

# TRACKS



## Building a Coexistence Resource Library

The need for carnivore coexistence education—in specific settings such as recreation, at home or for vacation rentals, at the farm, or on the ranch—has greatly increased in recent years. Many people want to avoid conflicts but don't know how simple it can be or how to use the tools. People and Carnivores has dedicated significant staff time and funds for design and printing to create and share bear safety kits and several different flyers.

Hablas español? We also made Spanish language bear safety flyers and are taping a video this fall. You may have

seen in our last newsletter that we created a pamphlet about recreating in mountain lion country. We also made a brochure for the university extension offices about conflict prevention and how we can help.

We have received requests for more than 7,000 pieces (kits, flyers, or pamphlets) and it's not letting up. When small, grassroots groups request bear safety flyers and kits, we add their logos and information to the materials to help support their local efforts. Pictured above are a few of our materials (thanks to you!).



These are just some of the coexistence resources we have made available.



## PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES

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# From the Director

## Dear Friends and Supporters,

I hope you've had a good summer. Here in the Northern Rockies, we welcome fall and winter after a very hot and dry few months. Wildlife needs a break and we need to get out of air-conditioned spaces.

As you may know, in August we sent out a questionnaire to supporters from the last year-plus to gather feedback about People and Carnivores' work and communications. With 55 responses, we received many good ideas and helpful communication preferences. I'd like to share some of the things we heard.

### The top three reasons people give to People and Carnivores are:

- (1) Our mission and program work (89% of respondents)
- (2) Supporters' personal/emotional connection to wolves, bears, or big cats (59%)
- (3) Our approach of working with all stakeholders (53%)

### The top three topics supporters like to see in the newsletter are:

- (1) Our field work
- (2) Information about wild carnivores (a very close second)
- (3) Information about staff (who knew!)

### Here is a sampling of ideas we received:

Share more on the relationship of the climate crisis to habitat loss.

*We can do that!*

I still think you need a better name.

*We hear this every now and then, and some of us agree. The P&C name was a requirement of our 2015 merger with Keystone Conservation.*

Share success stories. Another person said, keep sharing stories of both region-wide impacts as well as impacts with individual landowners.

*We can do this!*

Opportunities for donors to see first-hand P&C projects would be of interest to me. Another supporter said, perhaps offer an annual online/virtual meeting where your team could share stories and insights about your work.

*We have been wanting to do this. We will probably start with something online.*

Work on your Charity Navigator listing...they don't have your website and other info.

*We do need to update the listing and will make it a priority (it's been on the list...).*

More publicity to the public of what you do.

*We do need to share more generally.*

Interview ranchers/farmers/landowners who partner with you to give us insights into their lives and challenges and why they want to live with carnivores.

*We can include this in future newsletters. Many would be happy to share.*

(Director's letter continued)

And finally, we received much encouragement:

“

*Thank you for everything you do  
for the animals.*

*Glad someone is doing this  
unpopular work!*

*I admire what you do—it takes so much  
courage. Stay strong!*

*I really like your communication style.  
I like how you work with communities.*

*I think your organization is doing a  
tremendous job especially considering the  
political climate in western states.*

*I am always so delighted to read of the  
work that is being done to protect  
these endangered carnivores.*

*I am so impressed by your focus  
on practical solutions.*

*Really grateful the predators  
have you as a voice.*

*We really appreciate all ya'lls efforts  
on behalf of our carnivores.*

*Thank you for being there for all of us.*

*You are making a difference and inspire  
the rest of us to keep up the fight  
one step at a time.*

*Thanks for the chance to chime in!*

”

A few supporters asked for information about legacy/planned giving. (This is a way to make a lasting donation into the future for wildlife through one's will, trust, or annuity.)

Thank you! It is your dedication to wildlife that keeps us going in every way. We appreciate your partnership in this important work!

*Lisa.*

**Lisa Upson**

Executive Director

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These University of Montana students will use this bear-resistant gear P&C donated when taking wilderness experience trips (12 coolers and 20 food canisters are hiding behind them).

## Ongoing Bear Smart Efforts

Last year People and Carnivores started a bear conflict prevention resource program so that, in addition to doing our own work, we could support communities doing their own—with educational materials, small grants, and consultation/technical assistance. This year we've continued to support a number of passionate groups beginning Bear Smart initiatives. In Island Park, Idaho—a community spurred to action after five grizzly bears were euthanized in 2022—we sent over 3,000 educational flyers and bear safety kits. The nearby Teton Valley in Idaho is also working to spread awareness about living with bears, and we're sending them a big batch of educational materials. At the University of Montana, we helped purchase bear-resistant gear for students who are exploring western Montana. And we've provided bear-resistant trash cans in public spaces in other communities as a first step in building community support for Bear Smart efforts.

## Keeping a Resource Running: Bearsmart.com



Earlier this year, People and Carnivores took ownership of bearsmart.com—a website with a wealth of information on

preventing conflicts with bears and building Bear Smart Community initiatives. The site was originally created by the Get Bear Smart Society (GBSS)—a key founder of the Bear Smart Community movement in British Columbia and Canada—which ceased operations after 27 years. We are keeping the resources available and expanding them to include more about the growing Bear Smart movement in the states.

# Field Roundup

The field season kicked off with fladry flags flying in NW Montana. We put up the red flags hanging from an electrified line around calving pastures to deter wolves in Dayton, Marion, and Eureka. In another effort to avoid



*Cows investigate a newly installed line of fladry around their calving pasture.*

wolf-livestock conflicts, we shared conflict prevention toolkits including with a Wagyu beef rancher near Columbia Falls. He used the Foxlights and radio in the toolkit in his calving pasture and didn't experience any wolf conflicts from some that were nearby or coyote conflicts, which he has had in years past.

From there, it was a season of many fences. You've likely heard the advice to avoid carcasses when recreating; it is harder to do when being around carcasses is your business. We helped build an electric fence around a home-based butcher shop grizzlies and black bears were investigating. Near Libby, a couple reached out for help building an electric fence around their menagerie of livestock—they just moved to the area and wanted to be proactive. In southwest Montana, we're designing electric fences to prevent conflicts between wolves and sheep, and another in the Drummond area to prevent grizzly conflicts. (Fence design changes depending on which large carnivores you're trying to keep out!) In Island Park, Idaho, we hosted an electric fence workshop for beekeepers in the area on how to build a simple, but effective enclosure to protect bees from bears.



*P&C's Kim Johnston shows beekeepers how to build a fence around bee boxes in Idaho.*

Garbage was another big focus, as it often is. We handed out bear-resistant garbage cans to residents across the state. In the Ruby Valley, we loaned out a dozen cans, typically for residential use, as an immediate solution to black bears that were getting into garbage at a campground. A grizzly with cubs was spotted nearby adding to the urgency. We're now working on long-term solutions—getting a hold of metal bear-resistant containers that can be bolted to concrete pads throughout the campground. For campers and other recreators on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, they'll have access to three more bear-resistant food storage boxes at campsites and see signs informing them about grizzlies now being present in the area and corresponding safety steps.



*Signs like this will be placed around the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.*

And it wouldn't be a complete field season without some dogs. We cost-shared on two livestock guardian dogs (LGDs) in southwest Montana. We also consulted with a number of people about LGDs—where to get dogs and how to use GPS tracking collars to better monitor dogs' movement and see what's happening with livestock.

## Wyoming Wolf Update

# Torturing Wolves is Animal Cruelty

Earlier this year, a man in Wyoming ran down a young female wolf with his snowmobile and then paraded the injured wolf around a bar with its mouth covered with red duct tape. He eventually shot the wolf behind the bar. This brutality was punished with a \$250 fine.

In the days and weeks that followed, thousands of people from all over the country expressed outrage to Wyoming's Governor, legislators, and the Game and Fish Director. Public meetings and rallies have been held, and Hogs for Hope (a motorcycle group ride from Texas) raised \$130,000 for advocacy efforts. People and Carnivores also contributed funds and we have testified at relevant meetings. At the end of September, we will attend a key hearing in Cheyenne, WY to oppose the lack of official response to this horrific act.

The unfortunate takeaway from this experience is that the state of Wyoming wants landowners to be able to run down "predatory animals" with vehicles and machines. We have learned that it is a common activity for landowners/hunters to kill coyotes with vehicles and snow machines, and now this has extended to wolves, which are classified as "predatory animals" in most of the state. At the time of this writing, the only concession legislators are proposing is to take the fine to \$1,000 (or 6 months in jail, which is hard to imagine ever being levied), and to require the chaser to kill the run-down animal once it is immobilized.

Like most people and organizations, we are unbelieving and outraged. Of course it is not only unnecessary to kill or injure wildlife with vehicles, especially in this region where



*P&C'ers at the rally for "Hope," advocates' name for the beaten wolf.*

predator "control" is readily accessible (too accessible)—it is animal cruelty and inhumane. But Wyoming officials are avidly protecting this right. We and others have argued that wildlife needs to be included in animal cruelty laws, and on prohibiting intentional vehicle attacks on any wildlife species. We'll keep fighting!



We don't talk much about the Prairie Wolf, commonly known as the coyote, in P&C's work. Yet many of the coexistence tools we use can benefit coyotes. Fladry can startle coyotes as it does wolves, but if the fencing is tested, the height of the wire may not be low enough to deter a coyote from continuing into a pasture. Of course, fencing

can specifically be built to keep coyotes out of an area. Scare devices can be effective to deter coyotes and all large and meso (medium-size) predator species.

Coyotes are great survivors; adaptable and extremely smart. But they are also one of the most vilified animals, and probably the most hunted and "controlled"—

intentionally killed by government agencies as well as private companies.

Like many frequent Yellowstone visitors, I (Lisa) have seen many coyotes "in the wild." I have most often seen them alone, and I have heard (but not seen) them in packs howling. This past spring I got

to watch five small coyote pups bouncing around outside a den, with their mother coming and going. (Through a scope I saw this same scene with wolves! That was the day I saw nine grizzlies, but I digress...) I love coyotes as well as foxes, who always seem a little beat up but are so present looking and skilled at finding the next meal and, if they're lucky, avoiding humans (some get habituated and food conditioned in the parks). In mythology and by some indigenous peoples, coyotes are sometimes referred to as the trickster, which to me reflects their intelligence, though some trickster references are derogatory. When P&C gets the opportunity, we work to help coyotes in addition to wolves and the other wild carnivores, including in our advocacy to the state of Wyoming.

# PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES

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Permit #221  
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Foxlights mimic human presence  
with random light flashes.

## TOOL SPOTLIGHT **Foxlights**

Invented because an Australian sheep farmer noticed foxes would run away from his patrolling flashlight, a Foxlight is a scare device that works on wolves, bears, and mountain lions. These lights mimic a human presence and flash in a random pattern to keep carnivores on their toes. We often place a few of these lights around livestock enclosures to keep conflicts down for short periods, like during calving or lambing seasons.



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