Selkirk Mountains are cut off from other populations, and thus genetically isolated. The estimated 30 to 50 grizzlies in these mountains include only a half-dozen or so breeding females, giving the population a low probability of long-term survival without some intervention.

Vital Ground is the leading conservation force working to save the Selkirk grizzlies. Our vision for grizzly recovery has two key elements:

1. Help the population stabilize and recover by providing grizzlies with safe access to critical nutri-

tional needs at lower elevations (e.g. wetlands), which will reduce human-induced mortality and promote cub survival.

2. Once the population is expanding, reconnect the Selkirk grizzlies to another endangered sub-population located in Montana’s Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem by creating a usable habitat corridor across the Kootenai River valley floodplain.

In order to achieve this goal, Vital Ground has a unique strategy: target private landholdings in between already protected lands

NORTHERN IDAHO
CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Rancher Cooperates on The Canyon Creek Preserve

In Northern Idaho, Vital Ground is moving quickly to secure critical habitat for the resident grizzly population. This summer, we hope to close a transaction that will safeguard close to 400 acres bordering Canyon Creek in the Kootenai River valley.

Canyon Creek provides grizzlies with abundant food sources, such as Kokanee salmon, hawthorns, mushrooms and elderberries, as well as the grasses and sedges of the spring “green-up” by the water’s edge. The timbered sections provide a safe movement corridor from high-altitude winter and summer grounds down to the Kootenai valley.

Vital Ground is fortunate to have partnered with a rancher who shares many of our values about preserving intact tracts of land for wildlife and for future generations. His cooperation has

enabled us to put forth an innovative and detailed conservation easement on his ranch that restricts cattle, agricultural and timber

operations to time periods that don’t interfere with high bear use. High bear activity occurs on this property during spring and fall when bears rely on this area for food and passage.

The 394-acre working cattle ranch borders one side of Canyon Creek. On the other side of the creek lies an 18-acre parcel that was offered for sale on the open market. In spite of our attempts to purchase this parcel and our multiple cash offers this spring, the owner opted to sell it to a family seeking a summer



Photo: Banu Gureshi

Under the Canyon Creek easement, these cattle will be moved to alternative meadows during critical grizzly feeding periods.

home site. Rising property prices (over \$4,700 per acre in this case) highlight the urgency of our work in this critical area for wildlife. We intend to monitor developments on the property and will seek a conservation easement down the road.

The cost of completing the 394-acre conservation easement approximates \$250,000. For more information about *The Canyon Creek Preserve* or to make a gift to Vital Ground, please contact us at 435-658-0009 or at info@vitalground.org.



VITAL GROUND'S BEAR MART



Order form on reverse. To view color images, please visit our online Bear Mart at www.vitalground.org.

VITAL GROUND T-SHIRTS are 100% cotton with bear images printed on backs of T-shirts and small Vital Ground logo on left chest.



Growl T-shirt
Natural
\$22 / XXL \$24

Cubs T-shirt
White
\$22 / XXL \$24

Scenic T-shirt
White
\$24 / XXL \$26

Bart Smile T-shirt
Heather Gray
\$24 / XXL \$26

Fishing Bear T-shirt
Steel Blue
\$24 / XXL \$26

Kid's T-shirt
White
\$15

PILLOWS

"Bart the Bear" or "Bear Cub"
15"x15" decorative pillow.
Photo on plaid flannel pillow
with poly filler.
\$36



JEWELRY

Handmade Bead Bracelet
\$40



Handmade Bead Earrings
\$10



2005 CALENDAR

Stunning 12-month
"Bears of Alaska and Canada"
calendar featuring bears
of all types photographed
by award-winning
photographer Howie Garber.
\$12



BEAR ORNAMENTS

Individually hand signed
by Eric Thorsen.
("Walking Grizzly" &
"Sleeping Brown Bear," not
shown, also available.)
\$10/ea.



"Black Bear"



"Sitting Brown Bear"

SUPPORT VITAL GROUND BY BUYING DIRECTLY FROM OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS:

True Grizz by Douglas H. Chadwick



Fascinating true-
life stories of
great bears in
a disappearing
wilderness.
\$24.95

Purchase online
at the Bear Mart at
www.vitalground.org, or at your
local bookstore.

*Vital Ground receives a portion
of the purchase price of this item.*

Denise Walz "Grizz" Pendant

Pendants come on silver
sterling mesh chains 5mm
in width in your choice of
16", 18", or 20" length.

Pendant price is based on your
choice of precious metals:
Sterling silver pendant: \$299
14K gold pendant: \$795
18K gold pendant: \$1195

To order, contact Denise at
denise@midnightsuncreations.com

*25% of the proceeds from sales of "Grizz" pendants
is donated to Vital Ground.*



Coffee Traders Vital Ground Gift Pack

Gift pack contains
two 12-oz. bags
of Grizzly Blend
Coffee and a deli-
cious chocolate
bear claw.
\$23

Purchase directly from Coffee Traders
at www.coffeetraders.com or
1-800-345-5282.

*Vital Ground receives \$5 of the purchase
price of this item.*



ORDER FORM • MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP FORM

BEAR MART ITEMS	Quantity	Size (circle)	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Growl T-shirt		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$22 / XXL \$24	
Cubs T-shirt		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$22 / XXL \$24	
Scenic T-Shirt		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$24 / XXL \$26	
Bart Smile T-shirt		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$24 / XXL \$26	
Fishing Bear T-shirt		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$24 / XXL \$26	
Kid's T-shirt		Kid's S, L	\$15	
Bart the Bear Pillow		—	\$36	
Bear Cub Pillow		—	\$36	
Handmade Bead Bracelet		—	\$40	
Handmade Bead Earrings		—	\$10	
2005 Calendar		—	\$12	
Black Bear		—	\$10	
Sitting Brown Bear		—	\$10	
Walking Grizzly		—	\$10	
Sleeping Brown Bear		—	\$10	

MEMBERSHIPS (tax-deductible; see information about Membership Levels at right)

Annual Member		—	\$35	
Supporter		—	\$50	
Grizzly Friend		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$100	
Conservationist		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$250	
Bart the Bear Legacy		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$500	
Habitat Protector		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$1,000	
Habitat Conservator		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$2,500	
Wilderness Steward		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$5,000	
Grizzly Guardian		S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$10,000	

Additional donation for habitat conservation

Mail your order to: The Vital Ground Foundation, P.O. Box 982003, Park City, UT 84098.

Or fax your order to: 435-658-0035. Orders can also be placed online at www.vitalground.org

Vital Ground is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Subtotal

Shipping (\$3.50 per merchandise item)

Grand Total

VITAL GROUND

MEMBERSHIP

When you become a member of Vital Ground, you help fund efforts to conserve wildlife habitat in perpetuity. To view images of member benefits, please visit www.vitalground.org.

Membership Levels

\$35 Annual Member receives:

- Vital Ground newsletters
- E-mail alerts of bear news and special grizzly programs
- Invitation to Vital Ground events in your area
- Vital Ground bumper sticker

\$50 Supporter receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- 5x7 photo of Tank the Bear

\$100 Grizzly Friend receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- Vital Ground T-shirt (please indicate size on Order Form)

\$250 Conservationist receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- 8x10 photo of Little Bart

\$500 Bart the Bear Legacy Member receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- Signed 8x10 photo of Doug and Bart the Bear

\$1000 Habitat Protector receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- 1 lb. of Grizzly Blend Coffee

\$2500 Habitat Conservator receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- Personally signed thank-you letter from Vital Ground founders Doug and Lynne Seus
- Book, *True Grizz*, signed by award-winning author and Vital Ground Board Member, Douglas Chadwick

\$5000 Wilderness Steward receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- Bear ornament by Sculptor Eric Thorsen
- Book, *Kodiak Bears & the Exxon Valdez*

\$10,000 Grizzly Guardian receives all of the above benefits, plus:

- Bronze sculpture, "The Protector of Vital Ground" by Bob Scriver

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

I have enclosed a check made out to Vital Ground.

Please charge my credit card (MC or Visa):

Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

My company matching form is enclosed.

This is a gift. Please ship to:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____

Note to accompany gift:

Corporate Partner for Conservation **SPOTLIGHT**

Amy Shapira's Grizzly Cove Greetings Celebrates Alaska's Grizzlies



Amy Shapira photographed her first wild grizzly in Alaska's Lake Clark National Park in the summer of 2000, realizing a life-long dream. Since then, she has returned to Alaska and British Columbia as often as possible to capture these majestic animals on film. Several of Ms. Shapira's images have been published, and many of her photographs were recently seen on a PBS documentary filmed by *Alaska Magazine*.

In May, Ms. Shapira and her husband, Israel, joined

Vital Ground's *Wild Bear Adventure* at Knight Inlet Lodge (see article, page 3). In her words, "I have been blessed with the opportunity of meeting many new grizzly bears, the memories of those meetings caught forever with my camera lens."

Several years ago, she started Grizzly Cove Greetings, selling photographic prints and greeting cards of her wildlife images. As one of Vital Ground's Corporate Partners

for Conservation, Ms. Shapira's company donates the use of her photographs for our printed material, and provides us with complimentary note cards for our special thank you's. Both Mr. and Ms. Shapira are regular supporters of Vital Ground's grizzly conservation efforts.

To convey our deepest thanks to Ms. Shapira, we are showing a mini-gallery of her popular bear images. To view more of her work, or to purchase prints and cards, please go directly to www.GrizzlyCoveGreetings.com. 🐾



All photos: Amy Shapira



Vital Ground and Our Ambassadors Send Bear Hugs to...



The Appalachian Trail Hikers

TWO KANSAS CITY WOMEN WITH A GOAL OF completing the 1,400-mile long Appalachian Trail have decided to leverage their legs to raise money for habitat conservation.

Denise Cooper and Rebecca Brown set off in May to complete the rugged Trail and fundraise for Vital Ground in the process.

“We wanted to hike for a non-profit this year because it would give our hike that much more meaning. It would be our way of giving back to the Earth and the wildlife that become such a natural part of our day-to-day life on the trail,” stated Ms. Cooper.

The women have requested donations from family, friends and supporters, and hope that their fundraising efforts will gain momentum as they hike over the next four months. To support their undertaking, please send a check to Vital Ground designating “AT Hikers” on the memo line. Online donors can indicate “AT Hikers” as a Dedication Request. Good luck and many thanks to our hikers, Denise and Rebecca! 🐾

Tank Says Thanks!



Grand Valley State University

VITAL GROUND SUPPORTER MARIANNE FISCHER organized an Earth Day fundraiser to raise money for grizzly bear conservation. The event was held at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan.

The event featured a raffle offering \$600 in prizes, many of which came from Vital Ground’s Corporate Partners for Conservation. Organizers sold homemade grizzly-shaped cookies and brownies, as well as necklaces, soaps, bookmarks and cards. Fischer also sold Grizzly Blend coffee to faculty members for the two weeks leading up to the fundraiser, generating a donation to Vital Ground of \$1.00 per pound from Coffee Traders.

Fischer’s hard work paid off. The fundraiser raised over \$400 for Vital Ground!

Thanks to Grand Valley State University and Marianne Fischer for their support and leadership. 🐾

Get Active for Vital Ground!

For innovative fundraising ideas and supporting materials, contact us at (435) 658-0009 or email Heidi at info@vitalground.org. We will publish the results of your efforts in future issues of Vital News.

Photo: Amy Shapira

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(such as state or national forests, parks and reserves) and create bear-friendly, working conservation easements that landowners will embrace in perpetuity.

Our easements are designed with grizzly conservation in mind, but they provide for the continuation of traditional agricultural, cattle and timber operations outside of high bear-use periods. Like

other easements, they limit development and prohibit mining, both of which jeopardize the survival of resident wildlife. One of Vital Ground’s goals is to prove that conservation of an endangered species can be compatible with a traditional western lifestyle, including working operations and recreational activities.

Individual radio-collared bears from the Selkirk Mountains have already been monitored moving eastward across the Kootenai River

valley. With luck and time, some may cross the river and settle into the Cabinet Mountains, spreading genetic diversity to the 10 to 20 grizzlies in the beleaguered Cabinet population. Vital Ground’s work with private landholders to permanently protect their ranches as wildlife habitat may be just the ticket to grizzly recovery outside the national parks. 🐾

Vital Ground Retires More Grazing Leases on Public Land

Several months ago, Vital Ground completed yet another transaction to protect carnivores on over 12,000 acres of public land.

A recent trend among conservation groups is to remove livestock on key public lands by buying out existing grazing leases. Part of the deal includes helping the ranchers to obtain new grazing leases in another area, without incurring any costs. In the past eighteen months, Vital Ground has participated on a total of four of these transactions surrounding Yellowstone National Park.

Carnivores such as wolves, cougars and grizzlies can run into problems when they leave the park boundaries and move onto surrounding public lands that are leased by ranchers for cattle or sheep grazing. Removing livestock from primary grizzly conservation areas is a high priority, in order to reduce the potential for conflict. Typically, the livestock is transferred to an area well outside core grizzly or wolf range.

The most recent transaction involved a partnership with the National Wildlife Federation, who worked with a grazing permittee in the Island Park area of the Targhee National Forest. The permits included acreage around several creeks and West Lake, which is critical habitat for grizzlies. This area is immediately west of the town of West Yellowstone, bordering Yellowstone National Park.

The Targhee forest plan calls for removal of all allotments within the primary grizzly conservation area as opportunity permits. This provided a key motivator for the forest supervisor and other involved parties.

The area is significant because it provides connectivity to the Centennial Range in southwestern Montana. Bears have been re-colonizing this area during the last decade. Protecting habitat corridors, which allow safe movement for grizzlies and other wildlife, remains a critical conservation tool for recovery of the species. 🐾

Vital Ground Welcomes New Board Members

Vital Ground is pleased to introduce two new board members, James Holbrook and Robert Koons.

A graduate of Grinnell College with a Master's degree from Indiana University, **Jim Holbrook** obtained a law degree from the University of Utah. He lives in Salt Lake City, where he practiced law as a trial lawyer for nearly 30 years, including a stint as a federal prosecutor. Now a clinical law faculty member of the University of Utah, Jim squeezes in a full-time teaching career between multiple community and family obligations. His expertise in contracts, negotiation and arbitration, combined with his breadth of non-profit governance experience, provide tremendous value to Vital Ground.

Our newest board member, **Bob Koons**, brings a wealth of conservation experience to the table. A graduate of Colby College with Executive Management training from Harvard Business School, Mr. Koons led a successful career in commercial banking, business acquisition and turnarounds, and management consulting.

Subsequently, Bob devoted his time to the non-profit sector, in roles ranging from President of The Grand Canyon Association and Executive Director of the Robert T. Wilson Foundation, to his recent appointment as the Executive Director of the Wildlife Land Trust, based in Washington, D.C., a division of the Humane Society of the United States. Formerly Board Chair of The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Bob is keenly aware of the complex issues that Vital Ground faces in our mission of wildlife habitat conservation. 🐾

UPDATE:

Growing Up Grizzly 2

Thanks to all of our supporters who have expressed interest in purchasing a copy of this documentary featuring Jennifer Aniston and Vital Ground Ambassadors, Bart and Honey Bump.

As we go to press, we have not yet confirmed the release date or distributors, but as those become available, we will be sure to let you know.

Please check the Vital Ground website at www.vitalground.org for the latest update.



Doug Seus keeps Bart preoccupied while Jennifer Aniston tries her skills in ursine reflexology.

Photo: Joel Sartore



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Photo: Galen Rowell



DON'T MISS the 2004 American Wildlife Festival
in Park City, Utah, on Saturday, July 17! See page 5 for details.