



Western Canada Wilderness Committee



"Alive, the grizzly is a symbol of freedom and understanding, a sign that man can learn to conserve what is left of the earth.... In its beleaguered condition, it is above all a symbol of what man is doing to the entire planet."

-- Frank Craighead, author of *Track of the Grizzly*



Photo: Wayne Lynch

SAVE THE GRIZZLY BEAR

The Ultimate Symbol of Canadian Wilderness

Alberta grizzly bears threatened

Habitat loss, licensed hunting and poaching reducing numbers

by **Ken Barth**, "Save The Grizzly Bear" Campaigner

The Alberta grizzly bear and its majestic wilderness home are vanishing.

Increasing commercial development in grizzly habitat are pushing the bear to the edge of existence. A proposed resort in Kananaskis Country, a coal mine near Mountain Park and oil and gas development in the Whaleback are a few such examples. Burgeoning agriculture and motorized vehicle recreation are also destroying habitat, which in turn kills bears.

Parks no refuge

Our national parks offer little refuge. Tourism development within the parks is pushing grizzlies into more remote areas. In 1993, grizzly bear biologist Mike Gibeau found more than 40 per cent of Banff National Park was either at the maximum human disturbance level the bears could tolerate, or was unable to support them entirely.

David Mattson, a United States National Biological Service bear expert, told the *Globe and Mail* last year that Banff National Park has become a "sink" rather than a source of grizzlies — that means more grizzlies are dying in the park than are born there.

Licensed spring hunting further threatens grizzlies along all the national mountain parks' edges as the bears range freely across these boundaries (see map, page 2). In 1995, the Alberta government issued 169 hunting licences resulting in 11 dead grizzlies. For 1996, the province plans to issue 165 more. With only 500 to 800 grizzlies left and a provincial management goal of 1,000 bears, there's no justification for the hunt.

Bleak future

When you combine habitat loss with trophy hunting, poaching, "self-defense" kills by people, natural and accidental deaths, the grizzlies' future looks bleak.

Loss and fragmentation of habitat also isolate grizzly populations and so threaten their genetic

viability. Conservation biologists emphasize the importance of genetic variation to a species' survival because interbreeding within a single group tends to produce smaller, weaker animals.

Another study by Gibeau for the 1995 Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Project suggests a recent genetic bottleneck between the Eastern Slopes and Northern Continental Divide populations. Without adequate travel corridors between the two groups, these grizzlies will not thrive.

And much study is left to be done. To ensure the bear's survival well into the next century, we must learn more about them and sacrifice some of our demands on their terrain.

The grizzly is the ultimate symbol of the Canadian wilderness. It would be unforgivable if our blind economic agendas relegate it to zoos, books, film and memory.

A real "Alberta Advantage" would be a legacy of the great bear and its wild landscapes.



Photo: Wayne Lynch

A mother grizzly and her two-year-old cub stand erect in a meadow to keep an eye on a nearby male grizzly. Many people find the numerous behavioral similarities between grizzlies and humans intriguing.

National parks now killing not conserving grizzlies

Tourism, commercial development chief culprits

by **Jill Seaton**, a concerned Jasper resident

You might think Parks Canada's mandate to protect ecological integrity and leave the national parks for future generations of Canadians would make Banff, Waterton Lakes and Jasper National Parks havens for the grizzly bear. Well, think again.

These parks, at 18,024 square kilometres combined, are home to about 150 to 180 grizzly bears. The grizzlies inhabit the montane ecosystems of the valley bottoms during the spring and fall. While some of the old threats to park grizzlies such as garbage feeding have decreased over the years, the animals now face new obstacles from increased tourism in the parks and commercial development on the parks' borders.

Too much tourism

Parks Canada favors increased tourism, particularly during the spring and fall when the bears are most vulnerable. The behavior of some tourists when they see a bear is nothing short of remarkable. They disgorge from cars and tour buses -- disregarding all warning signs on the roads -- and rush towards the animal with their cameras. The bear either seeks the safety of the trees, its feeding disturbed, or else stands its ground and becomes a threat, risking relocation or death. If tourism increases, Parks Canada must increase staff to deal with these problems.

Too much development

Commercial development is the other threat. Alberta and British Columbia don't manage lands next to the mountain parks with grizzly preservation in mind. Bears have no respect for park boundaries and travel widely in search of suitable foods. But much of British Columbia's Crown land bordering the parks is slated for logging. Development on Alberta's Crown land also exposes grizzlies to threats from logging, coal-mining, uncontrolled all-terrain vehicle use and poachers.

Development within the parks is another issue. The transportation corridors between British Columbia and Alberta divide important grizzly habitat in Banff and Jasper parks. Municipal growth in Banff, combined with proposed facilities expansion in Waterton Lakes and Jasper, will reduce the montane habitats where grizzlies live.

Unless Parks Canada and the adjoining provinces commit to save the grizzly and its habitat, the bear will gradually disappear from the parks. The great tracks in the spring snow and along the river mud flats will be gone and with them something vital to our national identity -- something that cannot be retrieved.



Wilderness Sentinel. For many people, the grizzly bear represents a sentinel of wilderness. When we protect grizzlies, we protect wilderness. Photo: Wayne Lynch

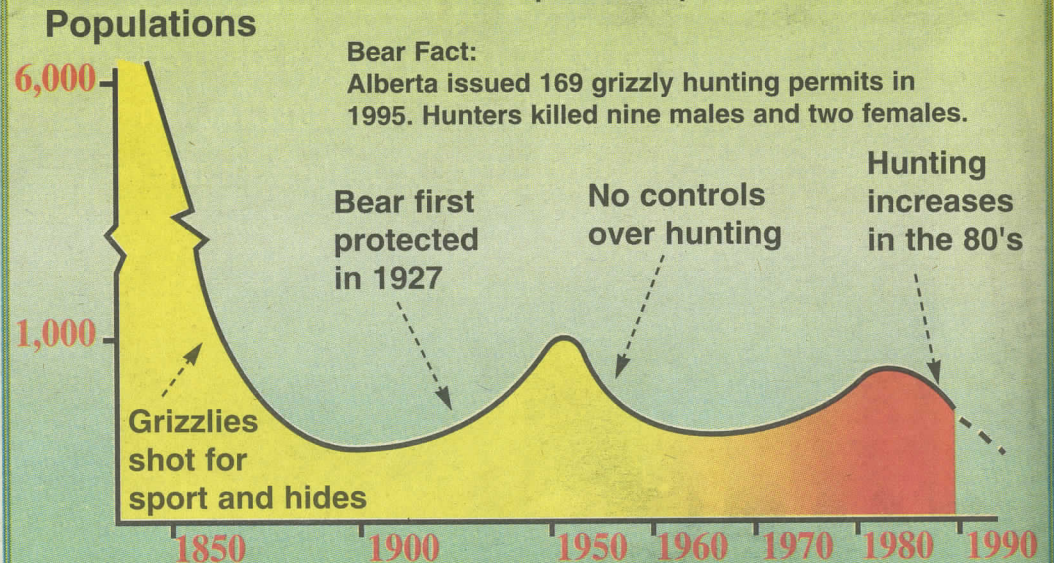
"From the far reaches of time, the great bear has been a symbol of supernatural power to native people, from the Haisla of the West Coast to the northern Cree. The grizzly is part of the wilderness and inseparable from it. But we are reducing this great animal to an economic commodity, worth thousands of dollars in hunting fees for rugs on floors, mounted heads on walls and as parts for Oriental medicine and cuisine, products that are readily available in Canada.

In many ways, grizzlies and humans are most similar. Humans compete with bears for habitat. We appreciate the same beautiful mountains, meadows and streams where the bear lives. Like

Grizzly bear population trends in Alberta

Bear myth:
Grizzlies are a protected species in Alberta.

Bear Fact:
Alberta issued 169 grizzly hunting permits in 1995. Hunters killed nine males and two females.



Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division
Management Plan for Grizzly Bears in Alberta, 1990

Illustration: D.B. Smith

"The excitement that comes with travelling across a lands necessarily the strongest and where you have to continual wilderness and wild lands are all about. That's why we ke

- Dr. Steph

Alberta Grizzlies: The Bear Facts

- Alberta's grizzly bear population has plummeted from about 6,000 in the early 1800's to its current level of 500 to 800.
- From 1972 - 87, there was a total of 636 human-caused grizzly bear deaths in Alberta, an average of 46 deaths per year.
- The plains grizzly is extirpated — that is, the bear is extinct in the prairie region.
- Kills from trophy hunting and poaching often eliminate geneti-

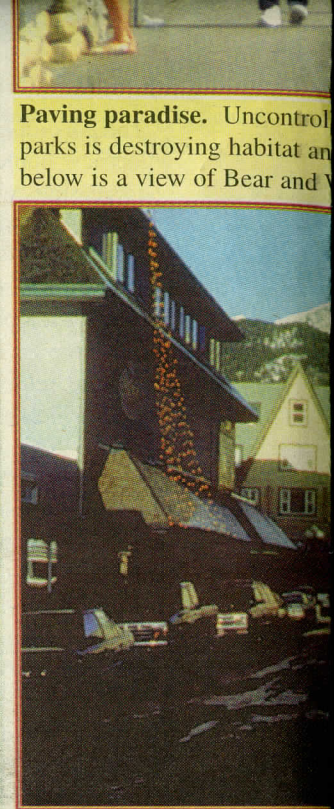


us, grizzlies are at the top of the food chain and are omnivorous. We eat many of the same foods. And our similarities go deeper than these. The carcass of a skinned bear resembles that of a naked, bloodied human."

Gray Jones, WCWC Alberta Executive Director



- female bears -- between 20 and 30 per cent of legal kills involve breeding adult females.
- Grizzly bears have slow reproductive cycles. A female may give birth to only one to three cubs every few years. Plentiful food, sufficient habitat and freedom from human-induced stress are important for breeding success.
- Studies indicate the loss of a male bear through death or relocation allows other males to occupy the territory. The new bear will often kill the cubs of the dead or relocated bear to reproduce with the same female.
- Bear poaching is a significant problem. Alberta Fish and Wildlife does not know how many bears are killed illegally. Proper regulation enforcement and poacher convictions require more money.
- The United States considers the grizzly an endangered species - - Montana harbors most of the Lower 48's 1,000 grizzlies under the US's Endangered Species Act. Alberta currently lists its fewer grizzlies as only "At Risk."
- Canada has no federal endangered species legislation. New legislation proposed by Ottawa would apply to federal lands -- only four per cent of the country, mostly national parks and military reserves.
- Alberta grizzly bear habitat currently consists of 154,000 square kilometres of provincial land, as well as the national mountain parks of Jasper, Banff and Waterton Lakes.



Paving paradise. Uncontrolled development in parks is destroying habitat and below is a view of Bear and V

The stability of grizzly bear populations is affected most by the deaths of mature female bears -- 20 to 30 per cent of legal kills involve breeding females.

Photo: Wayne Lynch



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to

Trafficking bear parts is now more lucrative than trafficking illegal drugs. Bear's paw soup sells for \$1,000 in Taiwan. Photo: Wayne Lynch



Black market goods. Oriental medicine has used black bear parts like these for thousands of years. Grizzly parts also sell as medicines, food, jewelry and trophies. A bear gall bladder can fetch more than \$3,000 on the black market. Photo: Wayne Lynch



cape where you're not necessarily the dominant animal, where you are not only use your brain to give yourself a strong measure of safety -- that's what keep bears."

en Herrero, Professor, University of Calgary Environmental Sciences, author of *Bear Attacks*

Mirror image. This view of a grizzlies' pad shows how closely the bear's footprint resembles that of a human. Photograph courtesy of Alberta Environmental Protection



Development plans threatening Banff and Jasper National Parks

The National Parks Act states:

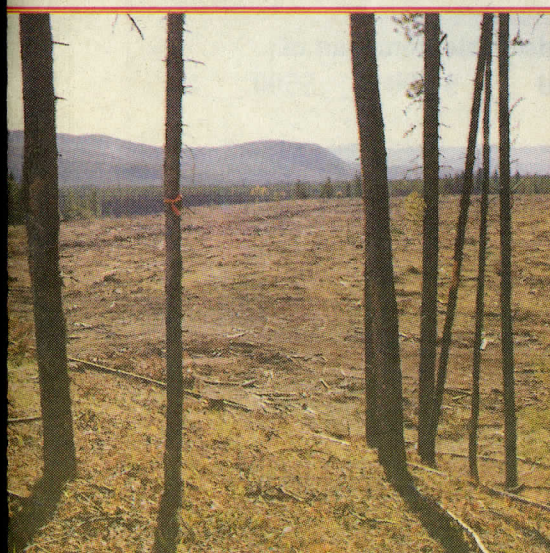
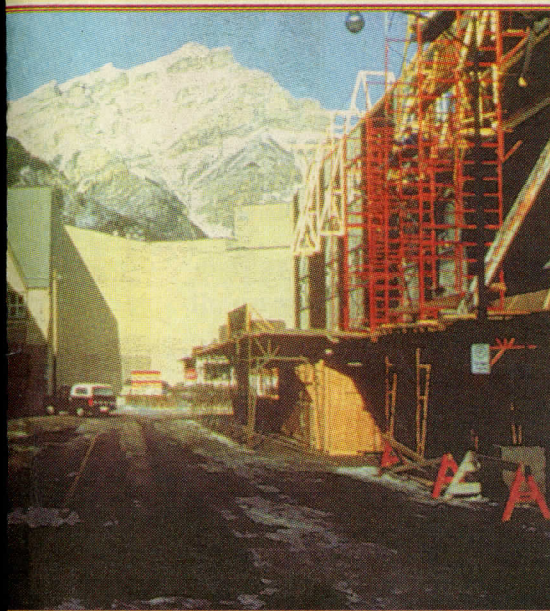
- "The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment... the National Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."
- "Maintenance of ecological integrity through the protection of natural resources shall be the first priority when considering park zoning and visitor use in a management plan."

The National Parks Policy states:





ed tourism development in the national mountain
d displacing wildlife. For instance, the picture
Wolf streets in Banff. Photos: Harvey Locke



llaging the land. Resource extraction
gments habitat, displaces bears and opens areas
hunters and poachers. Photo: Chris Bruun

manipulation of natural regimes, no new golf courses will be constructed in National Parks and expansions of existing golf courses will not be considered."

The Banff-Bow Valley Study is currently examining commercial developments' ecological impacts on the region. A moratorium restricts any new development for the duration of the study.

But the following Canadian Pacific Hotels' developments are exempt from the moratorium:

- an additional 200 guest rooms and increased staff housing at the Banff Springs Hotel, along with nine more holes of golf for a total of 36 holes
- a convention centre, new tennis courts and new staff housing for Chateau Lake Louise

Other development plans include:

- eighteen more holes of golf, 400 new hotel rooms and staff housing for the Jasper Park Lodge
- twinning the Trans-Canada Highway from Banff to Lake Louise
- a Parks Canada gravel pit
- a new ski lift at Lake Louise
- continued Banff town site residential development



Photo: Wayne Lynch

Island effect. If wilderness areas are too small and isolated from each other, the genetic health and adaptability of grizzly bears is compromised.

"If we are to manage grizzly bears in Jasper National Park, we actually have to look at managing for grizzly bears on a larger landscape, providing corridors and connections to other grizzly populations."

Photo: Ken Barth

- Wes Bradford, Wildlife/Human Conflict Specialist, Jasper National Park



Personal letters to politicians work!!

Write to these people if you want to affect public policy regarding grizzly bears and the mountain parks. You may want to refer to our campaign objectives listed below.

Regarding Alberta's grizzly hunt and pressures on grizzly habitat:

The Hon. Ralph Klein
Premier of Alberta
307 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6
(403) 427-2251

The Hon. Ty Lund
Environmental Protection
323 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6
(403) 427-2391

Regarding Canada's Endangered Species Act and managing the national parks:

The Hon. Sergio Marchi
Environment Minister
Room 105-S, Centre Block
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
(613) 994-2424

The Hon. Sheila Copps
Canadian Heritage Minister
Room 509-S, Centre Block
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
(613) 995-2772

WCWC's Save The Grizzly Bear Campaign Objectives are to:

- Protect grizzly bear habitat
- End the grizzly bear hunt in Alberta
- Halt development in the national parks
- Reduce road/rail speeds in the national parks
- Reduce bear mortalities from poaching, traffic and "self-defense" kills by people
- Put the grizzly on Alberta Wildlife's Red List for species "in serious trouble," not just on the Blue List for species "at risk"

Western Canada Wilderness Committee Save The Grizzly Bear Campaign

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"The national parks do not belong to those who live in or visit them. They belong to every Canadian, to the animals that live there and to generations to come."

Photo: Parks Canada

-- Ken Barth, WCWC Save the Grizzly Bear Campaigner





Adopt · A · Grizzly



Photo: Parks Canada - Bill Vroom

Western Canada Wilderness Committee Adopt A Grizzly packages help halt the grizzly's extinction. Packages include an adoption certificate, a poster, a fact sheet and a "Great Bears" video by film-maker Albert Karvonen -- all for \$50. And it comes with a \$35 charitable receipt. Please send _____ packages at \$50 each to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Postal Code: _____

I am paying with **VISA** **MASTERCARD** **CHEQUE**

CARD # _____ EXPIRY DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

Yes!! I want to support the WCWC Save The Grizzly Bear Campaign!

Wilderness committee memberships include a lovely calendar, regular updates on our campaigns, discounts on all our merchandise and some peace of mind knowing you're making a REAL difference to your world.

Make me an individual member of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee for \$30 a year.

Make us family members for \$52 a year -- that's only a dollar a week for wilderness!!

I'd like to give you a tax-deductible donation of:
_____ \$30 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$ 200 _____ \$500 _____.

Name: _____



Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Postal Code: _____

Make cheques, Visa or MasterCard payable to the WCWC and send them to:

Save The Grizzly Bear Campaign

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