



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| AMERICAN WILDLANDS 30TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS: | 3 |
| FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Celebrating Human Connections for 30 Years and Counting | 4 |
| SAFE PASSAGES: Engaging Locals in Bozeman Pass | 6 |
| CORRIDORS OF LIFE: Priority Linkage Assessment | 8 |
| AMERICAN WILDLANDS PROJECT MAP: Priority Linkage Assessment Results | 10 |
| CORRIDORS OF LIFE: Experts Discuss Importance of Corridors | 12 |
| SAFE PASSAGES: Unique Partners in Safe Passages | 13 |
| COMMUNITY GIS SERVICES: Modeling the Future of Wildlife Habitat | 14 |
| HUMAN CONNECTIONS: | 15 |
| DEVELOPMENT: Member Profile: Sally Ranney | 16 |
| NEW STAFF, BOARD, AND VOLUNTEERS: | 17 |
| DEPARTING BOARD & STAFF: | 19 |
| COVER ARTWORK: Children's Safe Passages Art Contest winners (clockwise from top left) Karlissa Bagel, Abbie Blevins, Hope Christesen, Bailey Butts, Emma Edmisten, and Bettina Diaz (see page 6). | |
| DESIGNER: Amy Kelley, Bozeman, Montana. | |

On the Wild Side is the official publication of



American Wildlands

321 East Main, Suite 418
Bozeman, Montana 59715
(406) 586-8175


www.wildlands.org

Missoula Field Office

114 W. Pine St. Suite 4
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 728-2087

Dillon Field Office

215 East Helena
Dillon, MT 59725
(406) 925-3081

 Printed on recycled paper

Board of Directors

Justin Bigart—Business Owner
Marilynn Cowgill—Business Consultant
Doug Sobey—Business Consultant
Bill Stoddart—Financial Consultant
Ryan Wilson—Business Owner
Seth Wilson, PhD—Wildlife Biologist

Founders

Sally Ranney, Clifton Merritt, Jerry Mallett

Staff

Julie Betsch: GIS Apprentice (incoming)
Kim Davitt: Missoula Field Office Director
(*Corridors of Life* program)
Jessica Hann: *Safe Passages* Program Associate
April Johnston: Conservation Program Director
Lisa Bean King: Membership and
Administrative Coordinator
Faye Kommers: Development Director
Melinda Monroe: Finance Manager
Sarah Olimb: GIS Lab Manager
Jim Roscoe: Dillon Field Office Director
(*Corridors of Life* program)
Joy Ritter: GIS Specialist (outgoing)
Tom Skeelee: Executive Director
Catherine Viscardi: Events and
Corporate Support Coordinator
Elizabeth Williamson: *Safe Passages*
Program Coordinator

American Wildlands is keeping the world-renowned U.S. Northern Rockies ecologically intact by restoring and maintaining connections between key habitats for healthy populations of native wildlife. Our three programs address habitat connectivity, wildlife conservation and building community support:

▼ **Corridors of Life:** working to maintain habitat connections and wildlife movement corridors throughout the region.

▼ **Safe Passages:** playing a lead role in establishing a regional culture that supports the concept and advances the implementation of highway safe passages for wildlife.

▼ **Community GIS Services:** providing discounted and pro-bono Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer modeling, analysis, and mapping to conservation organizations in the region.





Keeping Connected to Wildlife and Wildlands

Celebrating 30 Years of Wild Thinking

Please join American Wildlands July 14–19, 2008, for a week of public events as we celebrate 30 years of conservation successes, and map out our future connections to such issues as forest and energy development on public lands, private land subdivision, co-existing with wildlife, and climate change.

~ All events will be held in Bozeman and the surrounding area, and are open to the public ~

🐾 Weekday Evening Presentations 🐾 Free Admission

MONDAY, JULY 14: The lynx and wolverine, their natural history and wide-ranging travels. Speakers TBA.

TUESDAY, JULY 15: Grizzly bears and pronghorn antelope, their natural history and wide-ranging travels. **Dr. Lance Craighead** (*grizzly bears*) and TBA (*antelope*).

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16: The link between economy and ecology. Presentation and panel discussion with **Ray Rasker** (*Headwaters Economics*) and local business owners. Geared toward business owners, but open to anyone.

THURSDAY, JULY 17: The state of wilderness and its value with **Roderick Nash**, author of *Wilderness and the American Mind*.

🐾 THE MAIN EVENT: FRIDAY, JULY 18 🐾

OPENING KEYNOTE (LUNCH): **Harvey Locke** will set the stage about how the work of American Wildlands and others in the Northern Rockies fits in a global effort to conserve habitat connectivity and wildlife movement corridors. Harvey is co-founder of the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, has served on the board of numerous conservation NGOs, and was named one of Canada's leaders for the 21st century by *Time Canada* magazine.

FOUR "CASE STUDY" PRESENTATIONS on habitat connectivity projects around the world:

~ **Iain Douglas-Hamilton** (founder of Save the Elephants) on efforts to track elephant movements and identify safe havens in Kenya.

~ **Graeme Worboys** (30-year veteran of the Australian National Parks) on Australia's new "Alps to Atherton" wildlife corridor.

~ **Jon Miceler** (Managing Director for World Wildlife Fund's Eastern Himalayas program) on the Sacred Himalayan Landscape Initiative, creating an unbroken green corridor for the tiger, rhino, Asian elephant and snow leopard.

~ **Miguel Rafa** (Fundació Territori i Paisatge, Spain) on efforts to rebuild ecological linkages in Western Europe's Great Mountain Corridor.

EVENING KEYNOTE (WITH DINNER): **Rick Ridgeway** (mountaineer, author, and head of environmental programs for Patagonia) will introduce Patagonia's "Freedom to Roam" campaign for North America.

COST: Lunch keynote and afternoon presentations is \$30 per person; dinner and evening program is \$30 per person; or the full day is \$50 per person.

🐾 Saturday, July 19 Field Trips 🐾

Two early afternoon field trips to see and discuss American Wildlands' on-the-ground conservation projects, one will focus on our *Corridors of Life* program and the other on our *Safe Passages* program.

BOZEMAN PASS (SAFE PASSAGES): Leave Bozeman at noon for a short drive to Bozeman Pass, back in Bozeman by no later than 2:00.

MADISON VALLEY (CORRIDORS OF LIFE): Leave Bozeman at noon for a drive to Madison Valley and the town of Ennis, onto Virginia City, then circumnavigating the Tobacco Root Mountains and back to Bozeman by 4:30.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
WWW.WILDLANDS.ORG/30TH**

Celebrating Human Connections 30 Years and Counting....



by Tom Skeele, Executive Director

Lately, I have been thinking about how important human connections are to American Wildlands, as we continue our efforts to maintain habitat connectivity and wildlife movement corridors in the U.S. Northern Rockies. Not surprisingly, my assessment is that the organization's connection with people is critical to our success, for so many reasons.

Certainly, American Wildlands needs the community expertise, financial support, political influence and emotional reinforcement that come with these connections, in order to have the resources required to fulfill our mission: *Keeping the world-renowned U.S. Northern Rockies ecologically intact by restoring and maintaining connections between key habitats for healthy populations of native wildlife.*

Equally important is the need for American Wildlands to connect with as many conservation interests as possible (state and federal agencies, conservation NGOs, community groups, land owners, county planners and commissioners, and the like) to address the threats to, and opportunities for, maintaining habitat connectivity and wildlife movement corridors.

Some of the most influential connections the staff and Board of Directors have made in recent



months have come about because American Wildlands is celebrating our 30th anniversary this year. While it is impressive that one staffer, Kim Davitt, has been with AWL for 12 years, that still leaves nearly two decades of human connections for which we have few direct, in-house ties. We see our 30-year anniversary as a great opportunity to get re-connected with the full history and institutional memory of American Wildlands.

For starters, we have been blessed to have re-connected with co-founder Sally Ranney, who has graciously introduced us, through story and contacts, to many of the original leaders of the organization—originally known as American Wilderness Alliance. Meeting Sally, and working with her on the series of celebration events planned for this coming summer (see page 3), has been one of the high points of my two-and-a-half years with American Wildlands. I have known of Sally and her reputation as a stalwart of the conservation movement since I first engaged in conservation in the mid-1980's. What a treat it has been to finally work with her, and for her to connect present-day American Wildlands to the players and projects of the past (see Sally's profile on page 16).

All along the way, Sally has praised another AWL founder, Clif Merritt, who I had the pleasure of meeting a year ago (see *On The Wild*



Side, Spring 2007). Through numerous stories, Sally has confirmed the critical leadership role Clif played in both starting American Wilderness Alliance, and in establishing a wilderness

movement in the Northern Rockies and across the West. Clif Merritt is another connection that American Wildlands is so very pleased to have—given his historical significance to the organization, and the inspiration he and his work still provides so many people today.

Another connection to the American Wildlands of yesteryear that we have re-established is with wilderness historian Roderick Nash—who was a member of American Wilderness Alliance's Board of Advisors in the early years. Many of you will recognize Rod as the author of the seminal book *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Rod has kindly accepted our request to be one of a dozen guest speakers during our week long 30th Anniversary celebration in mid-July (see page 3). Rod will present his perspective—both historical and present day—on the state of wilderness as a place, concept, human need, community benefit and ecological value.

As for supporters of American Wildlands, in recent months we have enjoyed hearing members Paul and Gail Weingart and Andrea and Bruce Tyson—all of whom have been members since the beginning—recall their first involvement with the organization. I believe there are others of you that we are not aware of who have a long history with American Wildlands. I hope we have the opportunity to re-connect with you soon. Maybe this summer....

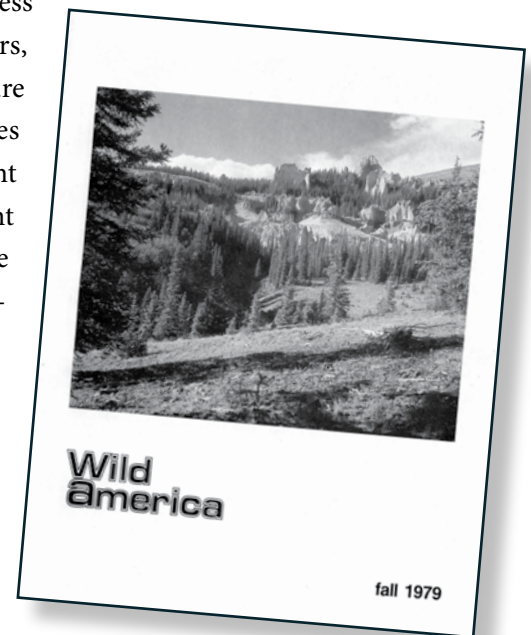
On behalf of the staff and Board, I want to invite each and every one of you to participate in some or all of our week-long celebration of American Wildlands' 30th anniversary—*Keeping Connected to Wildlife and Wildlands: Celebrating 30 Years*



of *Wild Thinking*. Three decades is a long time, and a milestone worthy of acknowledgement and celebration. Since all but one of us on the staff and Board are relative newcomers, we look forward to sitting around the proverbial fire and hearing your stories of your time with American Wildlands, while reflecting on the promising future of the organization.

From what Sally Ranney has told me, making connections with people on the land, and for the land, has always been a driving force of this organization. American Wilderness Alliance couldn't have started without the connections and support of lots of people, and American Wildlands wouldn't be where it is today without the same. Please join us as we celebrate 30 years of conservation successes ranging from wilderness areas to wildlife corridors, and map out our future connections to such issues as forest management and energy development on public lands, private lands subdivision, co-existing with wildlife, and climate change.

And, as always, thanks for your past, present and future support—we are so very pleased to be connected to you.



American Wildlands' 30-year memorabilia: (previous page) 30th anniversary logo (top); first organizational logo, before our current organizational name (bottom); (this page) first Action Alert (top); and first newsletter (above).

Engaging Locals in Making Bozeman Pass Safer for Wildlife and People



by Jessica Hann, Safe Passages Program Associate

My Mommy almost hit a deer when she drove me to school,” said the freckled little girl sitting in the front row swinging her legs beneath her desk. Her classmate in the back chimed in, nodding his head as if to convince me of his statement, “My brother hit a skunk once.” More hands flew up to tell their own stories of death and near death on Montana’s roads.

Even the children have a story to tell about how hitting wildlife is an unpleasant and unfortunate experience. As the new coordinator of American Wildlands’ Bozeman Pass highway project, I have the pleasure of working with all ages to build public awareness about the need for more wildlife safe passages on places like Bozeman Pass.

In January, American Wildlands kicked off a multi-year project to establish ample local support for the concept and implementation of wildlife safe passages on Bozeman Pass. We believe this local support will provide community leaders and the

state transportation department with the leverage they need to obtain funding for more safe passage measures on this 28-mile stretch of highway.

Every year, there are thousands of collisions between vehicles and wildlife on highways in the Northern Rockies, which are usually fatal for wildlife. For instance, more than 1,300 wild animals were killed on Bozeman Pass in the last five years. These accidents also come with a high societal cost, as they can result in human death, injury and thousands of dollars in property damage.

The remedy to this threat to wildlife and society is simple—make highways safer for wildlife to cross. At its most basic level, this work entails providing [1] safe passage structures, such as overpasses and underpasses, across highways for wildlife, as well as [2] innovative animal detection systems and other information to help drivers know where and how to avoid collisions with wildlife.

As part of our efforts to establish support for wildlife safe passages within the general public, elected officials and other community leaders, AWL is engaging all age groups in the surrounding communities in a public discussion about reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions on Bozeman Pass.

Children’s Art Contest

We began with the youngest age group. American Wildlands invited students in grades K-8 from schools throughout Park and Gallatin Counties to participate in our contest illustrating safer passages for people and wildlife. To kick off the contest, I visited classrooms to discuss wildlife safe passages. I told American Wildlands’ story, and the children told theirs. Then the students



Google Earth image.

drew amazing pictures for us—265 to be exact, from 26 classrooms in 18 schools.

Given the tremendous number of submissions and the fact that many students put a significant amount of time and effort into their drawings, we needed a top-notch panel of judges to choose the six winners. We got that panel in Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) and Congressman Dennis Rehberg (R-MT). American Wildlands will incorporate these winning illustrations into messages on billboards along Bozeman Pass. Meanwhile, we honored the top 20 winners at a public reception in late April, and are displaying all of the children's artwork in ten local businesses throughout April, May and June (see cover for winning artwork).

High School Monitoring Project

Next up the age ladder, this spring semester American Wildlands is helping connect students from Bozeman High School's "Wildlife Management Class" with distinguished wildlife biologist Dr. Lance Craighead, as he and his staff at the Craighead Environmental Research Institute continue their multi-year road kill monitoring project on Bozeman Pass. In addition to organizing this collaboration, American Wildlands will support the students by providing information about wildlife-vehicle collisions, safe passages mitigation measures, and other aspects of the science of road ecology.

I-SPY on the Pass

Also during the spring, American Wildlands will launch our "I-SPY on the Pass" program to give motorists who regularly drive Bozeman Pass the opportunity to help identify where wildlife are located on Bozeman Pass. *I-SPY on the Pass* is a web-based program motorists can use to record which wildlife they observed on the Pass, and where and when they observed the animals. Over time, this data will create patterns that can help determine the "hotspots" for wildlife highway crossings. This information will help AWL and the



Students from Arrowhead Elementary School in Pray, Montana drawing their version of safer passages for people and wildlife. AWL photo library.

Montana Department of Transportation determine where to place new motorist warning signs and other highway safety remedies to make Bozeman Pass a safer place for both people and wildlife.

Community Advisory Group

Finally, this summer American Wildlands will establish a community advisory group consisting of local citizens, community leaders, business owners and agency personnel. The group will help American Wildlands identify and secure safe passage opportunities on Bozeman Pass, so that we can make the most of the public support we garner.

As I spread the word about safe passages, I listen to the children's stories, I hear feedback from parents and teachers, and I realize safe passages truly hits home for everyone. One of the most incredible moments in life is when you suddenly realize how much of an impact your work is having. Most recently for me, this occurred when the art teacher at Arrowhead Elementary in Pray, Montana, raved, "I am so happy Arrowhead students have had the opportunity to experience such an outstanding organization as American Wildlands! The lessons they will learn from this are far reaching. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do."

Comprehensive Priority Linkage Assessment

AWL Identifies 100+ Critical Habitat Connections



by April Johnston, Conservation Program Director

A pronghorn climbs the last mountain pass, walking through the spring snow, grabbing a mouthful of sagebrush emerging from its winter blanket. She has a sense of urgency about reaching the familiar grasslands in her summer range—soon there will be a young fawn at her side. Along the way, she and others in the herd are halted—a wire barrier—mesh fencing stretches as far as she can see. She noses it, not understanding, looking for a way past. Antelope have evolved to run at incredible speeds, but they do not know how to jump over a four-foot-high barrier.

Fortunately, she and her herd find a break in the fence, and continue their migration. They top the pass, and descend into their familiar summer range—only to experience the strange odors, structures, and sounds of new development. This is where the pronghorn have always come to give birth and fatten on sagebrush. Can they find room to continue that tradition among the new buildings now dotting the landscape?

Wildlife across the U.S. Northern Rockies are facing scenarios like these on an increasing basis. While many people view this region's landscape as vast, even endless, animals view it differently. Each species of wildlife has different habitat needs, and cannot use all of the land. Pronghorn require sagebrush with little snow, wolverines raise their young in dens on steep mountain slopes, and moose need wetland plants. From a wild animal's perspective, these lands contain patches of useable habitat within a much greater matrix of land that it not entirely useful.

One of the greatest challenges for wildlife is to travel from one quality habitat area to another. Just as people must travel from one town to another to meet our needs, wide ranging animals also need to safely travel between protected habitats. The pronghorn's migration between summer and winter ranges is an example of how wildlife need movement corridors—or "habitat linkages"—to successfully travel between important habitats.

During the last century, conservationists placed great emphasis on protecting major blocks

of "core" habitat—such as national parks, wilderness areas, and national wildlife refuges. However, as more people move to the Northern Rockies to enjoy the region's impressive natural amenities, these protected lands are increasingly at risk of becoming isolated "islands" of habitat, as houses, roads, commercial areas and other developments are built between these protected areas. American Wild-

April Johnston, introduces our Priority Linkage Assessment at a March workshop for agencies and conservation NGOs. AWL photo library.



lands, through our *Corridors of Life* program, works to maintain the connections between these protected lands—linking the “string of pearls” of the Northern Rockies’ best habitat.

To help focus our corridors work, in 2007 we conducted a “Priority Linkage Assessment” to identify and prioritize the critical habitat “linkage areas” throughout western Montana and northern Idaho. This assessment was a significant year-long undertaking for AWL, involving half the time of three staff. The staff interviewed 60+ state, federal and independent biologists, and processed thousands of bits of information. In all, our assessment identified more than 100 major habitat linkage areas, as well as the threats to, and opportunities for, maintaining these habitat connections (see page 10).

One of the most important aspects of this Priority Linkage Assessment is that each person we interviewed ranked each habitat linkage, allowing us to calculate which linkages have the greatest conservation need. This prioritization has proven very valuable not only for American Wildlands, but for many agencies and NGOs trying to make the most of limited resources.

We are beginning to incorporate these results into a comprehensive conservation plan. Recognizing that we are not able to, nor do we want to, address all 100+ linkage areas alone, in March we hosted a one-day workshop to begin engaging partners in this endeavor. We were extremely pleased with the turn-out: 80 participants from state and federal agencies, conservation NGOs and regional land trusts.

While our final report is still being written, many groups are already using our findings: Bureau of Land Management; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Idaho Fish and Game; Western Governors Association; The Nature Conservancy; Yellowstone



to Yukon Conservation Initiative and the Heart of the Rockies Initiative.

Our Priority Linkage Assessment is also helping address the emerging issue of climate change by placing emphasis on critical areas to conserve so wildlife can cope and adapt to climate-induced landscape changes. Many biologists say climate change will have its greatest effect on wide ranging species like the wolverine and grizzly bear—two of the eight species we included in our linkage assessment.

Identifying and prioritizing these wildlife movement corridors is an ongoing challenge for many conservation groups and agencies. American Wildlands is thrilled to play a significant role in meeting this need, thereby influencing habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors conservation far beyond the boundaries of our own organizational capacity. As Jamie Williams, director of The Nature Conservancy’s Northern Rockies Initiative, stated during our March workshop:

“There is recognition that if we want to protect the legendary wildlife that makes the Northern Rockies unique, we have to protect the full assemblage of habitats that these species use—and connectivity is central to sustaining the wildlands we care about.”

American Wildlands looks forward to using the data we collected to help inform, guide and strengthen our work, and that of many other conservation interests, in the years to come.

April Johnston leads a break-out group strategy session on private lands conservation at our March workshop. AWL photo library.



AMERICAN WILDLANDS

Important Wildlife Linkages of the Cabinet-Purcell

American Wildlands identified more than 100 critical habitat linkage areas, as well as the threats of some of the top threats facing the eight species we focused on during this comprehensive

WILDLIFE-UNFRIENDLY FENCES

Fences are built to keep animals from moving past them, and thus can greatly affect the movements of many wildlife. Fences built too close to the ground for large animals to get under, or too tall to jump over, become a barrier. Antelope are especially vulnerable because they rarely jump a fence, and must crawl under or through it. Even if adult animals can get past a barrier fence, the young often cannot, and in trying, become entangled in the fence and die, or are left behind to fend for themselves. Using different fence designs, or modifying existing fences, can easily remove these barriers to wildlife movement.



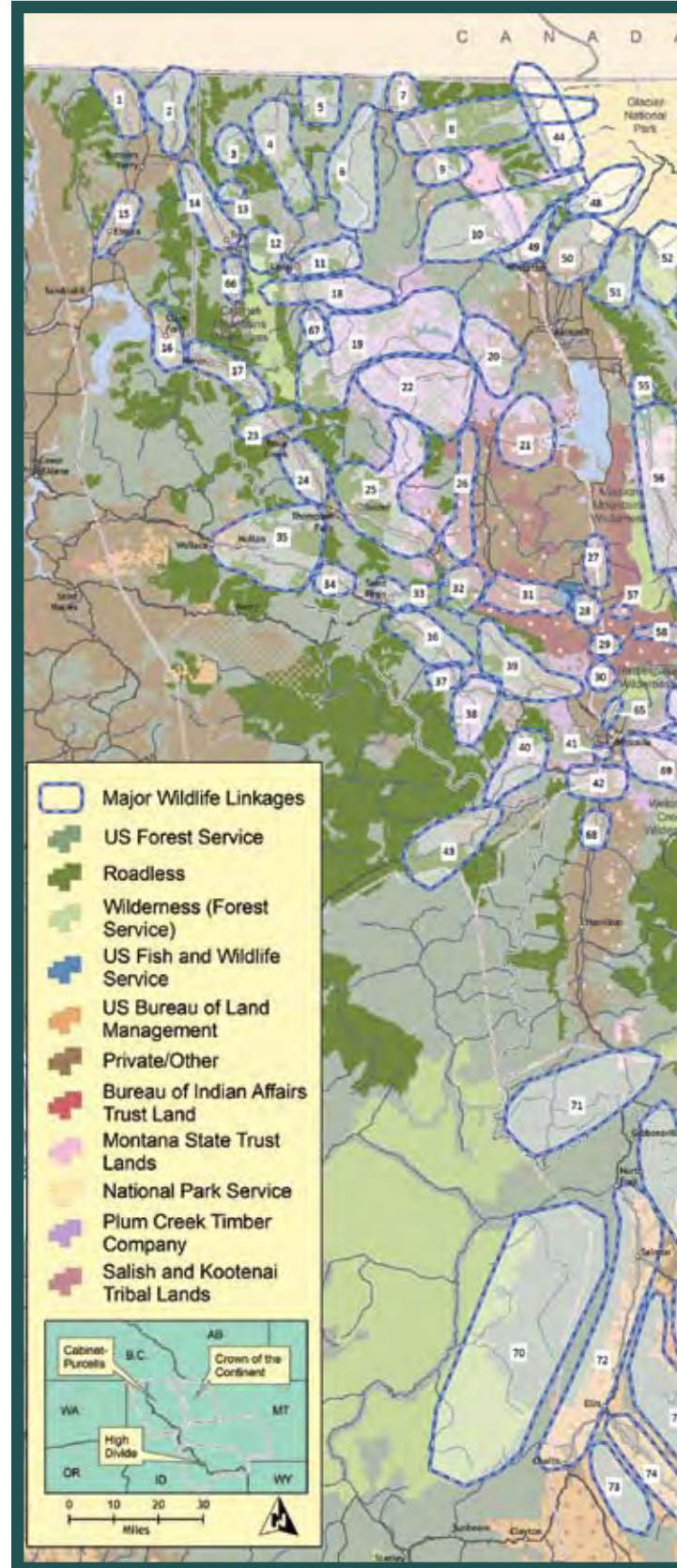
Phil Knight.

WILDLIFE-HUMAN CONFLICTS DUE TO INCREASED ATTRACTANTS

One of the growing conflicts between people and wildlife occurs in the “wildland-urban interface,” where bears and other wildlife are drawn to people’s homes by various attractants. These attractants include improper garbage storage, easily-accessed bird feeders, poorly stored pet food, and fruit trees, which can habituate black bears, grizzly bears and other wildlife to human developments—thereby greatly increasing the likelihood that these animal will be deemed “problem wildlife” and moved from that area or killed.



Bill Koppen, MFWP game warden.



Islands, Crown of the Continent, and High Divide Conservation Areas

San Joaquin Hills
Planning Areas

Revised March 2008

Of all the threats to habitat connectivity in northwest Montana, the divestment of Plum Creek Timber Company lands as real estate for new subdivisions ranks the highest. Plum Creek owns more than 1.2 million acres in northwestern Montana. Historically managed for industrial timber production, these lands are now being sold for residential subdivision and development. While past logging practices on these private lands were never great for wildlife, subdivision of these lands will be far worse.



Off-road vehicle use and other motorized recreation activities are an increasing problem for wildlife. The ever expanding network of unauthorized, user-created roads and trails on public lands enables more people on these motorized machines to gain access further and further into otherwise secure habitat. Research has shown that this activity displaces wildlife from important seasonal habitats. Soil erosion from these roads degrades water quality and native fish habitat, as well as increases the spread of noxious weeds.



Displaced wildlife and noxious weeds often end up on adjoining private lands, where they create other conflicts.

Experts' Perspective on the Importance of Identifying Wildlife Corridors

This past March, American Wildlands hosted a one-day workshop to begin engaging numerous partners in the implementation of our recently completed Priority Linkage Assessment (see page 8). Speaking at the conference were a diverse and well-rounded set of experts who discussed the role and importance of habitat connectivity in their conservation efforts. The following are some perspectives from interviews AWL had with these speakers. You can view the full video of these interviews at www.wildlands.org/pla-workshop-interviews.



Jim Lynch, director of the Montana Department of Transportation, speaking at recent AWL workshop. AWL photo library.

I think what American Wildlands is doing right now is taking all of the subjective information, the collective knowledge, of all the best scientists in the state, packaging it together, corroborating it, and coming out with a first cut, a first vision so-to-speak, of connectivity in Montana.

~ T. O. Smith, Fish and Wildlife Planning Coordinator, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

I think it is important for us to have that current science available to particularly decision makers, about what do you need to be doing to make the right decision at this time. I was just really gratified to hear from Kim [Davitt] and to read that Forest Service biologists were asked their opinion about "where are the important linkage areas from your perspective?"

~ Kathy McAllister, Deputy Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service Region 1

We look to American Wildlands for really great information about the most important wildlife linkage areas for wildlife in the Northern Rockies. It has been helpful to us for refining where we focus our conservation work.

~ Jamie Williams, Director, Northern Rockies Initiative, The Nature Conservancy

With the shortness of available funds to build projects themselves, if we are going to build a wildlife crossing or wildlife passage area, we really want to make sure that the dollars invested, the wildlife are going to use. So I think science is very important in determining what type of crossing will facilitate that wildlife passage in that area.

Jim Lynch, Director, Montana Department of Transportation

We see connectivity as a symptom of the problem, in that climate change could fragment habitats even further. We also see connectivity as a solution for enabling species to respond to climate change. So, we want to think about: "Can we design connectivity, or protect habitats, in a way that allows species to move in response to climate change."

~ Molly Cross, Climate Change Ecologist, Wildlife Conservation Society

Connecting with Unique Partners for Safe Passages



by Kim Davitt, Missoula
Field Office Director

Every 30-45 minutes, a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) train runs along the southern boundary of Glacier National Park. Each train carries an engineer and conductor, and some crew members have been riding

this route for more than thirty-five years. After so many trips, these regulars know the landscape well, and have seen a lot of wildlife along the way.

To find out where they repeatedly see wildlife and wildlife crossings of the train tracks, American Wildlands and the Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area (GNESA) group spearheaded an effort to interview BNSF engineers who travel the route between Havre and Whitefish, Montana. This is part of a larger effort to identify where wildlife are crossing Highway 2 and the adjacent railroad, information that will help GNESA determine where it should advocate for the construction of crossing structures so wildlife can continue crossing the highway and railroad.

Since American Wildlands and GNESA began collaborating two years ago, we have collected a significant amount of information about wildlife habitat and movements along Highway 2 and the adjacent railroad: digital information, modeled predications, expert opinion, and field data. Another important source of information is the knowledge locals have from their first hand observations about habitat conditions and animal behavior.

Rich Clough, a habitat connectivity researcher based in Montana, specializes in collecting this sort of local ecological knowledge from landowners, bus drivers, UPS drivers, highway maintenance staff—and now railroad engineers. Last summer, Rich and BNSF Road Foreman Randy Wolff spent most

of a 24-hour period in the Whitefish train depot interviewing 52 engineers and conductors as they passed through the area.

During the interviews, it became clear railroad engineers had an affinity for wildlife, and knew where they were. For example, many looked forward to watching for bears near Essex, and noted the increase of elk since the golf course was put in. The interviews resulted in the identification of several key habitat linkage areas, where wildlife were repeatedly observed.

Maintaining habitat connectivity along Highway 2 and the railroad will likely involve typical measures: conservation easements from willing landowners, wildlife crossing structures, or retrofitting

bridges and culverts to allow for wildlife passage. What is unique about this GNESA partnership is that we are collaborating at the earliest stages of conservation planning to identify long-term solutions in this critical wildlife corridor. Collecting information about wildlife activity from railroad workers is not only a key component of enhancing and refining our data, it is also helping us build partnerships with key individuals and groups who will work together to identify and implement solutions for wildlife safe passage in the South Glacier corridor.



Rich Clough discusses wildlife sightings with a Burlington Northern engineer. Photo by Rich Clough.

Modeling the Future of Wildlife Habitat



by Sarah Olimb, GIS Lab Manager

In November 2007, the American Wildlands GIS Lab eagerly began working with the World Wildlife Fund to develop a four-state future model of sagebrush habitat in the Northern Great Plains Ecoregion. The purpose of this model is to predict how climate change, and the resulting changes in weather, fire occurrence, and patterns of human land use (such as agriculture and settlement), will alter habitat for sagebrush-dependent species—including sage grouse, pygmy rabbits, and pronghorn antelope. The model starts with present-day vegetation and uses predicted climate data for three snapshots of the future—2030, 2070 and 2100. The result will be three vegetation maps that can be used to predict loss or change in sagebrush habitat, as well as to pinpoint the areas where conservation action is most critical.



Sagebrush habitat in Lemhi Pass near the Montana-Idaho border. AWL photo library.



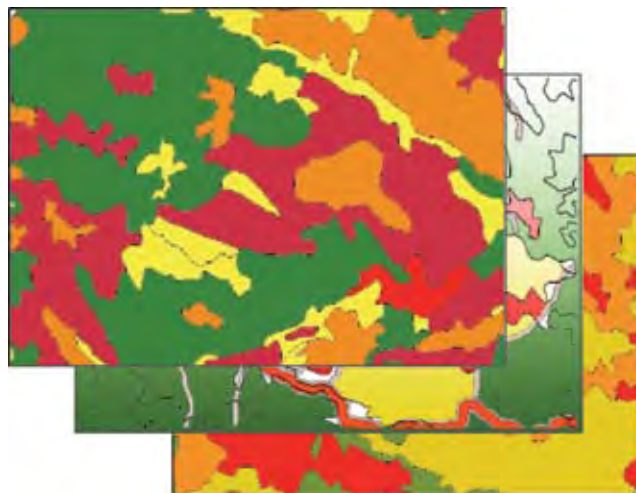
Pronghorn Antelope buck. Photo by Phil Knight.

conservation work, and continue staying at the forefront of cutting-edge research on the future of wildlife habitat in Montana and Wyoming.

Not coincidentally, the model results will overlap with important wildlife linkages identified by American Wildlands' own Priority Linkage Assessment in the High Divide (see page 8), providing us and our conservation partners with invaluable information to identify and protect key wildlife movement areas critical to species adaptation and survival.

For more information on this and other Community GIS Services projects, we encourage you to visit www.wildlands.org/programs/communityGIS.

In addition to furthering the goals of American Wildlands' Community GIS Services program (strengthening the conservation community's ability to advocate for and communicate about its issues), AWL sees this project as benefiting our own conservation programs. Specifically, we are excited about how our partnership with World Wildlife Fund will help us both incorporate climate change into our



Examples of outputs from the TELSA landscape model (ESSA Technologies Ltd.) in the World Wildlife Fund sagebrush habitat modeling project.

One of American Wildlands' leading principles is that we will be more successful at maintaining ecological connectivity through increased human connections. To put that belief into practice, AWL's staff and Board have been active in establishing connections with new people, businesses and communities—in hopes of engaging them in our efforts on behalf of wildlife, wildlands and wild thinking! The following are some of the highlights of our Human Connections efforts in the last six months.

Connecting Ecology and Economy Series

On St. Patty's Day, Bozemanites from every walk of life came out for a celebration of all things green—in this case, the kick off to American Wildlands Connecting Ecology and Economy Series. A great turnout of interested citizens came to the local Montana Ale Works for a discussion on “community investing,” presented by D.A. Davidson and Calvert Funds. Participants headed home with some important tips on the “what” and “where” of community investing - and a few people (who had the “luck of the Irish” in their favor) also headed home with cool gear door prizes they won through the generosity of the Bozeman-based Barrel Mountaineering! The next installment of our Connecting Ecology and Economy Series will take place this summer—stay connected to find out more!



Bozeman residents learn about “green investing” on St. Patrick's Day, at the kick-off event of American Wildlands' new Connecting Ecology and Economy Series. AWL photo library.

Patagonia's Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival

Having been invited to host Patagonia's Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival in Bozeman, American Wildlands held a weekend-long event last October. Films covered a wide range of environmental topics, from the oceans to the mountains, from wildlife to wild people to wild places. Based on the success of this event, we look forward to making this an annual tradition. We are already working with representatives of Patagonia's film festival to plan another great mix of adventure and educational films for 2008, as well as a film-makers symposium for Saturday afternoon. American Wildlands will host the festival at the Emerson Cultural Center this September 26 - 28. If your business is interested in being a corporate sponsor of this event, please contact Catherine Viscardi (cviscardi@wildlands.org).



AWL staff and the traveling advertisement for our fall environmental film festival (thanks to Bozeman's Eco-Auto for use of their electric car). AWL photo library.

American Wildlands Goes to Florida

This January, Conservation Director April Johnston and Development Director Faye Kommers spent a week in sunny Florida introducing American Wildlands to people through the southern part of the state—including members of the South Florida Water Management District. Although a long distance from our home base, April and Faye found these Floridians to be very interested in learning more about the world-renowned Northern Rockies, as well as American Wildlands' habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors conservation work. April and Faye were also able to make a “connection” with the Atlantic Ocean (by briefly dipping their toes in the water) on behalf of the rest of us back home!



Member Profile: Sally Ranney

Thank goodness for Sally Ranney! Well, that is what most of us here think because without her vision and dedication, American Wildlands may very well never have existed. Thirty years ago, Sally, along with Clif Merritt and Jerry Mallet, founded American Wildlands in Colorado to protect the wildlands and wildlife through legislative and legal strategies and public/private partnerships.

Sally served as president of AWL from day one until 1997. American Wildlands is quite fortunate that in this last year, Sally has become re-connected with the organization and has worked diligently to help us celebrate our 30th anniversary by providing hours of institutional history, contacts with whom we should reunite, advice regarding fund-raising, etc.

Early experiences such as living on a cattle ranch, running rivers, and adventuring in wilderness led Sally into an accomplished, thirty-year career in the public and private sectors dedicated to environmental, public land and water policy. She studied at the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University and from there, became an internationally recognized wildland conservation specialist and activist.

Initially working as a resource policy analyst for the Wilderness Society, she then co-founded American Wildlands and also established American Wilderness Adventures which hosted itineraries worldwide into many of the world's most spectacular wild and threatened areas. Consequently, she has been involved in projects throughout the continental U.S. and Alaska, Africa, South America and Canada.

Sally has worked closely with several U.S. Presidents and many members of Congress on natural resource issues. She was appointed by President Reagan to serve on the President's Commission on American Outdoors; selected by Vice President Al Gore and First Lady Hillary Clinton to serve on the Earth Core Design Team; and was the Alaska Lands National Interests Lands legislation representative to President Carter. She has received the prestigious Horace Albright Award from the U.S. National Park Service and the International Wildlife Foundation's Meritorious Conservation Award among many other awards and recognitions.

Also an artist, she is the owner of Natural Ideas, a fine arts marketing company, and has been exhibited in galleries in Santa Fe, NM and Aspen, CO. She is currently President of Rising Wolf International, a natural resource consulting group, and CEO of Stillwater Preservation, LLC, a private, Colorado-based company specializing in wetlands mitigation banking.

Thank you, Sally, for your vision and dedication to not only American Wildlands which has lasted these 30 years and clearly will well into the future, but for all of your other grand conservation strides.

Departing Board and Staff Members

At the close of 2007, American Wildlands had to say a fond farewell to two stalwart members of our Board of Directors, as they finished their second three year terms. Having joined the Board in 2002, Chris Bunting and Walter Goldstein had been with American Wildlands since before the organization's 25th anniversary. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary this year, we are oh so grateful for all Walter and Chris have done to help guide and grow the organization. The staff and present Board of Directors extend a deep and heart-felt **THANK YOU** to both Chris and Walter. To you both, we say "Job well done on behalf of the region's vast wildlands and abundant wildlife."

Chris Bunting joined AWL's Board of Directors in 2002, bringing years of experience in environmental education and advocacy. Chris served two full terms, and was the Board's Chair for several year-long terms. Chris' support and dedication has been admirable, as he executed everything that was asked of him and then some. During his tenure, Chris encouraged many people to support American Wildlands, was always ready to help find auction items and new business sponsors, and recruited several new board members. Chris' enthusiasm and passion for the wild places of the Northern Rockies will be missed, but we look forward to his friendship into the future. Chris and his wife, Rebekah, own the Bikram's Yoga Studio of India in Bozeman, and Chris is the co-founder of The Northern Kenya Fund. Best of good fortune to you, Chris!

Walter Goldstein also joined the Board in 2002, and also served two full terms. Walter used his professional marketing experience to advise American Wildlands well. He was particularly helpful in reframing our mission statement and improving other external communications. Walter also encouraged many people to support AWL, helping us grow our membership base. Our recently completed Priority Linkage Assessment (see page 8) particularly excited Walter, as he saw this as an excellent way for AWL to increasingly become a leader in habitat connectivity issues in the region. Walter and his wife Heather have been active in the Bozeman Public Library Campaign. Walter owns a marketing consulting company, WG Communications, with a national client base, many of them outdoor retailers and non-profits. We will miss you Walter!

American Wildlands also says farewell to our third GIS Lab apprentice, Joy Ritter. Joy has used her well-rounded expertise in wildlife biology and spatial and mathematical skills to conduct a comprehensive GIS model of future sagebrush habitat in the Northern Great Plains Ecoregion, for the local office of the World Wildlife Fund (see page 14). Joy earned a B.S. in Biology from Fort Lewis College, Colorado, and a M.S. in Biology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (where she was before coming to Bozeman last fall). In addition to her conservation interests, Joy is also an avid cyclist and skier. American Wildlands thanks Joy for her commitment to our Community GIS Services program during the past six months.



Chris Bunting



Walter Goldstein



Joy Ritter

New Staff, Board, and Volunteers



Julie Betsch, GIS Apprentice

Julie has eight years of field experience in conservation and wildlife biology with an emphasis on non-invasive methods to study large carnivores—most recently working with the University of Washington's Center for Conservation Biology to train dogs to find scat samples from endangered species (for DNA testing). She is currently working on a diet analysis of puma and jaguar from scat samples collected in central Brazil. She earned a B.S. in Biology from the University of Cincinnati. Julie joined the staff for her six-month GIS apprenticeship in April 2008.

Jessica Hann, Safe Passages Program Associate

Jessica moved to Bozeman from Portland, Maine in June, 2007. Interested in changing career paths from veterinary medicine to wildlife biology, Jess started volunteering for American Wildlands. Three months later, she was hired on as a full time staff member as Safe Passages Program Associate. Jess earned a B.A. in Biology and Pre-Veterinary Studies at the University of Findlay, Ohio, and a D.V.M at the University of Wisconsin. Since moving to Bozeman, she has spent most of her free time hiking and camping in the beautiful Northern Rockies with her husband.



Lisa Bean King, Membership and Administrative Coordinator

Lisa returned to Bozeman this past fall after having earned an M.Ed of Environmental Education from Western Washington University, and a Certificate of Non-Profit Administration and Leadership from the North Cascades Institute in Washington State. She also holds a B.A. in Geology and Environmental Studies from Whitman College (2002). She brings five years of experience working in the non-profit field, including working for the Montana Outdoor Science School in Bozeman. Lisa enjoys spending time in the outdoors climbing, fishing and hanging out with her dogs. She is originally from Washington State and actually enjoys the rain.

Melinda Monroe, Finance Manager

With previous accounting experience with Montana-based Glacier Restaurant Group (formerly Mackenzie Northwest Inc.) and Yellowstone Tour Guides, Melinda is currently pursuing a Bachelors degree (and then a Masters) in accounting at Montana State University. Originally from New Jersey, she has spent the last four years in Montana enjoying hiking, biking and running.



Jim Roscoe, Dillon Field Office Director



Jim recently completed a 32-year career as wildlife biologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Dillon, Montana. His diversity of work projects focused on the reintroduction of wolves, peregrine falcons and bighorn sheep in the area; long-term sage grouse telemetry study; constructing several wetland development projects, and extensive planning and coordination necessary for managing the wide diversity of wildlife habitat found on public lands in southwest Montana. Jim's personal interests and activities include birding, distance running, raising and training Quarter horses, and spending as much time in the hills as possible. Jim received a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from Colorado State University (1973) and a M.S. degree also from CSU in Fishery Biology (1974).

Jill Wilkinson, Intrepid Volunteer

A 4th generation Montanan who has spent time in Great Falls, Butte and Helena, Jill Wilkinson brings a varied set of work experiences in the political and environmental fields to American Wildlands—including campaign finance, GIS analysis, database management, wetland mitigation, community pre-disaster mitigation and land surveying. Jill holds a B.S. in Political Science from Montana State University, and a graduate certificate in GIS from the University of Montana. It is her experience with computer GIS analysis, and her life-long adoration and respect for Montana's wildlife and scenery, that inspired Jill to volunteer her services to American Wildlands.



Justin Bigart, Board Member

Justin is a native Montanan, originally from Missoula, and a graduate of the University of Montana. After several years as a consultant at Accenture in San Francisco, Justin quickly realized that the quality of life in Montana was truly unique, and not to be taken for granted. A move back to Bozeman in 2001 kicked off an entrepreneurial spirit, which led to the creation of Sage Spa Living (which he co-founded with his wife Stephanie) and Ecosystems (a technology and media firm). Whenever successful in disconnecting from work, Justin spends time traveling with his wife, mountaineering, skiing, running, cycling and mountain biking or just lounging on the porch reading or writing.



Doug Sobey, Board Member

Doug has a B.S. (Joint Honors) in Biology and Psychology from Leicester University and an M.S. in Pollution Control from Manchester University in England. He spent 30 years in the waste industry, most recently as Senior Vice President for Waste Management, Inc. He is currently a major investor in the largest waste management company in Alaska. When he isn't downhill skiing, traveling to wilderness areas or photographing bears, he works on increasing recycling and implementing bear-resistant sanitation systems in the Jackson Hole area. Doug is passionate about conserving wildlife and wild places.



Ryan Wilson, Board Member

Ryan Wilson is co-owner of Rockford Coffee in Bozeman. He and his wife moved to Bozeman to "pursue a better life and enjoy the outdoors and the life a smaller community has to offer." Ryan gained an MBA in Technology Management from the University of Phoenix, with a focus on systems and network administration. Tired of the life behind a computer screen, Ryan and his wife decided to move to Bozeman and pursue coffee—with aspirations of growing their business into various markets across Montana and possibly the Northwest. In his spare time, which will become increasingly limited with the birth of his second child this spring, Ryan pursues skiing, fly-fishing and mountain biking—some of the activities that inspired him to take a role in helping protect the region's natural heritage.



Tea That Soothes the Body—and Mind!

American Wildlands is proud to announce a new collaboration with Teas, Etc. The Florida-based tea company has created a blend especially for American Wildlands! The *Bear Hugs Blend* is a delicious brew of chamomile, peppermint leaf, licorice and lemon peel. Soothing and aromatic, this special blend is sure to provide comfort.

Even more comforting, a portion of the proceeds of the *Bear Hugs Blend* go directly to American Wildlands! So visit www.wildlands.org/support/teasetc and treat yourself to a delightful cuppa, then sit back, relax, enjoy, knowing that your comfort is bringing comfort to Rocky Mountain wildlife as well!



About Teas Etc.

Teas Etc. was founded by Beth and Newman Johnston at the turn of the millennium. Having traveled extensively abroad tasting teas with some of the world's most highly respected tea masters, Beth has been immersed in the art of tea for more than a decade. A sought after speaker and writer, Beth recently gave a presentation at the 2007 World Tea Expo, and has written articles appearing in tea publications globally. Her easy, enthusiastic approach to tea makes it available and enjoyable for novices and aficionados alike. To learn more, please visit: www.teasetc.com



American Wildlands

321 East Main Street, Suite 418
Bozeman, Montana 59715

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit
Bulk Rate
Postage Paid
No. 67
Bozeman
MT 59715