



HENRYS FORK WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

CHAMPIONS FOR WILDLIFE

Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance Newsletter: Volume 1, No.1

July 2019

OUR MISSION

Educate and advocate to protect and conserve the native wildlife and its enjoyment by the public in the Upper Henrys Fork Watershed.



**Affiliate of
the Idaho
Wildlife
Federation**



New Wildlife Alliance Forms in Eastern Idaho

Grassroots activists in Fremont County recently announced the formation of a new organization. The new group, the Henrys Fork Wildlife Alliance, aims to educate and advocate for science-based solutions on issues that impact wildlife in the Upper Henrys Fork Watershed. The Alliance is affiliated with the Idaho Wildlife Federation, the oldest and largest statewide sportsmen group dedicated to the conservation of natural resources, wildlife, and wildlife habitat.

"We live here and are stewards of a special treasure," said organizing committee member Jean Bjerke, a longtime homeowner in Island Park who met her husband in Island Park 25 years ago. "Residents of Island Park live here for the quality of life and wildlife is the cornerstone of our lifestyle. We need to have conversations about how we can live with wildlife and keep them healthy, and we need to have scientific data and facts guiding those conversations and policies."

HFWA founding member Tim Reynolds has lived in Idaho for 45 years, enjoyed his first camping trip to Island Park in 1974 and has owned a home in Island Park for 15 years. He said he wanted to help form the Henrys Fork Wildlife Alliance to bring people together around our love of wildlife.

Local sportswoman JoAnn Shults, a fourth-generation Idahoan who lives in Island Park and has spent many hours hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and four-wheeling, said "We moved here because we love the wildlife. We should protect what we love," Shults said.

"There is no such thing as a Republican elk or a Democrat mule deer."

Brian Brooks, executive director of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, said: "There is no such thing as a Republican elk or a Democrat mule deer. All they need is food, habitat, and the ability to get from point A to point B. Partisanship and misinformation keep us from having important conversations and good policy. Bringing folks together to inform decisions that keep Island Park and the Upper Henrys Fork a great place to live, visit, and hunt is critical now. HFWA will be a uniting organization with this in mind."



Top Photo: Brian Brooks, executive director, Idaho Wildlife Federation (3rd from right) with HFWA organizing committee members (from left) Tim Reynolds, Mary Van Fleet, Jean Bjerke, & Bonnie Altshuld, of Island Park; Ann Schenk of Ashton (photo:Randy Bjerke)
Bottom Photo: Jean Bjerke at Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Living With Wildlife: A Privilege & Responsibility

By Charlie Lansche

She was a beautiful animal. Sleek, tall and strong, and highly protective of her yearling male calf which never strayed too far from her view. The duo was in winter survival mode when they settled into our neighborhood last February. It seemed that moving about on our plowed roads required less energy than breaking trail through six feet of snowpack. From these twisted roads, mother and calf could reach vital browse and find protection from the brutal Island Park winter.

Local residents used extra caution when walking dogs and driving. We didn't want to spook or stress the moose, put ourselves at risk, or inadvertently push them onto nearby Highway 20 where they could face a deadly collision with motorists.

We loved seeing mother and calf and occasionally I would photograph them while they roamed the 'hood in search of a meal. And there was that time when I opened the shades to our bedroom window to find the cow peering in with her bulbous nose pressed against the glass.

Some folks suggested that we feed the moose to ensure they survived the winter. Others offered that feeding any wildlife, while well intended, may cause more harm than good through habituation and

difficulty with digesting unnatural foods. We opted for a laissez faire approach letting nature take its course.

It is both a privilege and a responsibility to coexist with wildlife. We use extra caution with bears and make efforts to keep odorous attractants at bay. We don't leave coolers or garbage out; barbecues, gasoline cans and even bird feeders can attract bears. We try to make noise and carry bear spray while using local trails.

In late February it was reported to me the cow moose was hit and killed by a motorist on Highway 20. The calf was orphaned during its first winter alone. And though I believe he survived the winter, it was a hard reminder for each of us to slow down and be mindful of wildlife that may be utilizing roadways during times of deep snowpack and seasonal migrations.

Charlie Lansche is a landscape and wildlife photographer residing in Island Park, Idaho

"It is both a privilege and a responsibility to coexist with wildlife."

OUR VISION

The iconic wildlife of the Upper Henrys Fork Watershed will thrive in connected and sustainable habitats because citizens treasure diverse and healthy wildlife populations and understand what is required for their continued success.



Champions for Wildlife

We are the only citizens organization devoted solely to protecting healthy wildlife populations in the Upper Henrys Fork Watershed.



Want to Know More About Big Game Migrations? Listen to Idaho Department of Fish & Game

Many wildlife species must migrate each year to survive as individuals and populations. Land uses such as residential and energy development, fences, roads, and large-scale habitat changes due to wildfire or noxious/invasive weeds degrade winter range and disrupt migration routes that allow animals to move from one place to another. Such effects can not only reduce wildlife population growth but can also reduce the harvestable surplus of game species available for hunting, leading to decreases in hunting opportunity and hunters, resulting in an adverse impact to Idaho's economy and cultural values.

Idaho's big game populations, particularly mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope provide many examples of extensive migration. For example, mule deer migrate over one hundred miles to and from Wyoming and Idaho seasonal ranges. From the Pioneer Mountains, pronghorn travel over 100 miles to the Beaverhead Mountains and back. Elk and deer migrate from Yellowstone National Park across U.S. 20 to the Sand Creek desert of Eastern Idaho.

Elk across Idaho migrate from high elevation summer ranges in all of Idaho's mountains to milder winter ranges of lower elevation south and west facing slopes to increase their survival during winter months. [We] are now only beginning to understand the full scope of how and where movement and migration help sustain native wildlife. It is important for IDFG and stakeholders to manage and conserve the wildlife, their important migration and movement pathways, and associated seasonal habitats such as winter range.

From

IDAHO ACTION PLAN for Implementation of Department of Interior Secretarial Order 3362: "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors"

"[We] are now only beginning to understand the full scope of how and where movement and migration help sustain native wildlife."



Autumn Bugle (CM Lansche Images)



Mule Deer (P Pickett)



JoAnn with Moose



Kit & Caboodle (Jon Jacobs)

"I am a fourth generation Idahoan. I live in Island Park, and I have spent many hours hunting fishing, snowmobiling and 4-wheeling. I also believe in protecting wildlife and open spaces. We moved here because we love the wildlife. We should protect what we love."

JoAnn Shults
Island Park



Calendar Announcement:

We all love our wildlife. Want to know more about their migrations? The Nature Conservancy and Idaho Fish and Game are sponsoring a great speaker from Idaho Department of Fish and Game this summer in Island Park and Ashton. Both presentations are free and open to the public.

Program in Island Park sponsored by the Flat Ranch Preserve

Program in Ashton sponsored by Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Wildlife Migration at the Crossroads: Solving Idaho's Wildlife-Human Conflicts

Gregg Servheen, Idaho Department of Fish & Game

Saturday, July 27, 2019 - 7 PM

Visitor Center at the Flat Ranch Preserve,
4770 Hwy 20, Island Park

Gregg Servheen, Idaho Department of Fish & Game

Saturday, August 24, 2019 - 5:30-7:00 PM

Ashton Community Center, 925 Main, Ashton

Contact Us Today!

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