

# Range Rider Wolf Conflict Reduction Project



*A Grant Proposal for \$ [REDACTED] in Support of Predator Conservation Alliance's  
efforts to protect wolves from lethal control  
in the Madison Valley of southwest Montana*

— September 24, 2003 —

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Project Summary: In 1 – 4 sentences, describe the goal of your project and how you will achieve your goal.

As wolves expand their range out of Yellowstone National Park into unprotected lands to the west, they run the risk of getting into trouble with livestock operations in the Madison Valley and surrounding summer rangelands. Predator Conservation Alliance is working with a local ranging association, the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, to establish a “range rider” program that will help reduce the number of wolves that get lethally controlled in response to livestock depredation in this area. All involved parties believe that increased human presence, conducted by a set of range riders who will stay with livestock and be trained to non-lethally keep wolves away from livestock, will decrease wolf depredation, which, in turn, will mean fewer government wolf control actions. If it works, we envision a range rider program that would serve as a model for other areas where wolves and livestock both exist (including in Montana’s Paradise Valley and Idaho’s Lemhi County, where we are working to develop relationships with other ranchers).

Outcomes: Please describe the specific outcomes you wish to achieve. Outcomes are not what you are going to do, but what will be accomplished by what you do. One way to think about outcomes is to ask, “How will we know if we have reached our goal for this project?” The outcomes will be important in the proposal review process and, if you are funded, reaching them will be an important part of determining whether the project was successful. If possible, outcomes should be measurable.

— protect one to eight wolves (and maybe more, given a successful breeding season next spring and the fact that another pack of wolves also frequents this area) that presently live and hunt in the Madison Valley from being killed in response to livestock losses in the area. The Taylor Peak II pack has denned on the east shoulder of the Valley, with eight wolves in the pack. That is one less animal than in July, as government trappers in response to livestock depredations on a ranch killed the alpha female. That ranch was not using any range riders to help avoid conflicts. This gives us great hope that our efforts can and will result in fewer wolves being killed in future years.

— establish and use a protocol for scientifically determining the effectiveness of range riders in protecting wolves, as well as a method for determining if a range riders program is cost-effective (with respect to the relationship between livestock saved and money spent). We want to test, over a three to five year period, whether the range riders help reduce depredation (and thus wolf kills), and provide a service that is economically sustainable for ranchers. If we find it successful on both counts, then we will be in a position to encourage the ranchers to incorporate the cost of range riders into their production costs, thus relieving PCA or others from having to fund this program indefinitely.

— engage one or more ranchers into a “predator friendly” economic incentive program that PCA is now managing, whereby PCA helps ranchers who use non-lethal conflict reduction measures get a higher return on their sheep or cattle products through a environmentally-sensitive certification market. This is one way of helping offset the cost of hiring additional range riders over the long haul. In our conversations with the director of the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, he thought there would be some interest among the ranchers to take advantage of an economic incentive program, if it helped them with their economic bottom line.

— establish a full working relationship with one or more ranching groups. One of the indirect, but politically important, benefits of this program is that it will help put a new public face on predator conservation. To date, the media has largely framed the issue, and thus the public by and large perceives the issue, as a battle — between people and predators, and conservationists and agricultural producers. Showing that it is possible to get beyond that battle mentality to a place where diverse groups are working together will go a long way toward establishing a balance between needs of people and the needs of predators. Ultimately, this program is as much about helping people live with these animals as it is about protecting these animals — because without the former, we will not accomplish the latter.

— Establish the range rider program as a model for ranchers in other areas where wolves and livestock both exist, to use to reduce conflicts and thus protect both wildlife and domestic livestock. We are designing this program so that it can be proven effective and easily adopted by others for their own situation, both in the region and elsewhere in the country. For instance, PCA has already had people contact us to say that ranchers in two other conflict “hot spots” — Montana’s Paradise Valley (just north of Yellowstone National Park) and Lemhi County (in southeast Idaho) — might be interested in a similar program.

Objectives/Methodology/Timeline: Briefly list your project objectives, which will describe what you intend to do. Objectives should be clear and time specific.

We are initially focusing this effort in Montana’s Madison Valley, where wolves have migrated west from Yellowstone National Park. It is critical that these wolves are allowed to re-establish themselves in this area and continue their expansion further west for two reasons. First, Yellowstone National Park and other federally protected lands are not big enough to provide all the habitat needed to ensure we have a healthy population of wolves widely distributed across the landscape, so that wolves can survive over the long term in the region. Second, Yellowstone and other protected lands where wolves cannot be killed are fragmented from each other and thus it is difficult for wolves to travel to and from these separate areas. This can cause problems for wolves with regards to their ability to breed with different animals, thus avoiding genetic interbreeding. In all, the long-term conservation of the species depends on wolves being able to use and travel through the unprotected lands between “core” protected habitat areas. The Madison Valley area is critical to wolves both as potential habitat in which to expand their range and numbers, and as the first portion of the travel “corridor” between the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the wildlands of central Idaho.

Unfortunately, as wolves have expanded their range in to the Madison Valley area, ranchers in the area have already suffered livestock loss because of the wolves, and are expecting more losses in the future. The depredation is the most severe on remote public land grazing allotments where cattle and sheep aren’t monitored as closely as on private land. The result of these depredations, as was the case in late July of this year, is the killing of wolves.

In response, PCA has established a partnership with the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group and the Turner Endangered Species Fund to develop a “range rider” program to see whether increased human presence is effective in reducing wolf predation on the open range. The goal is to hire two range riders who would ride where conflicts are most likely to occur, and stay with the cattle on the summer months grazing allotments (May through October).

Although the field season is not until next spring, there is quite a bit of work to complete in preparation for the beginning of the field season. PCA has taken the lead role in finding funding for the project, and coordinating and facilitating its overall progress. Specifically, we will:

1) work with biologists from the Turner Endangered Species Fund to establish the study design for the program. TESF will also scientifically analyze the study at the conclusion of the field season. For instance, we have already established that the riders will only use non-lethal methods in protecting the cattle, and that they will not call the federal Wildlife Services program to ask for lethal control if depredation occurs. Finally, Val Asher, a wolf biologist employed by the Turner Endangered Species Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will train the riders in wolf ecology and behavior, and non-lethal harassment methods.

2) coordinate with the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group on the study design, as well as planning and implementing the actual field work. The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group which includes eight to ten ranching families, will be responsible for hiring the riders, making sure they have adequate livestock handling skills, and overseeing the coordination of these riders amidst the involved ranch families.

In addition to these efforts, PCA will take the lead on securing funding for the project, as well as work with the ranchers to see if they are interested in establishing their livestock operation as *Predator Friendly* (which we think can help them make range riders economically feasible over the long run). Come next spring, the three groups will work together to hire, train and coordinate two range riders, who will spend six months on the summer range working to keep wolves out of trouble with livestock.

Meanwhile, we will be meeting with ranchers in both Paradise Valley and Lemhi County to discuss the idea of them using range riders in their area. Paradise Valley is a critical area, because it is an area where wolves are initially expanding their range out of Yellowstone National Park. Lemhi County, or the Salmon country of southeast Idaho, is also critical for wolves because it is part of the area where wolves have re-established themselves in Idaho, and it is the first area in Idaho where wolves migrating from Yellowstone will arrive.

Other Funders: Please list other funders involved with this project, and/or those being sought. If certain funding is necessary for the project to move forward, please make that clear.

Predator Conservation Alliance is asking the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation to fund all of the work for establishing a Range Rider program in Madison Valley, as well as our efforts to promote the establishment of a similar program in two other identified conflict hot spots in the region.

Note: the bottom line cost of getting two range riders in the field in the Madison Valley area next summer is \$XXXX — the cost of hiring the range riders for six months.

Should the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation decide not to fund the entire project in Madison Valley, we will seek the remaining needed funds from other funders, including, but not limited to, the:

- Arthur B. Schultz Foundation
- Tapeats Fund
- Mountain Sky Guest Ranch Fund, part of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
- Bailey Wildlife Foundation
- Individual donors we have identified as being interested in this new PCA program

These are the same foundations and individuals from whom we will seek funding for the remainder of our *Coexisting with Predators* program work during 2004, including, but not limited to,

- implementing a Range Riders program in other areas of the region (if we are successful in our promotion of the idea);
- promoting our Predator Friendly program throughout the region;
- establishing a web-based information clearinghouse which will include references and resources for how people who live, work and recreate in predator country can proactively and non-lethally reduce conflicts with predators;
- producing a quarterly newsletter that discusses and promotes both the concept and practices of “coexisting with predators” — this publication will be written for and distributed to those people who live, work and recreate in predator country;
- implementing our residential conflict reduction program;
- pursuing our community engagement efforts to build political support for our stewardship and incentive programs beyond those who immediately use them.

It is important to note that part of what we want to determine through this project is whether or not using range riders is economically feasible for ranchers. If so, we expect within 3-5 years we will be able to have the Madison Valley project be self-sufficient, and show livestock producers elsewhere that range riders are an economically sound investment for their livestock operations.

Project Budget: Attach a one-page line-item budget. The budget should show uses for WPMF funds and other project expenses. Clearly indicate how much of WPMF funds will be used for overhead.

### **Range Rider Wolf Conflict Reduction Project Budget**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>WPMF</b>
Madison Valley Range Rider Wages (May - October, 2004).	24,000.00	24,000.00
Coordination of Madison Valley Project by PCA staff *	6,000.00	6,000.00
Promote Predator Friendly in Madison Valley *	3,000.00	3,000.00
Range Rider Outreach (Paradise Valley, Salmon, ID) *	4,000.00	4,000.00
PCA Administrative/Overhead Costs **	5,000.00	5,000.00
Total	<u>42,000.00</u>	<u>42,000.00</u>

\* Includes portion of staff salaries for *Coexisting with Predators* Program Director and Executive Director, as well as travel costs.

\*\* Includes overhead costs of rent, utilities, etc.

Board of Directors/Key Staff and consultants: Please include a list of your Board of Directors, key staff and consultants, with profession, place of residence and position on the Board.

### **Predator Conservation Alliance's Board of Directors**

**David Engel:** David is a biomedical scientist at the University of California, San Diego. He has been a member of Predator Conservation Alliance since it was founded in 1991. Prior to moving to San Diego in 1997, David lived in Seattle where he was active for several years in the local chapter of the Sierra Club on Wilderness/National Forest issues. He has also served as an officer and director for a Seattle corporation. David joined Predator Conservation Alliance's Board in May 1999.

**Karl Forsgaard:** Karl is an attorney from Mercer Island, Washington. He received a BS in biology from Harvard and his JD from the University of Washington. He has served as President of the Washington Trails Association and is presently the chairperson of the Sierra Club Recreation Issues Committee. Karl joined Predator Conservation Alliance's Board in January 2002.

**Lynn Fritchman:** A third generation Idahoan, Lynn served in U. S. Army for 26 years, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. From 1992-1995, Lynn was a "reservist" volunteer for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. In 1995-1996, Lynn chaired the Idaho Coalition United for Bears, a state-wide organization which placed a voter initiative on the 1999 ballot to ban baiting, hounding, and spring season hunts for black bears in Idaho. Lynn lives in Boise, Idaho, and joined Predator Conservation Alliance's Board in November 1999.

**Jacqueline Rieder Hud:** Jacquie is a local artist with national recognition. She and her husband have more than one business in the Bozeman area, including a guest cabin in Big Sky. Jacquie lives in Bozeman, and joined the Predator Conservation Alliance's Board in the fall of 2001.

**Richard Reading:** Rich is the Director of Conservation Biology at the Denver Zoological Foundation and an Associate Research Professor at the University of Denver. He earned his Ph.D. from Yale University. He serves on the boards of directors of the Argali Wildlife Research Center (Mongolia), the Colorado-Mongolia Project, and the Southern Plains Land Trust. Rich joined PCA's Board in January 2002.

**Kelly Rudd:** Kelly is a consultant in real estate transactions, advising private landowners and conservation-minded buyers on land-use issues and the conservation easement process. Kelly has worked as a fly-fishing outfitter in Jackson, Wyoming, and served as the founding vice president of the Teton Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited. He holds a Master's degree in Business, Government, and Not-for-Profit Management from Willamette University in Oregon. Kelly lives in Victor, Idaho, and joined PCA's Board fall of 2002.

**Becky Weed:** Becky is co-owner of Thirteen Mile Lamb and Wool Company in the Montana's Gallatin Valley. The ranch is a "predator friendly" operation, in that they do not to use lethal control methods against predators. Becky is also a co-founder of Predator Friendly, Inc, the organization that certifies ranches as "predator friendly". Becky lives outside of Bozeman, and joined the Board in the fall of 2001.

**Kristin Wimberg:** Kristin is a wildlife film editor, and has worked in the wildlife film business for 18 years. Her career began with wildlife filmmaker Wolfgang Bayer in Jackson Hole, and has continued in Los Angeles for 11 years as an editor for clients that included the PBS Nature show, Discovery and the National Geographic Specials. She and her family moved to Bozeman 5 1/2 years ago. Her husband is a cameraman and she has two children. Kristin lives in Bozeman, Montana, and joined the Board in December 2000.

President	David Engel
Vice President	Lynn Fritchman
Secretary	Kristin Wimberg
Treasurer	Rich Reading

## Predator Conservation Alliance Staff — As of May 2003

**Cecily Clemons**; Development Director ([cecily@predatorconservation.org](mailto:cecily@predatorconservation.org)): Cecily's work experience has ranged from the first Director of Development for the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, a land trust in coastal California, to a Major Gifts Officer for the San Francisco Opera in San Francisco, and Annual Fund Manager for Bastyr University in Washington state. Cecily's work experience includes 20 years in nonprofit organizations, 12 of which was spent dedicated to raising money. She holds a masters degree in nonprofit administration from University of San Francisco. Cecily joined Predator Conservation Alliance's staff in June 2001.

**David Gaillard**; Program Associate — Forest Predators ([gaillard@predatorconservation.org](mailto:gaillard@predatorconservation.org)): Dave worked for the Wild Forever Grizzly Bear Project from 1991 to 1994, and spent the summer of 1996 conducting an independent research project on the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Williams College and a Masters degree in environmental studies from Yale University. Dave joined Predator Conservation Alliance's staff in September 1997.

\*\*\* **Janelle Holden**; Coexisting with Predators Program Director ([janelle@predatorconservation.org](mailto:janelle@predatorconservation.org)): Janelle who grew up on a ranch on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front before spending two years in Washington, DC, first as an intern for Montana Senator Burns and then as assistant communications director for Idaho Senator Larry Craig. She also worked in Alberta, Canada as the national political reporter for a weekly magazine, and then as a media strategist for a successful senate campaign. Most recently, she was the environment reporter for the Cortes Journal and Durango Herald, as well as the campaign manager for a county commissioner campaign, in southwest Colorado. Janelle joined PCA's staff in April 2003.

**Jonathan Proctor**; Program Associate — Grasslands Predators ([jonathan@predatorconservation.org](mailto:jonathan@predatorconservation.org)): Jonathan received his MS at the University of Missoula in 1998, with a thesis titled "Resource Selection by Black-tailed Prairie Dogs in the Northern Great Plains Shortgrass Ecoregion." Jonathan has worked as a wilderness ranger, and volunteered with Wilderness Watch and Oregon Natural Resources Council. Jonathan joined Predator Conservation Alliance's staff in May 1997.

**Shannon Roberts**; Executive Assistant ([Shannon@predatorconservation.org](mailto:Shannon@predatorconservation.org)): In her seven years at Backcountry Tours, a adventure tourism company in Bozeman, Montana, Shannon worked her way up the ladder from Office Manager to Administrative Manager to Director/Fiscal Manager. She also spent three years as a Service Center manager with Montana AAA. Shannon joined PCA's staff in May 2001.

**Shawn Regnerus**; Program Associate – Motorized Access ([shawn@predatorconservation.org](mailto:shawn@predatorconservation.org)): Shawn addresses motorized travel and recreation issues. He received a BA in Philosophy, with a minor in Environmental Studies, from Calvin College in 1992, and a JD, with an emphasis in environmental law, from the University of Montana in 1997. Shawn spent a year clerking for the 19th Judicial District Court in Libby Montana. Shawn joined Predator Conservation Alliance's staff in January 1999.

**Jon Schwedler**; Communications Director ([jon@predatorconservation.org](mailto:jon@predatorconservation.org)): Jon has an undergraduate degree in archaeology from St. Mary's College of Maryland, and is currently pursuing a MS in rural planning. Prior to joining PCA, Jon spent four years with The Nature Conservancy working in communications, media relations, and outreach at both their international headquarters and Maryland chapter. Jon joined Predator Conservation Alliance's staff in November 2002.

\*\*\* **Tom Skeele**; Executive Director ([tom@predatorconservation.org](mailto:tom@predatorconservation.org)): Tom received a BS in Recreation and Park Management, with an emphasis in environmental education, from the University of Oregon in 1982. After nine years as an outdoor/experiential educator, Tom shifted to advocacy work and co-founded Predator Conservation Alliance in 1991.

\*\*\* Indicates staff actively involved in project

Other information: You may include other information about your organization or the history of your project. Unless specifically requested, this is not a requirement. Please put this information after the list of the Board.

### **Why Predator Conservation Alliance Exists**

Ultimately, the goal of environmental conservation is to protect, conserve and restore the wildlands, wildlife and wildness of our natural heritage. Doing so is not only critical to protecting the plants, animals, habitats and ecological systems of our natural landscapes, it also provides ecological, economic, cultural and spiritual benefits to people. For a number of reasons, Predator Conservation Alliance believes the conservation of wildlands-dependent predators, such as wolves, grizzly bears, and lynx, is an effective strategy for pursuing the protection, conservation and restoration of our wildlife, wildlands and wildness.

Yet, people often respond to the idea of focusing on predators by asking: (1) why focus on wildlife when ultimately we need to focus on habitat and ecosystem protection; and (2) why focus on a group of species that is so controversial and can cause problems for people? Our answer is simple: science, policy, and public opinion all strongly support the idea that carnivore conservation, as an over-arching conservation strategy, is beneficial to not only predators themselves, but serves the greater good of wildlands, wildlife and wildness as a whole.

Predator Conservation Alliance works to enhance and maintain the ecological integrity and balance of our wildlands through carnivore conservation. We work to protect and conserve predators and their habitat both for the benefit of these magnificent animals, and for the benefit of the overall ecosystem. We are simultaneously a wildlife conservation and habitat conservation organization. Meanwhile, PCA is also committed to ensuring a balance between people and our wildlife in the places we both call home. We are working with people who live, work and recreate in predator country to establish mutually-beneficial stewardship programs that protect our natural heritage while enhancing people's ability to continue pursuing their interests with fewer wildlife conflicts.

In total, Predator Conservation Alliance is working to saving a place for America's predators. This "place" is on the ground in the northern Rockies and northern Plains regions where we seek remedies to threats facing predators and their habitats. PCA focuses our conservation work in the northern Rockies and northern Plains because these two regions provide the best opportunity to conserve, and where necessary restore, native forest and grassland predators. We focus our work on four major factors limiting carnivore recovery and conservation: human-caused mortality; logging, grazing, oil and gas development and other resource extraction activities; motorized access, and habitat and population fragmentation.

This "place" is also in the human heart and mind, where we work to improve the public's understanding of, and appreciation for, the ecological, economic and cultural value these animals bring to our lives. PCA works to shift people's perception of predators in two ways. First, we advance the idea of having these animals fully restored and well distributed across the landscape, rather than only existing in a few isolated national parks, Wilderness areas and other public lands. Second, we work on the social side of predator conservation — increasing human acceptance and appreciation, with the final goal of coexistence. In doing so, we increase how often people take proactive steps to protect these animals and their habitats.



## Why Focus on Predators

Predator Conservation Alliance has chosen to focus on predators because they:

1) are the foundation for some of the strongest conservation measures being implemented today:

Wolves, grizzly bears, mountain lions, lynx, black-footed ferrets and other wildlands predators do best in the wildest, most pristine forests and prairie grasslands of western North American. Predators are more sensitive to habitat alteration and human activities than almost all other animals. As such, many conservation biologists consider these carnivores to be indicators of healthy, intact forests and grassland ecosystems. They are the “canaries in a coal mine” for our wildlands — disturb a wild area, and these animals are likely the first to retreat. Also, the ecological needs of carnivores help inform many conservation biology principles, including the need to protect core habitat areas and maintain corridors of species connectivity between those cores. Because of this, these animals need stronger conservation measures than almost all other animals.

For these reasons, predators provide a strong scientific and ecological leverage point for addressing habitat alteration and human activities to our public forest and grassland ecosystems. Pursuing the restoration and conservation of predators through the legal requirements of the Endangered Species Act (to protect wildlife that is threatened with extinction) and the National Forest Management Act (to ensure we manage our national forests and grasslands in a way that conserves all native wildlife) has proven to be successful at leveraging significant habitat and ecosystem protection as well. By restoring and conserving enough habitat for these species, we will have restored, protected and conserved an abundance of healthy forest and prairie wildlands.

2) have a pragmatic value as “umbrella” species: Protecting species that require large areas, like predators, provides an “umbrella” of protection for many other species that require smaller areas — including many species conservationists don't have the time or resources to focus on. This is particularly true if we protect the full suite of wildlands-dependent carnivores, such as the wolf, grizzly bear, lynx, wolverine and fisher, because in doing so we must address a diversity of habitat types at varying elevations. From the fisher that lives in mature and old-growth forests at lower elevations, to the wolverine that spends much of its time in more mountainous terrain, to the lynx that needs a mosaic of forest types, to the grizzly bear that needs both forest and big meadows, to the generalist wolf that cover lots of ground, meeting the ecological needs of these animals means we will meet the habitat needs of many other plants and animals.

3) play critical, or “keystone,” roles in their ecosystem: Carnivores influence ecosystems through a “top down regulation” effect. Wherever this phenomena has been studied, in terrestrial or marine environments, research shows that animals at the top of the food chain exert some influence on the population size and behavior of their prey, which in turn affects other trophic levels and the functions and balance of an ecosystem as a whole. For instance, a seminal research project found that with the loss of sea otters in the north Pacific Ocean, sea urchin numbers dramatically increased and depleted the kelp beds – affecting the overall kelp forest ecosystem. Meanwhile, in Yellowstone National Park, some researchers are theorizing that the wolf's return is playing a role in restoring creek bottoms in the northern portion of the park. These biologists believe wolves are making the elk more wary, which are therefore spending less time in places where wolves can easily catch them — including the flat creek bottoms. These biologists have noticed the willows in these areas are beginning to recover, which, in turn, is beneficial to not only elk, deer and moose, but also to beavers, birds, fish and amphibians.

4) are charismatic species that serve as popular symbols, or “flagships,” for conservation efforts: Public opinion poll after public opinion poll find that the majority of American’s (usually 60 to 75% or more) consider predators an important part of our natural heritage, and support restoring wolves and grizzly bears into areas of suitable habitat where they don’t exist. This is true whether the poll was conducted at a national level, or at a regional level such as in the northern Rockies, southern Rockies, Northwest, Northeast, Southwest or Southeast. These findings are not surprising given that for as long as humans have been around, our legends, beliefs and art have documented a special relationship with wild predators. For a variety of reasons, many people have an emotional affinity to wolves, bears and other predators. As such, there is a strong constituency ready to support these animals and the habitats they need.

For instance, the federal government received more public comments on its plans to reintroduce wolves to Yellowstone National Park than on any other wildlife plan in our nation’s history. People travel from across the country, indeed the continent and world, to see wolves, bears and other wildlife in Yellowstone. According to the National Park Service, wolf-related tourism has pumped \$20 million into the Yellowstone area since the wolf’s return in 1995. Ultimately, predators are charismatic species that serve as popular symbols, or “flagships,” for the needs of wildlife and wildlands in general — they are an emotional rallying point for many Americans interested in restoring, protecting and conserving our wildlife, wildlands and wildness.

5) provide an excellent opportunity - maybe the best - for people to determine how we can coexist with the wildness we value in our wildlands heritage: Predators are a symbol and embodiment of wildness. They are “the call of the wild” and help define a landscape as being truly wild, one that includes the important natural process of predation. If you are fortunate enough to have been in predator country, then you know it has a different feel than when traveling through places void of these animals. Yet, predators are also a symbol and embodiment of the struggles and conflicts we can experience with wildness when we live, work or recreate in wild landscapes.

Predator Conservation Alliance believes that wolves, bears, mountain lions and coyotes, as well as people’s relationship with them, are at a crossroads. As the numbers of people and predators increases, there are increased conflicts regarding human enterprises (primarily ranching and other agriculture pursuits) and safety (both in the wildlands where we recreate, and near our homes). This situation is emblematic of people’s relationship with wildness as a whole, which is being increasingly tested as we develop and move into more and more wild habitat.

Again, we would do well to focus on predators, thereby directly grappling with this emerging aspect — what PCA considers the “social side” — of wildlands and wildlife conservation. A prime indication of how well we can hold onto that wildness, in real and symbolic terms, is how people address the threats we face and conflicts we have with our wild associates at the top of the food chain. By working with diverse interests to establish mutually-beneficial stewardship programs that help mitigate the impacts of predators, PCA is helping secure a more positive future for predators specifically, and wildness in general.

In conclusion, there are numerous reasons why carnivores are an indicator of healthy landscapes and intact ecosystems, and why carnivore conservation is an effective strategy for restoring, protecting and conserving wildlands, wildlife and wildness. Equally important, these animals are not only valuable ecologically, they also provide values to peoples’ lives economically, culturally and spiritually.

## Predator Conservation Alliance's Niche

PCA fills an important, unique niche in the conservation community because we:

— are the only organization that focuses on all wildlands-dependent predators (not just the “charismatic megafauna”) in the northern Rockies and northern Plains. We focus most of our efforts on the imperiled forest and grasslands predators: the wolf, grizzly bear, lynx, wolverine, fisher, black-footed ferret, and swift fox. Additionally, we devote time to addressing conflicts people have with mountain lions, black bears and coyotes (as well as wolves and grizzly bears). We commit some time to birds of prey, such as the northern goshawk and burrowing owl.

— develop and promote comprehensive, forward thinking and ecologically sound conservation plans for these species and places. We think it is important to reframe the way managers approach carnivore conservation. For instance, we approach carnivore conservation from a multiple species perspective because management plans designed to address the needs of more than one species are more efficient ecologically and in terms of the use of limited resources. As such, multi-species conservation plans are likely to be more effective than the predominant single species approach.

— collect and use the best scientific information, including our own field-based inventories, to determine each predator species' ecological needs and condition, the threats they face, where PCA and others should focus our monitoring and advocacy efforts, and what best management practices should be used to ensure the long-term conservation of these species.

— share this information with public agencies, conservation groups and others to help guide and prioritize their monitoring and protection efforts. We provide this information through a variety of sources: a web-based information clearinghouse which details the ecological needs of each species we advocate for; various reports and other publications which present our strategies or solutions for meeting the species' needs; regular face-to-face meetings with agency personnel, biologists and field researchers, conservationists, university professors, media, opinion leaders and decision-makers, and the general public; our annual meeting, which each year focuses on a pertinent and timely aspect of carnivore conservation; and more.

— pursue administrative, legal and public pressure avenues to secure adequate protections for predators and their habitats. While our preference is to work with agencies and others to resolve problems and improve management, sometime the political climate is such that we need to “use the stick.” of the administrative appeals process or laws such as the Endangered Species Act.

— expanding, strengthening and solidifying public interest in and support for predators, as well as PCA's work, through our Voices for Predators program . We focus our outreach, education and engaging efforts on seven priority audiences: media; people who live, work and recreate in predators country; educators; opinion leaders; PCA members; decision makers; and animal lovers. Considering the out-dated beliefs and myths about wolves, bears, mountain lions and other predators, this work often entails explaining what is not true about these animals, while also presenting the ecological, economic and cultural value they bring to our lives. We provide our members and the public with a quarterly newsletter (*The Home Range*); timely alerts seeking public comments on critical agency policies, plans and proposals; multi-media presentations, reports and fact sheets; field trips; and a comprehensive website.

## Coexisting with Predators

Predator Conservation Alliance's newest program, initiated in Spring 2003, is an education and outreach effort, focused in the northern Rockies region, to increase people's ability to reduce conflicts with wildlife. This focuses on the social side of predator conservation — human acceptance, tolerance, appreciation and, ultimately, coexistence. We work with people who live, work and recreate in predator country to establish mutually-beneficial stewardship and community celebration programs that lead to reduced conflicts between people and predators.

On the predator side, this program focuses on the wolf, grizzly bear, black bear, mountain lion and coyote — those predator species that people most value and respect, but also most fear and have conflicts with. On the people side, we work with five constituency groups that experience the most conflicts with these predators: (1) traditional agriculture landowners; (2) conservation-minded landowners; (3) homeowners who live next to wildland habitats; (4) hunters; and (5) backcountry recreationists.

We work with a diverse group of individuals and communities to develop and provide the information, programs and, if need be, resources needed to (1) respond to the fear, anxiety and losses some people experience because of these animals, and (2) have people take real and workable steps toward minimizing conflicts with predators. The three major objectives of this program are:

- To develop, promote and initiate stewardship and incentive programs that will reduce the direct conflicts people who live, work and recreate in predator country have with these animals. This includes, for example, using human vigilance through a range-rider program to reduce livestock losses on grazing allotments, working with homeowners in the “wildlands/community” interface to make household attractants (such as bird feeders, pet food, fruit trees and the like) less accessible so bears or other predators are less likely to be drawn into a residence, or helping ranchers who use non-lethal conflict reduction measures get a higher return on their cattle or sheep products through an environmentally-sensitive certification market.
- To provide a web-based clearinghouse of information on the options for reducing conflicts that arise between the above-mentioned groups of people and predators, to be accessed by any interested individual and to help inform PCA's stewardship and education programs.
- To expand, strengthen and solidify public interest in and support for predators in the region through community programs that are fun, educational and celebratory in nature, and promote the ecological, economic and cultural value of these animals.

A decade ago the question was whether wolves, grizzly bears and other predators were going to exist in the west. Today, predators are here to stay. However, the work is not done. We now face new questions: (1) how are we going to ensure predators are well-distributed across the landscape, and (2) how are we going to coexist with them, sharing the land with fewer conflicts?

PCA is confident that our Coexisting with Predators program will address these timely questions by working with others to restore these animals where there is adequate habitat and social acceptance. No other organization is addressing the issue of coexistence with predators in such a comprehensive and engaging manner.