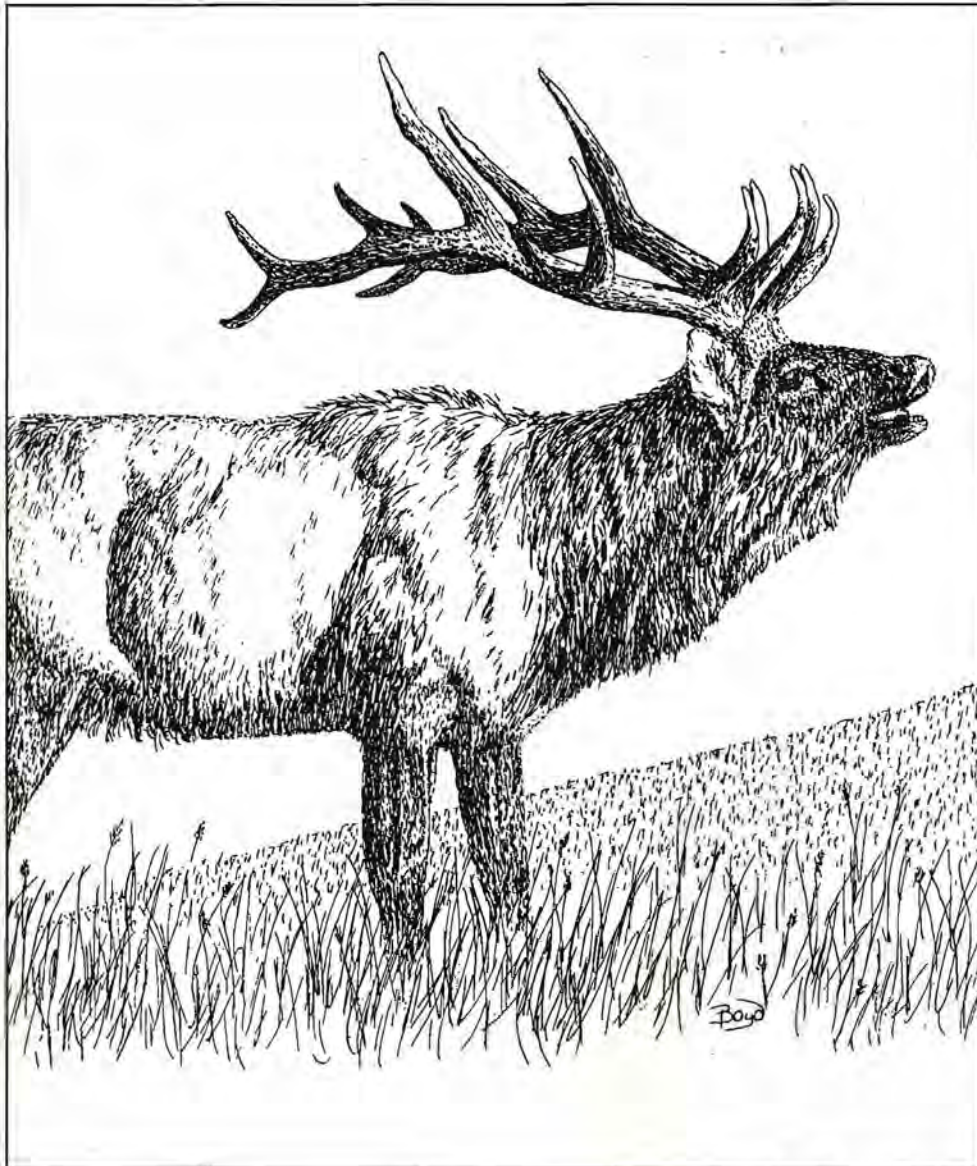


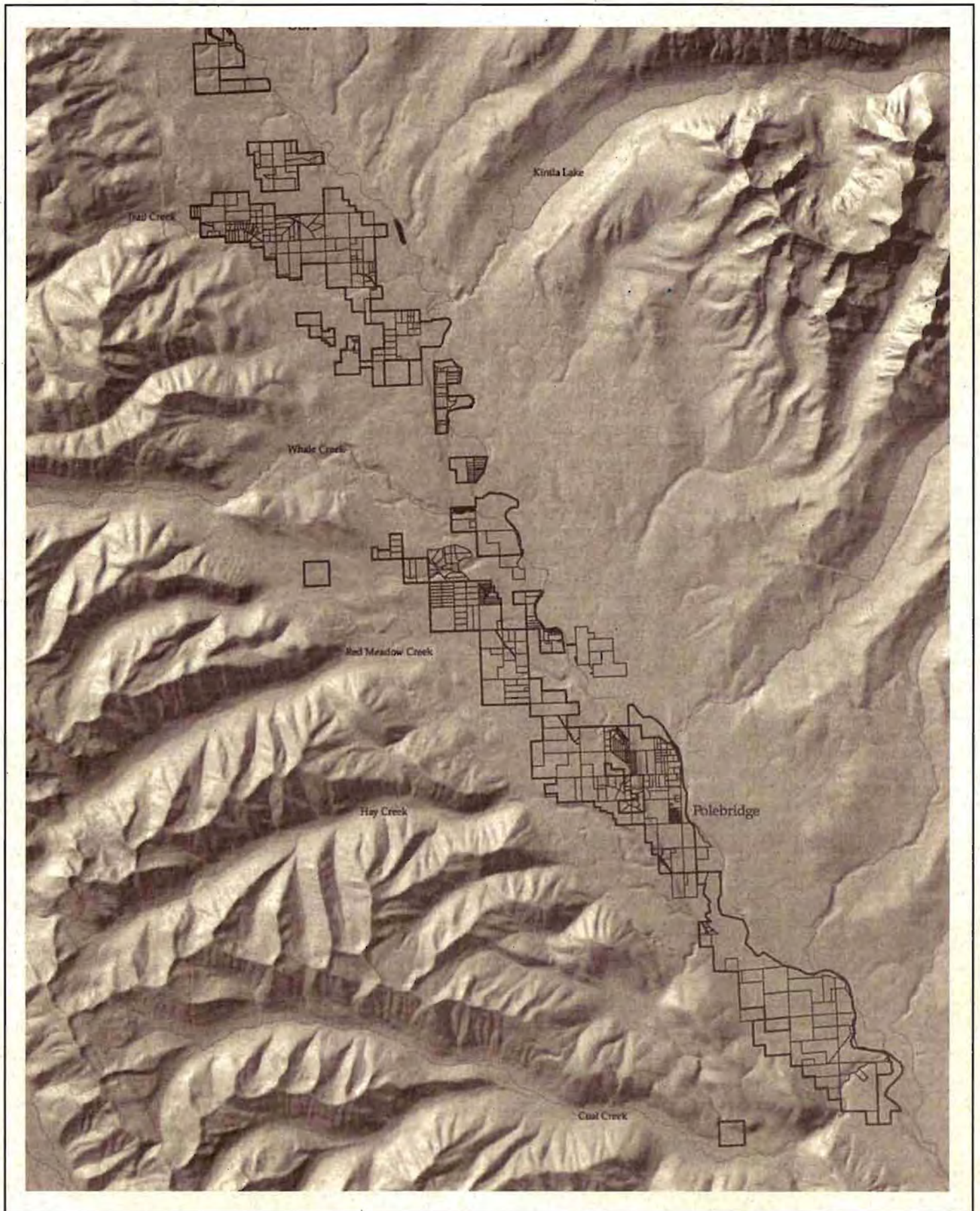
The North Fork: *Living With Wildlife*



Diane Boyd illustration

**Produced by:
The North Fork Community
and friends**

PRIVATE LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE NORTH FORK OF FLATHEAD RIVER VALLEY



Map courtesy of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Grizzly Bear Recovery Office

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The North Fork: *Living With Wildlife*

I. A Statement of Purpose

Wildlife is an integral part of the valley. This is an important reason why we live and recreate in the North Fork.

As the North Fork grows and is developed, the valley continually becomes less attractive for humans and less secure for animals.

Problems may arise when extensive development expands along a valley bottom, eliminating many animals' opportunity for safe travel, feeding, and reproduction.

This brochure outlines recommendations on how to live responsibly in wildlife habitat and suggests specific ways to minimize the chances of conflict with such animals as grizzly bears, black bears, mountain lions, wolves, coyotes, deer, elk, and moose.



Coexistence among all of the valley's residents, both people and animals, will help to protect the qualities which make the North Fork a unique and wonderful place.

II. The North Fork

The North Fork of the Flathead lies between the Whitefish Range to the west and the Livingston Range in Glacier National Park to the east. Within the U.S., the valley extends from the border of British Columbia south to the Big Creek drainage.

Private lands make up roughly 3% (15,000 acres) of the valley. While private holdings are only a small portion of total land ownership, they make up some of the most critical wildlife habitat since they are mainly located along the valley bottom.

Recreationists are increasingly seeing the North Fork as an attractive place to escape urban pressures.

Land prices have skyrocketed in the past several years, which has spurred subdivision of larger parcels of land into small lots.

Lack of experience with living in a wild and rural area has the potential to bring residents into conflict with wildlife. Therefore, it is important to inform residents about the importance of human impact on wildlife.

III. Land Use Planning in the North Fork: A Background

The North Fork Land Use Plan provides an excellent background for current efforts to protect wildlife. It outlines past trends in land use and residents' attitudes, and it describes goals for the future of the North Fork. The Land Use Plan is an essential reference for anyone moving to or doing business in the North Fork.

Copies of the North Fork Land Use Plan are available at the Polebridge Mercantile and the Home Ranch Store.



IV. What Can Private Landowners Do To Coexist Successfully With Wildlife?

The recommendations that follow are a set of guidelines on how to avoid human/wildlife conflicts, and what to do if problems occur:

Subdivision, Development, and Land Use Recommendations:

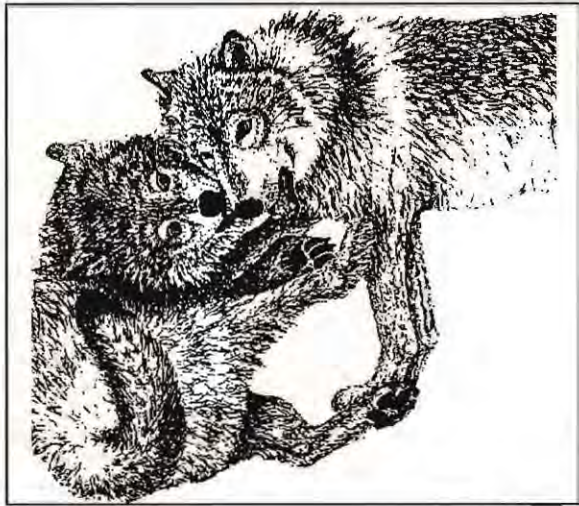
- (1) Limiting the number of dwellings on private property tends to increase the security of wildlife habitat.
- (2) Conservation easements are an option to protect the character of the land.

Whatever the landowner chooses to do, or not to do, with his land becomes permanent with a conservation easement.

Land trust organizations specializing in conservation on private land are appropriate sources for additional information.

- (3) Real estate agents are generally the first ones to interact with new residents, and their involvement

through full disclosure is very important. Real estate agents should be encouraged to inform buyers moving into bear and lion habitat about the need to minimize animal attractants in order to reduce problems between wildlife and humans.



Diane Boyd

Eliminating Animal Attractants:

In the North Fork people need to take special precautions to ensure that they are not inadvertently attracting wildlife.

Improper storage of foods and garbage can kill animals and birds by making them unafraid of humans and dependent on humans for food. When an animal loses its natural

fear of humans, it often becomes dangerous.

- (1) Store garbage in the house or in a secured bear-proof container, well out of reach of wildlife.

Barbecue grills, portable smokers, ice chests, coolers, beverage cans, and bottles are bear attractants that should be stored inside or washed thoroughly.

Do not pour grease or other liquid garbage on the ground.

- (2) To reduce the odors and attractiveness of stored garbage, bag it several times in plastic and avoid letting meat or fish residue sit for long periods of time.

Spray your garbage cans with disinfectant after each use.

Don't let garbage pile up! Get rid of it properly as soon as you can.

In the North Fork, the Forest Service's adage is the best policy: "Pack it in, pack it out." County dumpsters are located in Columbia Falls.

- (3) Keep all pet and livestock feed inside the house, or in a

secured container or shed.
Never leave domestic animal feed outside unattended.

Never leave house pets tied up outside unattended for long periods of time. They will attract mountain lions or other predators.

Bowls of dog food left on the porch have caused problems with bears and other wildlife.

- (4) Refrain from feeding deer and elk during winter months. Feeding by humans eventually causes wild animals to lose their natural instinct to migrate. Consequently, during times of food shortage, the animals no longer know how to locate natural wintering areas and food. This may result in starvation for a large number of these animals.

Large concentrations of deer, elk, and moose also tend to attract predators. Lions hunt areas where they have been repeatedly successful at making kills. They will keep coming back.

Deer, elk, and bears often like the same foods, including lettuce, apples, cabbage, and carrots. Do not use these items as feed.

Salt blocks tend to bring in deer and elk. Mountain lions, wolves, coyotes, and bears may then be attracted to the area.

- (5) We DO NOT recommend feeding birds in the summer. Bears and deer are attracted to bird seed.

Hummingbird feeders are targeted by bears because they contain sugar. If you have hummingbird feeders, hang them as high as possible.

Window box bird feeders are easy prey for bears and entice animals to come close to your home or cabin.

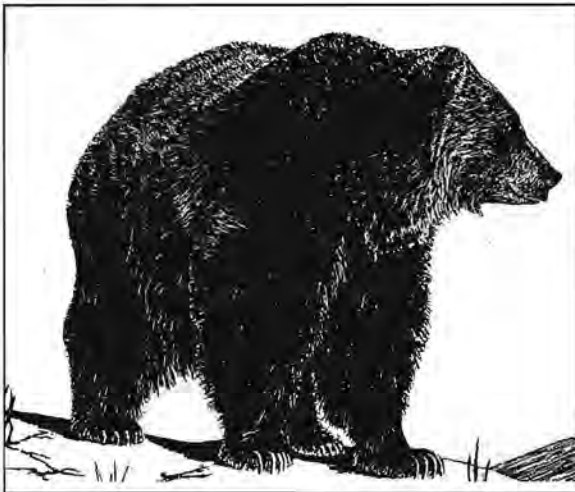
- (6) Avoid keeping compost piles, fruit trees, bees, or vulnerable livestock such as goats, chicken, or sheep. These attractants are too easily accessible to predators.

- (7) If you garden, keep a high fence.

Fruit trees bring in bears, and because the North Fork has such a short, cold growing season, fruit trees tend to die anyway.

- (8) Hunters should not leave gut piles near human dwellings and should hang game very high, leaving 10 feet between the animal and the ground.

The best practice is to remove or butcher wild game as soon as possible.



Diane Boyd

Wildlife / Human Interactions:

- (1) Living in the woods has risks. Learn how to protect yourself and your family by avoiding conflicts with wildlife.

All wild animals, including deer, elk, moose, bears, wolves, coyotes, mountain lions, and birds of prey can be dangerous to pets and humans when disturbed or threatened. Always keep an eye on pets.

- (2) Ravens and eagles in trees often indicate a dead animal with a predator feeding. It is unwise to approach.
- (3) As of this writing, wolves and coyotes have not attacked people or pets in the North Fork.
- (4) If you have a conflict with a bear or any other wildlife on your private land, phone the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at 406-752-5501.

*** In case of emergency, call 911 or the Flathead County Sheriff's Office at 406-758-5585 anytime.*

- (5) What to do if a grizzly is in the yard:

According to Tim Manley, bear specialist for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the bear should be scared away.

It is acceptable to take a few quick photographs from a safe place, but get the bear out of there by banging on pots or making noise in some other fashion. Throwing things might be a last resort, but make sure you are in a safe and protected position when you are doing these things.

Make it unwelcome each time it comes and it will stay away from other homes as well.

Chasing a bear away is actually doing the bear a favor by preventing it from being trapped and removed, or even killed.

- (6) Grizzly bears are not waiting in the woods to attack you. However, they can be unpredictable. Females with cubs can be particularly dangerous because of protective instincts for their young.

If you encounter a grizzly bear, DO NOT act aggressively. Slowly back away, speaking in a low voice. Turn your head to the side and avoid eye contact.

Never run! You cannot outrun a bear. If you are comfortable with bear spray, use the pepper spray designed specifically for bears, as these products are the proper size and strength.

Pepper spray has proven effective in repelling grizzly attacks and should be readily available whenever you hike or camp (not in the bottom of your backpack).

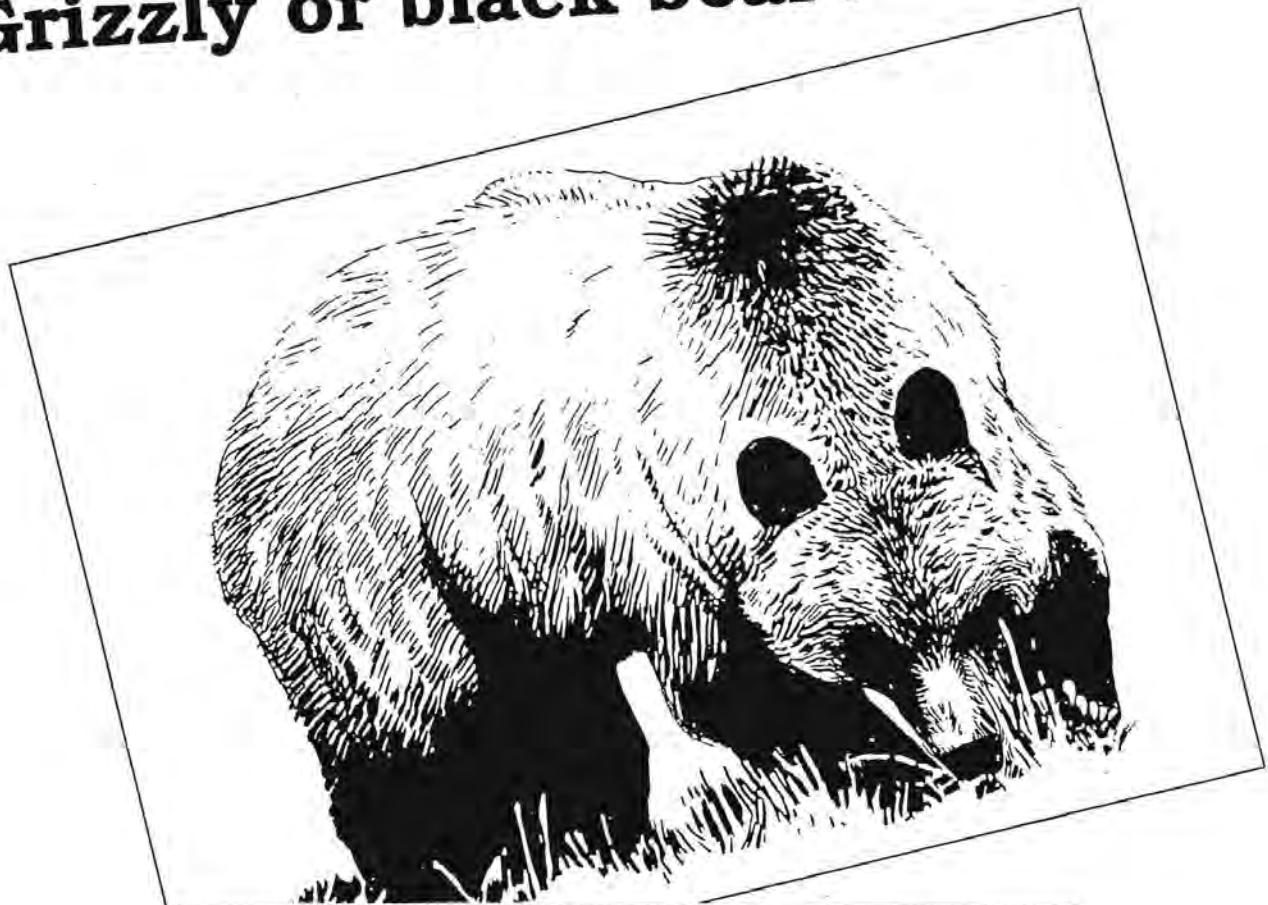
If charged, do not drop to the ground until the bear is near and you believe you are in imminent danger. Protect your neck and face, and once on the ground get into the fetal position. Once you have dropped to the ground do not move from that position until you are certain the bear is gone.

Only use a large-caliber firearm to defend yourself or someone else from an attack, and only if you are competent with a gun.

Remember, wounding a bear can make it even more dangerous to you. Although firearms are not allowed in Glacier National Park, you can legally carry them in the National Forest.

Grizzly bears are classified as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. There are substantial fines for illegally shooting a grizzly bear.

Grizzly or black bear?



Can You Identify a Grizzly Bear?

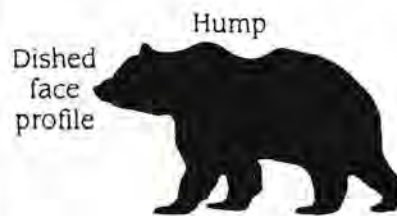
Look for a combination of several characteristics, as color and size are sometimes misleading.

Black Bear



Front track of black bear

Grizzly Bear



Front track of grizzly bear

- (7) Mountain lions are not often seen but are fairly common in the North Fork. They have been known to attack children, small adults, and pets. Never turn your back on a lion, and do not run!

If you are confronted by a lion, you must deal with it very differently than you would a grizzly bear. Lions can usually be chased off with aggressive behavior, such as yelling, waving a large stick, or throwing things. Fight back if you are big enough or have something to swing.

- (8) Teach children how to live safely with bears, lions, and wolves.
- (9) Use the same care around grazing livestock that you would with wildlife. Just because they are domestic animals doesn't mean that they are not dangerous.
- (10) Do not transplant into the North Fork animals, birds, or fish raised in captivity. It is inhumane and will disrupt the natural balance.

If you observe someone releasing captive raised animals, birds, or fish in the North Fork, please get a

license plate number and report it to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks as soon as possible.

- (11) Pamphlets providing more information are available at the Polebridge Mercantile, the Home Ranch Store, and the Polebridge Ranger Station. They are also available at Glacier View Ranger Station in Hungry Horse and from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks in Kalispell.

V. Conclusion

The North Fork is a way of life as well as a place to live and recreate. This brochure is designed to help protect this valuable area that happens to be our home and one of the most beautiful places on earth.

The abundance and variety of wildlife, both predators and prey, the vegetation, and the natural beauty all contribute to the unique character of the North Fork Valley. We humans are a part of the ecosystem. People and animals must learn to coexist.

In closing, we encourage you to treat the North Fork Valley as a place to live in harmony with nature, not as a wilderness to be conquered.

ADDENDUM



By Tim Manley, Bear Conflict Specialist, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

WHY IS THIS BEAR IN MY YARD?

Grizzly and black bears are always looking for easy food. When people move into or adjacent to bear habitat, there is always the chance that bears will be attracted to the area around houses because of the food we may be providing. The following is a list of things that we know attract bears to our property. Also included is the best option I know for dealing with the attractant, and then some other options that may help minimize the chance of attracting and feeding bears.

- (1) **Food that people eat:** If we eat it, bears will eat it too. Don't leave food outside unattended, especially at night. If you are done eating, put it away or in the garbage.

- (2) **Garbage:** Even though we don't eat garbage, bears do. Keep all food related garbage in the house or a secure closed building, preferably in sealed plastic bags, and haul the garbage often. Bears will even get into empty pop cans because of the sweet sugar residue left in them. The longer you let the garbage pile up, the smellier it gets and the sooner bears will find it.

- (3) **Livestock feed:** If it isn't straight hay, and you feed it to your horses, llamas, cattle, pigs, goats, chickens, and rabbits, then bears will eat it too. Especially attractive are horse pellets, 3-way (corn, oats, and barley mixed with molasses), cracked corn and oats, and chicken scratch. Even silage fed to cows will attract bears. Most of the time the 3-way and pellets are just a supplement to grass and hay, and if that is the case then it could be possible to reduce or eliminate the amount you supplement. Store the feed in 55 gallon drums with lock-down lids in a secure building. Also, try to feed in a bucket or rubber tub so that you can pour the unused portion back into the barrel, and put the bucket away.
- (4) **Pet foods:** Bears really like both the canned and dry pet food that you feed your dogs and cats. If your pets are allowed in the house then feed them inside. If you keep them outside, feed them in the morning or at mid-day. That way you won't leave uneaten food sitting outside. If your pets haven't eaten it all by evening, bring the food dish inside or empty it for the night.
- (5) **Bird feeders:** The best option is not to feed birds or squirrels during the time when bears are out (mid March to mid December). This includes suet feeders, peanut butter feeders,

sunflower seed feeders, and even hummingbird feeders (though hummingbirds aren't around in the winter). Other options that apply to seed or hummingbird feeders are to hang them out of reach of bears (easy if you have a deck off the second story or big trees around). Just remember that bears do climb very well. Otherwise, bring feeders in at night or only put out enough seed for the bird to eat during the course of a day so nothing is out overnight. Of course, store the seed indoors and not just in a garbage can sitting on the back porch.

- (6) **Feeding wildlife:** Don't do it. Feeding the deer and elk corn and oats, or putting out apples for them will also result in feeding the bears. Even if you feed during the winter, there will be lots of leftovers in the spring. Again the best option... don't do it.
- (7) **Mineral and salt blocks:** Grizzly bears have been seen licking on mineral blocks. Especially bad are the mineral blocks that have corn and molasses in them. Straight salt blocks are not as attractive to bears, but they will attract deer, and thus lions.

- (8) **Compost piles:** Not recommended. Unfortunately, many of these end up being garbage piles rather than compost piles. If only vegetable matter is put in the pile and it is aerated and turned properly, then there usually isn't a problem. Electric fencing can be effective in keeping bears away from compost piles.
- (9) **Livestock:** Bears usually don't bother horses, adult cattle, or llamas. Some bears may take calves, sheep, lambs, goats, pigs, geese, and chickens. Sheep, pigs, and chickens are especially vulnerable. If they aren't a part of your livelihood, consider not keeping them. If you do have them, remember to keep feed unavailable to wildlife, clean up any afterbirth, and remove any dead animals immediately. Electric fencing can be used to keep bears out of corrals and chicken coops.
- (10) **Dead livestock:** If you have a cow or horse that dies, you should haul it to the landfill or have a rendering service pick it up. If you are unable to do that, hauling it to a remote spot (and burying it if possible) on your own private land is an option. Don't go dump it out on public property where someone else might wander into it. Don't leave dead animals next to buildings or in bone pits. Distribute them in a random fashion, rather than always in the same place year after year.
- (11) **Beehives:** Not recommended. If you must have them, then proper electric fencing or bear proof platforms are the only options.
- (12) **Wild game:** If you shoot a deer in your front yard, don't leave the gut pile there. After you harvest an animal, butcher it as soon as possible. If you have to hang it, then quarter it and hang it at least 10 feet from the ground and 4 feet out from the tree. Putting it in a secure shed or garage may work for a while, but make sure to butcher it quickly. Don't leave meat scraps, hides, or heads laying around.
- (13) **Fruit trees:** Bears love all kinds of fruit, even crabapples. Don't plant fruit trees. If you have fruit trees, then pick all of the fruit as soon as it is ripe.
- (14) **Vegetable gardens:** Bears might check out the garden, especially the carrots. Consider not having a garden, or use electric fencing. The deer will probably get the garden before the bears.
- (15) **Flower gardens:** Not a problem unless you use blood meal to try to keep the deer away.

(16) **Lawns:** Try to use native vegetation for landscaping. If you must have a lawn, don't use clover, as bears really like clover, dandelions, and lush green grass.

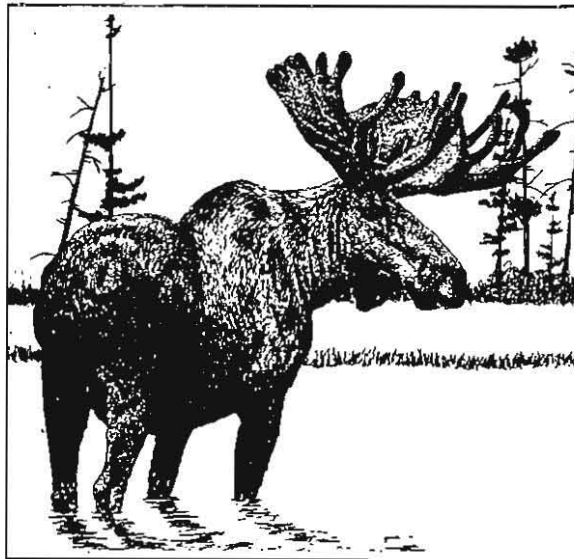
(17) **Miscellaneous:** Don't leave refrigerators or freezers unsecured on the back porch. Don't throw cooking grease and waste water out the back door. Use common sense.

Remember... bears are very good at finding food, and unfortunately we are very good at making it available to them. We can live in bear country successfully without adversely affecting bears if we don't attract them and feed them. If a bear does get a food reward, just remove the attractant and most likely the bear will move on. If the bear continues to associate houses with food rewards, it becomes difficult to make food attractants unavailable. Your neighbors need to keep food rewards unavailable also. If the bears are eating at your neighbor's house, they may very well come by your place and see what you left out.

If you do have a bear that gets a food reward, or you would like me to come help you identify and secure attractants, please feel free to contact me. It is far easier to prevent bear problems in the first place than to try to change bear behavior afterwards.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me:

Tim Manley
Grizzly Bear Management Specialist
MT Fish Wildlife and Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
Office: 751-4584
Home: 892-0802



Diane Boyd

Grizzly killed after conditioning bid is unsuccessful

A young male grizzly that had been frequenting the Essex and Pinnacle areas for more than a month was captured and killed by lethal injection Tuesday.

The bear had been actively searching for bird seed, pet food and garbage. Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologist Tim Manley captured and anesthetized the bear, and a veterinarian injected a euthanization drug.

The decision was made jointly by members of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee.

The committee believed it would be difficult to find a zoo willing to take a 2 1/2-year-old male grizzly as they prefer taking young-of-the-year grizzlies and females, said the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The bear was first captured July 1 in Essex at the same residence where a black bear and grizzly had been captured in 1995. The bear was fitted with a radio collar and released at the head of Dickey Creek. It later returned to the valley and moved back and forth between the communities of Essex and Pinnacle.

Manley worked with the bear and the residents throughout July.

"I felt that the bear would leave the area around the communities if we could get people to make the bird seed and garbage unavailable, and at the same time give the bear a negative experience using rubber bullets,

'We spent weeks working at great lengths with the residents and the bear.'

— Tim Manley

pepper spray and cracker shells," he said.

He said the problem was that all the attractants were not removed and the bear continued to get food rewards.

Most residents were cooperative in Manley's efforts to remove attractants,

but some were not. The continued food rewards obtained by the bear caused it to become food conditioned.

"We spent weeks working at great lengths with the residents and the bear," Manley said.

Manley said that earlier in the week the bear had been walking between trailers and getting into garbage. Manley hit the bear with a "bean bag" deterrent round fired from a 12-gauge shotgun at 12 yards.

Within hours the bear returned to the same site and was finally captured.

Manley is also working with another sub-adult grizzly in the area, a female believed to be a sibling. He said efforts are underway to avoid removing that bear.

He noted efforts will succeed only if residents make a community decision to remove attractants.

In other bear news, an adult male grizzly was captured on the Blackfeet Reservation after killing a cow and relocated on Aug. 3 to the Unawah Creek drainage above Hungry Horse Reservoir. The bear was fitted with a radio collar and will be monitored.