

Subj: **Not Worth Their Salt**  
Date: 10/9/99 8:24:31 AM Mountain Daylight Time  
From: metaylor@wyoming.com (Meredith Taylor)  
Sender: COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG (Wild Forever Grizzly Recovery Network)  
Reply-to: COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG (Wild Forever Grizzly Recovery Network)  
To: COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG

> "NOT WORTH THEIR SALT"

>  
>  
> I have just returned from a horsepack trip to the Yellowstone Meadows area of the Bridger-Teton National Forest where I saw some of the most disgusting and unethical hunting activity of my life, the illegal salt baiting of elk. The salt baiting stations are designed to lure elk out of Yellowstone National Park and into rifle range of waiting outfitters' "hunters". This is nothing short of a disgrace.

>  
> The Hawks' Rest, Thorofare, and Yellowstone Meadows area in northwest Wyoming is a very special place. The southern boundary of Yellowstone National Park cuts across the high peaks, timber, and wide, willow-covered meadows. It is home to elk, moose, deer, grizzlies, bison, ermine, wolves, coyotes, geese, bald eagles, blue-wing teal, and blue birds - all of which were present during my recent visit. I had heard of the illegal salt bait stations and wanted to investigate them for myself, but I was not prepared for the scale of the problem I found.

>  
>Before my trip, I believed that salting was confined to a couple of 50-pound salt blocks placed in secret places here and there. In fact there are dozens of salt bait craters up to four feet deep and 20 yards across. Game trails, looking like cattle paths, radiate from the salt baits like spokes of a wagon wheel. Some salt baits are placed just steps from Forest Service trails, within 50 yards of Yellowstone Park's boundaries, and only a few hundred yards from major Forest Service campsites. At these Forest Service campsites metal bear boxes are furnished and people are required to keep every morsel of food away from bears. This seems ironic when one considers that up to 75 bull elk are killed and tons of bear food are left around salting sites within a few miles of these campsites. I was told that one guide claimed to have placed over one ton of salt baits for the outfitter for whom he worked in a single year. The scale of salt baiting is staggering and will only increase if not stopped now.

>>>>>>>  
>>>>>>> I started my tour with a visit to a Yellowstone Park Ranger who has patrolled the area for 20 years. He showed me several of the salt baits, a map pin-pointing at least 23 more, and several color photos of the killing fields which take place each hunting season around the baits. Clearly illustrated by his photos was the illegal waste of meat from elk carcasses "boned" in the field. Several pictures showed that as much as 30 pounds of edible meat, including the tenderloins inside ungutted elk, were left by hunters. The ranger estimated that as many as 75 bull elk per year were killed in the six salt baits in his patrol area. Several other elk are wounded, flee to the Park and die near the boundry. Most disturbing to this ranger was the fact that the Park is under-staffed with law enforcement personnel and that other poaching is taking place inside the Park because so much time is spent patrolling the boundry near the salt baits.

>>>>>>>  
>>>>>>> One of the reasons grizzly bear delisting has been delayed is the numbers of grizzlies killed each hunting season, often by guides and resident hunters. Government agencies and conservation groups have spent

much time and money trying to reduce human/bear conflicts during hunting season. The illegal salt-baiting of elk creates an artificially high concentration of hunters and bears amid elk carcasses in a small area. This is a recipe for dead bears and/or mauled hunters.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> During my trip, I stopped by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Thorofare patrol cabin which lies an easy rifle shot from one of the largest bait stations. I was told that outfitters' clients sometimes use the department's horse corral fence as a blind and shooting rest at this salt bait. I visited with two game wardens about the salt baits and asked how they and the department felt about the situation. I got much hemming and hawing. Predictably, the department preaches about hunting ethics and law enforcement, including the waste of meat, but looks the other way when it comes to putting its money where its mouth is.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> I next encountered two officers from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. I shared my concerns about the salt baits and the increased chance of bear/human conflicts. The two seemed more interested in congratulating each other for their fine work riding around talking with people and indicated that since there were no human bones scattered among the elk remains at the salt baits, there really is no problem.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> The park ranger and I talked with one of the guides from a nearby outfitter's camp. We had a nice chat up to the point where the guide scolded the ranger for riding near the salt baits when the guide was "trying to offer hunters a quality hunt". The ranger calmly replied that if the outfitter and other guides would stop poaching elk in Yellowstone and trying to drive elk out of the Park, he would not have to ride the boundary so much. This "quality hunt" remark made me wonder what was so quality about shooting a bull elk over a bait. I thought quality hunting had to do with fair chase of wild animals. I suspect that some outfitted clients don't care if their bull elk is baited, has an ear-tag, or is haltered in a corral, but many do. Those clients who respect fair chase are probably not told there is a salt bait nearby.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> Upon my return, I talked with several friends about the salt baits I had seen. We discussed the damage to hunters' images and the damage to the future of hunting when the American public realizes its wildlife is being lured from Yellowstone National Park by illegal salt baits and killed by hunters. It was suggested I talk with some of the national sporting magazines and elk conservation groups. I suspect that as long as the back of those magazines are filled with ads from outfitters, they will not be interested in exposing salt baits. It was also suggested I talk with law makers, but as we have seen with such laws as the Wyoming wilderness guide law, law makers seem to be in the outfitters' pockets.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> I talked to a high official in the Bridger-Teton National Forest about my concerns. I again heard no call to action but more hemming and hawing. It seems that an unethical and illegal hunting activity which threatens the future of our hunting is taking place and no one really gives a damn. The Bridger-Teton National Forest's regulations are very clear in prohibiting salt baits in the Teton Wilderness. The salting practice would stop today if the Bridger-Teton Forest would enforce its own regulations and be supported by other government agencies and by sportsmen who do not wish to have hunting ethics defined by slobs.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> .....

>>>>>><SIDEBAR>

>>>>>>

>>>>>>What you can do:

>>>>>>

>>>>>>Contact Michael Schrotz Bridger-Teton Forest Supervisor PO Box 1888, Jackson, WY 82190 (307-739-5510) schrotz\_michael/r4\_b-t@fs.fed.us and John Baughman WY Game & Fish Director 5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82003 (1-800-442-1934) jbaugh@missc.state.wy.us to tell them of your concern about this illegal activity. USFS and WYGFD enforcement staff should be assigned to this Thorofare area summer and fall under the interagency Memorandum of Understanding to cite violators for illegal salting of elk in Teton Wilderness and for leaving edible game meat in the field. Salting must be stopped now and existing sites reclaimed to remove the attractant.

>>>>> The most critical time to contact agency personnel is before October 21 when the hunting season ends in the Thorofare, so please call those people to address this issue soon.

>>>>>>

-----  
For SC email list T-and-C, send: GET TERMS-AND-CONDITIONS.CURRENT  
to listserv@lists.sierraclub.org

----- Headers -----

Return-Path: <owner-commons-grizzly-recovery@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG>

Received: from rly-zc03.mx.aol.com (rly-zc03.mail.aol.com [172.31.33.3]) by air-zc05.mail.aol.com (vx) with ESMTP; Sat, 09 Oct 1999 10:24:31 -0400

Received: from LIME.EASE.LSOFT.COM (lime.ease.lsoft.com [209.119.1.41]) by rly-zc03.mx.aol.com (v61.13) with ESMTP; Sat, 09 Oct 1999 10:24:07 -0400

Received: from grape.ease.lsoft.com (209.119.0.34) by LIME.EASE.LSOFT.COM (LSMTP for Digital Unix v1.1b) with SMTP id <10.002BE94B@LIME.EASE.LSOFT.COM>; Sat, 9 Oct 1999 10:20:17 -0400

Received: from LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG by LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG (LISTSERV-TCP/IP release 1.8d) with spool id 1468460 for COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG; Sat, 9 Oct 1999 07:36:57 -0700

Received: from Mailhost.wyoming.com (CALAMITY.WYOMING.COM) by diablo.sierraclub.org (LSMTP for Windows NT v1.1b) with SMTP id <0.FDCB43CC@diablo.sierraclub.org>; Sat, 9 Oct 1999 7:36:56 -0700

Received: from meredith ([204.227.201.25]) by Mailhost.wyoming.com (Post.Office MTA v3.1.2 release (PO205-101c) ID# 601-42080U15000L1500S0) with SMTP id AAA1000 for <COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG>; Sat, 9 Oct 1999 08:24:00 -0600

X-Sender: metaylor@mailhost.wyoming.com

X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Light Version 3.0.3 (32)

Mime-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

Approved-By: Meredith Taylor <metaylor@WYOMING.COM>

Message-ID: <3.0.3.32.19991009073303.00a5efc0@mailhost.wyoming.com>

Date: Sat, 9 Oct 1999 07:33:03 -0700

Reply-To: Wild Forever Grizzly Recovery Network <COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG>

Sender: Wild Forever Grizzly Recovery Network <COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG>

From: Meredith Taylor <metaylor@wyoming.com>

Subject: Not Worth Their Salt

To: COMMONS-GRIZZLY-RECOVERY@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG

In-Reply-To: <0.bfd5e991.252fc33a@aol.com>