

Statement of Robert Jackson December 2001

The issues in this statement are not included within the official agendas of any of the various interagency meeting being held on the Yellowstone Ecosystem. So, if I sound like a voice in the wilderness it is because that is precisely what I am. My name is Bob Jackson. I am not a politician or a park administrator or a scientist. I am a back country ranger in Yellowstone National Park. My beat is one of the most remote outposts in federal service X the Thorofare country in the southeast corner of Yellowstone.

Every year for more than a generation, I have patrolled its valleys, walked its boundaries and watched its denizens. I know what I know and I know what I have seen. For those of us who care about what is happening in the back country, let me be as plain as possible:

We are on the verge of an ecological disaster with the Yellowstone grizzly. Tons of elk meat left on the forest floor by hunters have habituated generations of grizzly to a new and irresistible food source. To be the first to claim an elk carcass, grizzly follow hunting parties, associate the sound of gunfire with food and descend upon fresh kills like an avenging fury from hell.

Like the Agarbage dump \cong bears of the 1970's, the grizzly are losing their fear of humans. Not only are hunter confrontations are on the rise but bear/human encounters of all types are increasing. This habituation during hunting season continues year round. The result is more grizzly shootings and, I fear, a greater threat to public safety from maulings.

As with the garbage dump closings, every year of delay increases the danger to the bears and the public. While speed is essential, timely action will be possible only if public agencies recognize the severity of the problem and then promptly act to shoulder their public trust responsibilities.

At the outset let me underscore what is already widely known X my views do not reflect the official views of Yellowstone National Park, the National Park Service nor, apparently, the entire government of the United States of America. My views are my own. Any overlap between my statements and those of a federal agency is purely coincidental and, as far as I am concerned, that is part of the problem.

Despite this disclaimer, I am speaking out in order to change minds. If I am persuasive perhaps the gulf between what I am urging and what others are saying and doing will not be so wide. The three questions I will address are:

* Why salting is an even greater problem today;

caption - / our problem

- * Why coordinated inter-agency action is needed now; and
- * What should be done.

I. Why Salting is an Even Greater Problem

There is a comedian who uses a line that goes, ADenial is not a river in Egypt.≅ He is right; it apparently is located in Wyoming. Consistent denial that a problem exists in Thorofare is itself the toughest aspect of the problem because denial precludes all steps toward a solution.

A. Economic Imperatives of Trophy Hunting in the 21st Century

Twenty years ago, outfitters did not consistently Adraw≅ as well as they do today, with most of the four camps in Thorofare Country having between two and four hunters per ten day hunt. That meant ten to twenty hunters per season per camp.

Today, outfitter camps often have up to twelve or sixteen hunters for six day hunts with hunts overlapping. This means that 50 or 60 hunters in one camp or even 80 to 90 hunters in another camp per season is becoming more common.

With a lot more hunters per camp and no more Ahunts≅ (areas where outfitters make a daily circle to hit meadows) per camp, there is more pressure to draw more elk out of the park. Shorter hunts also increases the importance of holding elk in areas where hunting is easier and faster.

Servicing these greater numbers of hunters seeking to bag their trophies sooner is a powerful incentive to use salt to attract the elk to a place where they are more accessible to the customers. Competition from other outfitters adds to the pressure. Those ads in *Bugle* and *Outdoor Life* touting that over 90% of customers will get elk kills in Thorofare are true. Why would a customer choose an outfitter offering only a 30 to 40% chance of success?

More customers means more revenue. Annual grosses for some of the bigger outfitters now reach \$400,000.

The resale value of a hunting camp is directly tied to the hunt numbers for that camp. In other words, it is the number of circle hunts (one guide and two hunters) available each day that sets the value of that camp. Bank loans are pegged to that resale value. Those numbers get locked in and livelihoods come to depend on keeping those numbers up.

With salt, a camp can double the number of hunts and hunters. Conversely, without salting, outfitters say (in private) they will lose their businesses.

When confronted, some of the more candid outfitters will admit their reliance on salting. In a

Bugle interview a little more than a year ago (the May/June 2000 issue), one prominent outfitter said:

A[Salting] helped concentrate elk then and it helps now X especially given the fact that we=ve got a wolf pack in there scattering them out nowadays.≡

This outfitter justified the practice, reasoning:

A[T]he salt is a good thing for hunting, and for game management in general. The Fish and Game want the herds kept in control. If we can=t kill elk on the Teton wilderness, they=ll have to be hunted on the winter range or culled on the feedgrounds. Which is more ethical? I don=t know.≡

In that same issue, another outfitter disputed my claims about the extent of salting but offered another justification:

AWe are not renegades down there. Sometimes we do hunt over the salts, especially with guys who can=t handle the real thing, can=t take the rough country...≡

Tory Taylor, an outfitter that many of you know, also was skeptical about the extent of salting. Two years ago I took him on a guided tour so he could see for himself. This is what he wrote when he returned:

ABefore my trip, I believed that salt baiting was limited to a couple of 50-pound salt blocks placed in secret places here and there. But I discovered that outfitters have created dozens of salt bait stations, used for decades, with craters up to four feet deep and 20 yards across. Game trails radiate from the salt baits like spokes on a wagon wheel.≡

There is no question that, because of the evolving economics of the outfitting industry, salting is more widespread than ever before.

B. Piercing Agency Smokescreens

In the October 13, 2001 issue of the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, Scott McMillion reported state and federal bear managers find no link between salt baiting and grizzly bear habituation and mortality. According to this article, Wyoming=s Game & Fish bear specialist Mark Bruscano and Yellowstone Park's bear biologist Kerry Gunther claim that salt baiting does not appear to put either bears or people in harm=s way. They say that bears do not hang around salts, and that most human/bear encounters happen by surprise.

Bruscano also says that there are 40 to 50 salt sites that his office has mapped. He could find no hunter-caused bear deaths within two miles of those licks between 1982 and 1999. Unfortunately, these reports do not reflect what is really happening in the Thorofare country: First, the

Wyoming Game & Fish Department's report is inaccurate because it ignores key information. Game & Fish has very limited knowledge of locations and numbers of salts, in large part because they assume the salt licks are just outside the park boundary. In reality, the salt pits are all over the Bridger Teton Wilderness, including where five bears were killed in Thorofare four years ago.

Wyoming Game & Fish claimed to have mapped all incidents but could not find any within two miles of a single salt pit. All they would have to do is get up in a plane or ask any former hunting guide about salt locations and soon find out there is no way a bear could even get one half mile, let alone two miles, from a salt in the entire Bridger Teton Wilderness area.

Two years ago a hunter killed a griz right outside our boundary at Fox Park. Four salts surrounded that kill site X all within one-quarter mile. Also in reference to the statement, Abears aren't just hanging around the salts,≡ if biologists went in the back country they would see lots of grizzly tracks diverting off the trails checking out the salts. They would also see griz daybeds in the park right above the salts at times when hunter success was high.

It is important for bears to get to carcasses before other bears claim it, otherwise there will be a feeding frenzy situation like we sometimes have in Thorofare. I believe state and federal bear specialists do not want to find a link and avoid Adigging≡ for the answers for two reasons: economics and politics. Outfitters have tremendous political and economic power in the state of Wyoming. They practice salt baiting and quick quartering precisely because these practices allow them to Aservice≡ more hunters per season, providing more revenue for state coffers.

Although Wyoming has made the practice of salt baiting illegal, the new law is virtually impossible to enforce. Moreover, Wyoming Game & Fish does not have the funds or the personnel to adequately patrol the region during hunting season.

Looming over this entire debate, however, is the effort to strip federal protections from the grizzly under the Endangered Species Act. If the grizzly bear is taken off the federal list of threatened species (i.e., Adelisted≡), the Game & Fish Department will have to spend less time and money enforcing Endangered Species Act regulations. Delisting will give outfitters and hunters more latitude to kill the very Anuisance≡ bears they have created so they will no longer interfere with elk hunting.

Unstated in all the official pronouncements about the health of the Yellowstone grizzly population is the assumption that the state and federal resource management agencies and the Wyoming outfitters have everything to gain from delisting; it is only the bears that have everything to lose.

C. Collateral Damage

Besides the impact on the Yellowstone grizzly, there are other side effects from salting I am seeing in the back country. By allowing outfitters too double the number of clients per camp,

salting has caused overcrowding problems not unlike those that would result from a road put into Thorofare country:

- > Numbers of horses have increased, causing grazing and associated resource damage;
- > Since horses are displacing elk from former hunting areas, salt placement has become even more critical to hunting success;
- > Private horse users are looked on, not only as hunting competition, but also as a grazing threat. In one ten-mile section of the Thorofare two outfitters use the whole length of the open creek drainage for grazing. Any private hunter automatically becomes grazing competition along this whole route;
- > Relations among certain outfitters is now strained because each grazes on each other's land; and
- > Because private hunters are a direct threat to take game within an outfitter's sphere of influence, horses are being run off and private hunters' hunts are abused up by certain outfitters riding through a meadow the private hunter has staked out.

If there are more than two or three private hunters in a group, some outfitters file redundant reports with various governmental agencies that the hunters are scabs or un-permitted outfitters. These reports cause the National Park Service, Forest Service, game wardens, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and outfitter-hired lawmen to all visit the hunters to check out whether they are scabs. Besides wasting scarce resources in the already under-staffed back country, hunters subjected to repeated visits feel harassed, pack up and do not come back.

The departure of private hunters also has an impact. Twenty years ago there was also more of an even mixture of private hunters and outfitter guided hunters. Private hunters tend to be more spread out throughout Thorofare, not so concentrated on the park line. Today, the greater reliance on outfitters clustered around favorite salted sites magnifies the impacts that used to be diluted by dispersal.

All of these additional people in the back country creates law enforcement problems which the Forest Service is not staffed to handle. For example:

- > Chain saw use is common. Several permittees have been caught but no real penalties have been assessed. Wilderness staff at Bridger Teton's Hawks Rest described to me how one outfitter would put one tent inside of another to muffle the sound. Another wilderness guard caught a permittee with obviously chain-sawed firewood. Again no action was taken. Still another Hawks Rest ranger caught a permittee coming out of his cache with a chain saw in his hand;

- > Illegal winter stashes of equipment have become more necessary as hunter numbers per camp go up. It is just too much to carry out at the end of the season;
- > Salts are placed next to Forest Service trails with elk remains not only left near trails but are pulled even closer to them. The carcasses have to be moved because an elk will not walk past a bear on a carcass. Therefore, the carcass must be moved. One outfitter may have two to four carcasses, with bear on them, stacked up 50 yards to the side of where they wait for more elk to come out of the park; and
- > Elk are left all night at salt kill sites.

II. Why Coordinated Action is Needed Now

For those of you who have not seen it there is a new draft federal-state study that addresses several of these issues (A Possible Effects of Elk Harvest on Fall Distribution of Grizzly Bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem prepared jointly by the Biological Resources Division, U.S. Geological Survey and Wyoming Game & Fish Department. An online copy is available at www.peer.org/montana/grizzly_study.pdf.)

Among other things, the study finds:

- * ADuring the 1990's, numbers of hunting related grizzly mortalities have increased in the GYE (Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem). Much of this increase can be attributed to incidents during the elk harvest...in Montana and Wyoming.≡
- * Grizzly feeding patterns have changed, as bears migrate out of Yellowstone National Park during elk season. ABears learn to use available food resources quickly, and when food availability becomes predictable, bears will establish traditional use and impart that behavior to their offspring. Availability of food associated with the elk harvest may be considered a predictable food resource to bears.≡
- * Grizzly in search of elk meat are losing their fear of humans. ADuring recent yeras, anecdotal descriptions from outfitters, guides and hunters...indicate encounters between humans and bears are a common occurrence during hunting season. Two decades ago, many of these same outfitters and guides considered observations of grizzly bears a rare event.≡

To give some sense of the allure of this Afood resource≡ the study cites government estimates that each season approximately **370 tons of elk meat** are left in gut piles outside Yellowstone Park. By any measure that is a lot of Afood resource.≡ It is no wonder grizzly are changing their behavior to take advantage of ours.

A. Garbage Dump Syndrome

Notwithstanding what I have said about salting, I do not think it makes any difference if the bear incident is ten yards or half a mile from a salt. What does make a difference is salt concentrating elk in small areas outside park boundaries. Combine this with the common practice of quick quartering (where there's lots of meat left) and one has a recipe for disaster.

Twenty years ago, three to four hunters per camp meant outfitters could anticipate what stock was needed to pack out quarters. An often told story in outfitters camps is about the private hunters who did not know how much a moose weighed and therefore had to throw a quarter or two away. Nowadays, that amount of meat is thrown away routinely without a bat of the eye.

I have seen outfitters leave 150 pounds of meat on a boned moose. Outfitters regularly quick quarter elk, popping the shoulder from the rib cage, abandoning the rib cage, neck, organ meats and skin. With quick quartering, leaving 50 pounds or more per elk is now the rule rather than the exception.

In Thorofare country, if I look at a 6 x 25 square mile area, there is between 20,000 and 30,000 pounds of carrion available in a seven weeks period of time. I doubt if there is any other area around the park with such concentrated and unnatural food sources. The bears of Yellowstone know this and head to its boundaries a week before hunting season starts.

The end result is that there are more hunter-bear encounters than ever before. Highly reported hunter mortalities, though rightfully alarming, are not nearly as damaging to bear populations as the habituation of these bears. They associate humans with food and act no differently than the garbage dump bears of Yellowstone 30 years ago.

Back country users report more each year of bears not leaving the trails when hikers come upon them. Grizzlies come back into Yellowstone and end up eating and sleeping near our roads and tourists. Even on horseback when I have to stand my ground (because of pack horses) I now see bears reluctant to move 20 yards off the trail.

These bears, our Yellowstone Bears, learn this behavior because of hunter contacts in the fall. I also feel hunter habitation is a major reason why bears are frequenting garbage cans (thus being shot by Wyoming Game & Fish personnel each summer) in developed areas away from the park. As for the bear behavior outside the park, habituation is also a major contributor to grizzly mortality. Outfitters commonly report grizzlies following their horses. The bear killed at Fox Park was following so close it panicked one of the hunters into shooting it with his .44 pistol. Hunters killed another bear northeast of Yellowstone when it tried to pull quarters off a horse X in their camp. Was it starving or habituated? With the bold behavior of bears I see in Thorofare, habituation has to be seriously considered.

B. Grizzly and People Do Not Mix

The salts of Thorofare have accelerated habituation by showing bears a lot of elk carcasses immediately next to humans. Bears are traveling the same trails as the hunters are in getting to the salts. Both are often moving at the same time X in the darkness of early morning or evening.

When I travel the Thorofare Trail to the Southeastern corner not a day goes by that I do not see the previous night=s bear tracks.

A gun shot now means food to a hungry grizzly. Bears in Thorofare come to the sound of a gun. Shoot off a gun near a salt, run to the top of the hill, and watch the Afun≡ as bears come running.
Most hunters in my area now know bears will claim carcasses soon after they shoot.

There can be so many bears in Thorfare country at any given time during the hunting season that a horse dying near Bridger Lake can have six or seven grizzlies on it within a day. Unnatural concentrations of bears means sows and cubs competing with boars at the same food source. Injuries and deaths by other bears is inevitable.

Bears staking out a salt claim a killed elk as THEIR food. Common practice by some outfitters today is not to tag an elk until they get back with pack animals. If someone has been left to guard the elk it can turn into a dangerous situation when the bear shows up. We have had several maulings (and bear shootings) when bears encounter guides and hunters field dressing an elk.

A lot of bears are being killed in hunter confrontations. In my mind whatever the number of formally recorded grizzly shooting deaths should be multiplied by two to account for those that you only hear about through the rumor mill and are never officially investigated.

The problem has gotten steadily worse because the volume of meat available for the bears has also grown. Last summer one outfitter, in justifying quick quartering, told me that taking the smaller quarters allows him to haul out the meat right away on his saddle horses. He has his hunters stand guard, watching for bears coming in while he skins out the elk. My response was, Amaybe his leaving all the meat is bringing the bears to your shooting sites.≡

Conditioning bears to follow hunting parties is bad news waiting to happen. Both knowing and unknowing humans who get in the way of a grizzly, especially in the way of a grizzly pursuing a food source, is living dangerously. Unfortunately, those in danger are not limited to hunters who are threatened by a charging grizzly trying to be the first to claim an elk or moose carcass. Those in danger now include X

- * Anyone hiking trails near a salt;

- * Campers setting up camp not knowing there is a carcass 40 yards away in the willows; and

- * Outfitter clients that get injured by a horse rearing up because a bear is on the trail amongst these salts.

The fact that the involved public agencies are not expressing alarm about this habituation-by-

hunting syndrome or taking action to curb it suggest that more tragedies must follow before real change is triggered.

C. Bears Know No Jurisdiction

One factor aggravating all these problems is the jurisdictional barriers separating the various state and federal agencies within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. While we humans draw these political lines in the sand, these lines mean nothing to the wildlife.

The problems affecting Yellowstone Park wildlife do not stop at the park=s borders. For example, over-fishing of spawning Yellowstone cutthroat can reduce that food source for the grizzly. Outfitters threaten to shoot wolves because they are competing for the same prey X elk and moose.

Some of the cross-border conflicts threaten human lives. For example, because the hunting goes right up to the park border, I can no longer safely patrol the line in the valley in morning or evening. The vast majority of bullets from hunters on the nearby salts come zinging into the park. The park=s Lynx Creek Trail and Park Line Trail are in the direct line of fire from hunters in blinds waiting at the salts. Any horseman or back-packer using park trails during hunting season is in danger.

With the first shot, elk head back into the park. The shots follow them. The expectancy of seeing only elk at a salt lick can lead to cases of mistaken identity. I was almost shot by a hunter who mistook my horse for an elk. I was 30 yards inside the park at the time.

It is precisely because of the jurisdictional boundaries that the challenges facing the Greater Yellowstone require an overall, multi-agency game plan buttressed by political support from environmentalists, hunters and the general public.

III. What Should Be Done

I do not have an advanced degree or impressive title X I am a seasonal ranger. Those of you who know federal agency pecking orders know that within the National Park and Forest Services seasonals generally do not rate, are not listened to and are viewed as bodies apparently lacking minds. The one question I have never been asked in three decades of service by any park superintendent, forest supervisor or other manager is, ABob, what do you think?≡

What I think is that we can no longer conduct business as usual and should no longer tolerate lip service to back country needs as a substitute for public service. There are five overarching steps that need to be taken now to address the growing habituation of grizzly. Each of the major groups on the front lines of grizzly issues X outfitters, public agencies and conservation groups X need to play a part in the solution.

A. Five Big Steps

1. Reducing Bear Habituation Must Take Priority

Public agencies and private outfitters alike must recognize that bear habituation and its causes should be a top priority because it permeates every part of wildlife management and recreation programs. To continue to ignore bear habituation is to fiddle while Rome burns.

When confronted, usually by some pesky reporter, agency spokespersons will acknowledge there is a concern but down play its seriousness or suggest that other matters must take priority. What I hear is that, frankly, back country issues are simply not a priority in Yellowstone. Until that changes, nothing will stop the accelerating transformation of generations of grizzly into carrion and garbage scavengers.

2. Mark All Salts and Set Bounties for Violators

The locations of salts in the back country are an open secret. I have made maps of where many of the salts are in the Bridger Teton but I cannot even give these maps away. Mark Bruscano of Wyoming Game & Fish says in the newspaper that there are 40 to 50 salt sites that his office has mapped. If Wyoming Game & Fish knows of 50 salt sites, why are they not posted? How does Wyoming Game & Fish expect to enforce the new no-salt law if they do not identify the salt sites to every outfitter and customer?

The answer, of course, is that Wyoming Game & Fish and the U.S. Forest Service have yet to evidence any intention of enforcing anti-salt laws and regulations. The Forest Service has explicitly prohibited salting in the Bridger Teton wilderness since 1990 but not one citation has been written.

Wyoming Game & Fish has also yet to cite anyone under their law, which appears to have been crafted so as to be unenforceable. As Terry Cleveland, the Assistant Chief of the Wildlife Division of Wyoming Game & Fish helpfully explained in a letter this past August:

Unless salt has been placed after the effective date of the statute, July 1, 2001, there is no violation...Depending upon the circumstances of the specific incident, it will be difficult to establish the >knowingly= requirement if the hunter has not placed the bait himself or if the salt has persisted in the soil over an extended period of time. The law enforcement officer will be require to establish the hunter meets all elements of the crime before criminal action can take place.≡ [emphasis added]

What a joke.

If these agencies were serious they would put up a sign at every identified salt prohibiting hunting over it, To back it up, the agencies would also put a sizeable (enough to buy a new pickup) reward out for information on anyone salting over hunting over salt. They would also

pay for information given on each salt lick reported. Regardless of the monetary amount, the psychological effect of a bounty on illegal activity can be a deterrent by heightening the importance of that activity and the social ostracism associated with it.

After they are posted the salts should, over the next few seasons, be systematically eradicated. Every salt lick should be dug out and filled with gravel or planted over.

To prevent circumvention of no-salting rules by hunters, all livestock users in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem should be required to carry salt for their cattle in non-leaking containers. These salts should also be picked up when the cattle leave.

3. End Quick Quartering

Mass quantities of elk carcass meat must be eliminated as a predictable food resource for the Yellowstone grizzly.

As it used to be twenty years ago, full quarters and the elk skin should be packed out of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Organ meats also need to be brought out until unnatural bear behavior ceases.

All elk shot must be either hung ten feet high in a tree or immediately packed out. Today, most night kills are left on the ground overnight. My estimate is that fifty percent of elks killed on salt are claimed by bears before next morning. Some outfitters actually like it if the bear gets the meat because there is not as much meat to pack the next day.

Unfortunately, we are losing legal ground on this issue. When confronted with photos showing how much meat is being left, the Wyoming state legislature reacted by weakening its waste law and legalizing quick quartering. For the past year, hunters in Wyoming are only required to pack out the quarters and backstrap but can leave the rib meat, neck and guts.

As long as outfitters keep leaving elk buffets for the grizzly, habituation will only deepen.

Alaska addressed the problem of meat wastage. Why cannot the states surrounding Yellowstone do the same?

4. Disperse the Concentration of Hunting Around the Park Perimeter

One major factor in the habituation is the concentration of meat left in a narrow zone right outside the park. As a consequence, the park perimeter has become *The Killing Fields*.

The fire of 1988 has caused the elk to come out of the park interior much earlier than before. When grass could be grazed under green trees with even a foot of snow on the ground, now only four to five inches of snow starts elk moving.

The salts near the line are full of hunters because a lot more elk use them. There used to be one main migration but now the elk repeatedly go out of the park with a snow and back in when it melts. As the elk go back and forth across the line, more elk are shot near where the bears are waiting.

The fires of 1988 have also meant that whole family groups of resident elk outside of Yellowstone are now completely eliminated. Heavy timber always draw some elk no matter how great the hunting pressure. After the fires, elk thought they were still safe in those locations even though the trees were burnt and the elk were now visible to hunters. Consequently, these families are no more and the concentration of hunting has funneled them into smaller areas that scavenging bears can more effectively cover. Gone are the days when ravens and eagles could gorge themselves for two or three days on a carcass before a bear chased them off.

Unfortunately, Wyoming Game & Fish are trying to increase the kills around the park. It used to be bulls only, spikes the last ten days of the season, and no cows. Now it is everything all season long. Not surprisingly, a lot more elk are killed close to the line than 20 years ago.

A no-hunting zone around the park perimeter would help minimize hunter-bear encounters by eliminating hunting around some of the more-established salts and dispersing the concentration of hunting in small areas.

The situation with bow hunting of elk is a good illustration of the need for a buffer. With bow hunters the number of elk shot and not retrieved are tremendous. In one camp, for example, one six-day hunt yielded two recovered elk versus six Agut shot, non-recovered elk. These non-recovered elk go back to the safety of the park to die and the resultant meat source near the line is very attractive to griz.

If bow hunting is not banned in the entire Yellowstone Ecosystem, it should at least be eliminated in the two to three mile zone surrounding the park. That would give bow hunters a chance to retrieve elk that die before getting back to the park.

Undoubtedly, the best way to eliminate both grizzly mortality and human mortality from grizzly attacks is to prevent the encounter in the first place. If the encounter cannot be prevented, the second step is to try and avoid fatal consequences.

Agencies also need to adopt a different management approach to a problem grizzlies than just shooting them first and discussing it later. Non-lethal controls like bear dogs, cracker shells and rubber bullets should be added to the tool kit.

5. Enforce the Law, Dammit

Every one of the government agencies needs to step up to the plate:

a. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

First, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service needs more of a presence in Thorofare. It used to be that Jim Klett would ride into every camp and sit down with outfitters and guides to go over the enforcement end of the bear issue. That was before Jim was shackled by paperwork. The Fish & Wildlife Service needs to give their people the time to do this on a regular basis again.

Second, as part of this increased enforcement presence, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service should treat every gut pile as a slob campsite.

Third, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has to restore some credibility to their investigations of grizzly shootings. Some question, with good reason, the Service's willingness to go after unnecessary shootings. The Service should make their investigative reports public as soon as possible and establish liaisons with both outfitters representatives and conservation groups, so that both know exactly what is happening and why.

b. U.S. Forest Service

First, the Forest Service has to get back into the business of managing their wilderness areas. Each year their budget gets cut more and their presence keeps shrinking. As a consequence, wilderness rules appear made to be broken. Outfitters graze their horses in wilderness pastures for a month at a time despite a 14 day limit. Several camps routinely cut their fall firewood with chainsaws. Why have wilderness rules if they are never invoked?

The prohibitions against salting in Forest Service wilderness areas are regularly flaunted. Outfitters can freely pack up to 1,000 pounds of salt to maintain their supposedly illegal licks. Outfitters can even drop blocks of salt from airplanes, in one case while Achecking out snow conditions early in the summer.

Second, the Forest Service must start actually enforcing outfitter permit conditions. The Forest Service controls the permits for the outfitters but acts like it is terrified of this responsibility. Because of lack of support from above, citations to outfitters get reduced, to A double secret probation in one case. This type of ticket-fixing causes the Forest Service to become the laughing stock of the valley.

Any outfitter caught salting should be banned from the valley X period. It would not take too many enforcement actions of this type to get a handle on the problem.

Third, the Forest Service has to manage the bears the same in the fall as they do in the summer. Summer campers are required to hang candy bars ten feet high but hunters in the fall are allowed to leave hundreds of pound of meat laying on the ground. Tell me why this makes sense.

I do not mean to denigrate the many very good and hard working Forest Service employees that I know. They are my neighbors, friends and comrades. They should be given the funds and the clout to do their jobs the way they know they can.

c. Wyoming Game & Fish

Game & Fish knows what needs to be done. They just need to get beyond the political pressures. I know that is a lot easier said than done. Of the employees that I see in the department's cabin in Thorofare, I see no slackers. They camp out and do what they can.

No one likes to see photos of carcasses with lots of meat left on them or hear of people running off others' horses. I know that if these employees get support from above they can require that all meat come out of the back country.

Second, Wyoming Game & Fish has to get serious about enforcing its new no salting law. If an outfitter's gross income for a seven week hunt falls from \$400,000 to \$200,000 because he has a lot less elk to hunt (and he has to pay more money for legitimate hunting guides), it is going to take a fair amount of persuasion by Game & Fish to get him to abide by the law. Third, Wyoming Game & Fish should get together with the law enforcement divisions of its sister agencies in Idaho and Montana to set comparable salting fines. Salting is not confined to Thorofare; it is happening all around the perimeter of the park. Wyoming could and take the lead to address salting throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

d. Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone Park should be taking a leadership position on the problems facing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Instead, Yellowstone seems intent on keeping a low profile and not aggravating its public partners.

As part of this leadership, Yellowstone has to do a better job of monitoring their back country resources, especially near their boundaries.

B. Everyone Has to Play a Part

Rules are only meaningful if they are respected as well as enforced. The above steps will only work if significant segments of the Auser groups in Yellowstone want them to work.

Outfitters X Revive Hunter Ethics

Outfitters in Jackson and Cody who do not hunt Yellowstone's borders tell me that border outfitters are giving all outfitters a bad name. If that is so, it is the duty of all these outfitters to reclaim the good name of the profession by taking visible steps to clean it up.

a. Embrace Hunter Ethics

As a smaller and smaller portion of the U.S. population engages in hunting, it becomes even more important for hunters set higher standards for themselves.

Outfitters need to establish policies on salting and reaffirm their ethics. Wyoming guides and outfitters would do well to look to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's *Bugle* magazine for guidance. Ethics take center stage in a lot of their articles. The economics of their business does

not have to dull their respect for the animals they kill.

Instead of attracting clients on just their success rate, outfitters should feature that their hunts are about fair chase and the best in sporting experience.

b. Education

The outfitters should be taking the lead to ensure that all their clients are trained in the correct protocols involved in hunting within grizzly country, proper storage of food, and use of pepper spray. Either the outfitters can take the lead or they can wait for government to impose new rules on them.

c. Pepper Spray

Less than five percent of hunters carry pepper spray. Pepper spray education now mainly consists of handing someone a can. Outfitter clients should be trained and allowed to practice with inert spray to see how it works.

When encountering a bear, the first instinct is to grab a rifle rather than a slow deploying cannister in a floppy webbing holster. The outfitters should get together with sporting arms manufacturers to make a repellant pistol that un-holsters like a Colt 45 or an attachment to a rifle so that the repellant can be shot with velocity and explosive power rather than sprayed.

Perhaps by equipping each outfitter client with a repellant gun, we can cut the number of hunter caused grizzly mortalities.

Conservation Groups X Hold People Accountable

For the conservation community, the main task is to publicize the problems, make sure agencies are enforcing the law and getting in their face when they are not doing their jobs. Do not be afraid to name names.

The next task is to be part of the solution (after first getting the agencies to admit they have a problem to solve). Conservation groups can provide volunteers, brain power and money to X

- * help agencies identify and eradicate salts;
- * report wilderness and wildlife violations; and
- * post bounties for violators.

If conservation groups can, through this sort of active volunteer-ism, remove the agency excuse that it does not have the funding or personnel to do its job, then the community will have taken a giant stride forward in protecting the wild lands and the creatures which inhabit them.

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