

ENDANGERED

EARTH



CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY • FALL 2017



Saving Life on Earth

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Actor Ed Begley Jr. offers some unconventional advice in a series of new Center for Biological Diversity videos on issues near to our heart — energy waste, food waste and the unsustainable growth of our human population. Check it out at:

BetterThanEd.org

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Giving West Coast Wolves a Fighting Chance to Recover

With all the challenges wolves face elsewhere, the West Coast is full of promise for recovery. California, Oregon and Washington polls all show overwhelming support for protecting and recovering wolves.

Wolves returning to former homelands here are finding plenty of good habitat. Washington's first pack in decades was confirmed in 2008; today, around 115 wolves live there. In Oregon, a lone wolf wandered in from Idaho in 1999 and today Oregon boasts roughly 112 wolves. Famous wolf OR-7 — known as Journey — traveled from Oregon into California in 2011 before returning to Oregon; since then, a pack identified in Northern California in 2015 has disappeared, but in 2017 a new six-member wolf family was confirmed.

Wolves are on track for recovery on the West Coast, but to succeed there must be more wolves in more places. This requires as much protection as possible and coexistence instead of killing wolves, so it's troubling that wolf management in Washington and Oregon has trended the opposite direction. Since 2011 some wolf kill orders issued by state agencies have resulted in the slaughter of entire wolf families.

Killing wolves to resolve conflicts contradicts the best available science which demonstrates that non-lethal conflict prevention measures are more effective and less costly than simply killing wolves. Killing wolves also can increase the risk for more livestock conflicts, reduce social tolerance for wolves and increase wolf poaching — the exact opposite of what's needed to achieve recovery.

To prevent more wolf killings, the Center and allies have gone to court, are seeking additional protections through state commissions and have rallied the public to hold state officials accountable. These lawsuits prevented agency wolf killings in Oregon for nearly three years and challenge Oregon's premature state-level delisting of wolves. In both Washington and Oregon we are staving off agency attempts to allow private citizens to hunt or trap wolves. In California we are fighting a livestock industry lawsuit that would strip wolves of state protections, and have petitioned the state wildlife commission to ban activities that risk wolves' lives. In all three states we've helped generate massive public turnout at commission meetings and protest rallies, and have engaged scientists to comment on proposed agency policies.

Even with overwhelming public support, wolves will recover on the West Coast only if there is ongoing pushback against state agencies and the livestock and sports-hunting industries. In the future, there will be more wolves in more places because we'll continue our fight and because the public will fight with us.

Amaroq Weiss is the Center's West Coast wolf advocate. She handles wolf issues in California, Oregon and Washington as well as in the northern Rockies and on the federal front.





Photo by Jean Su/Center for Biological Diversity

Kicking the Resistance Into High Gear

On Sept. 24 the Center officially launched Ignite Change, our new nationwide, grassroots volunteer network aimed at protecting life on Earth from President Donald Trump. Volunteer groups met in more than 70 cities and towns across the country to join Ignite Change and plan actions around our first campaign, Stand for Lands, to save America's public lands.

Here's why: The American people own more than 600 million acres of beloved forests, deserts, rivers and other landscapes that give us clean air, clean water, recreational opportunities and lifesaving refuges for wildlife. Now we're in a fierce fight with Trump and right-wingers in Congress who are trying to turn our public lands over to corporations to drill, mine, frack and log.

As one of his first acts as president, Trump ordered a review of 27 national monuments, covering over 1 billion acres of lands and oceans, with a view to opening up these treasured landscapes to extraction. And Congress is gearing up to try to gut the National Monuments Act (also known as the Antiquities Act), which would make it nearly impossible to designate future monuments.

So we're organizing and fighting back, mobilizing people across the country to demand that their representatives sign our "National Monuments Pledge." This pledge gets representatives on the record opposing any efforts to shrink or slash protections for national

monuments and defending the National Monuments Act.

Sept. 24 was just the beginning — our first step in building the mass people power we need to defend against Trump's destructive, anti-wildlife agenda.

I'm fired up to be helping to launch this new network because I know that there has never been a more important moment to fight for what we hold dear. The stakes are high for all of us. Last November I was five months pregnant and felt overwhelmingly worried and saddened by the state of our country. Now my daughter is five months old, and there's no room for worry or hopelessness. There's only the deep conviction that I will do whatever it takes to fight for her and for a world filled with wild beauty, clean air, water and a safe climate for all.

I hope you'll join me at [IgniteChange.org](https://www.ignitechange.org).



Valerie Love is the National Organizing program's deputy director, and helps manage Ignite Change, the Center's national grassroots campaign to protect wildlife, people, lands and the planet.



Photo by Bob Wick CC BY 2.0

Fending Off Attacks on Our National Monuments

President Trump's unprecedented attack on America's public lands is emblematic of his corrupt and base administration — riddled with lies and secrecy and driven by the profit motives of fossil fuel, mining and other extractive industries.

But the response to Trump's widely unpopular national monuments "review" has shown just how powerful American support of our shared lands is. It's energizing a growing coalition opposed to any changes in protections to our magnificent monuments or to the 1906 Antiquities Act, which has enabled presidents from both parties to designate national monuments when Congress failed to act.

Trump's Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke wants to eviscerate protections within 10 national monuments. Though Trump has no legal authority to do that, it probably won't stop him from trying — so we're prepared to take him to court.

In April Trump asked Zinke to review 27 national monuments — those larger than 100,000 acres protected since 1996 — with the clear goal of increasing industry access. More than 2.8 million people wrote to the Interior Department, 99 percent of them urging continued public-lands protection. Zinke arbitrarily decided to take no action on six monuments, without providing criteria for his decision, and the Center has filed legal action to force him to release related public records.

In August Zinke submitted his report to Trump, but it was kept secret for nearly a month (the Center filed another public-records request to unearth it) until it was leaked to reporters at *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*.

Zinke wants to lift critical protections to allow drilling, fracking, mining and logging in 10 national monuments and also shrink four: Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Canyon-Escalante, Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon and California and Gold Butte in Nevada. He also wants to open three marine monuments to industrial commercial fishing: Northeast Canyons and Seamounts in the Atlantic, Pacific Remote Islands, and Rose Atoll in the South Pacific.

Taxpayers already heavily subsidize oil and gas production, mining, livestock grazing and logging on federal lands. And America's public lands belong to all of us — including future generations. The Center will do everything we can to stop Trump, Zinke and anti-public lands members of Congress from trying to privatize and degrade our shared public lands.

Randi Spivak directs the Center's Public Lands program. She works to ensure that the country's wild places are managed for the benefit of species and ecosystems in a warming climate.



Saving Yellowstone's Bears

It may be hard to imagine today, but scientists estimate that about 50,000 grizzly bears once roamed the American West, from Canada to Mexico and the western shores to the Great Plains. But with European settlement of the West and a federally funded bounty program aimed at eradication, grizzly bears were shot, trapped and poisoned to near extinction, reducing the population to just 2 percent of their historic range. Now fewer than 2,000 grizzly bears inhabit the United States in just five isolated populations in the northern Rockies and the northern Cascades.

In ignoring its big-picture duty to recover grizzly bears in the West, the Fish and Wildlife Service has now adopted a piecemeal approach to grizzly bear recovery. On June 30, 2017, the Trump administration stripped federal Endangered Species Act protections away from Yellowstone grizzly bears. Removing protections for one isolated population of grizzly bears while other grizzlies continue to struggle for survival is nonsensical and ignores the purpose of the Endangered Species Act.

Moreover, while the population in and around Yellowstone has indeed increased since grizzly bears were first listed in 1975 — from about 150 bears to just under 700 — grizzlies face ongoing and new, emerging threats. And the numbers prove it.

Since 2015 grizzly bear deaths have spiked, and the population is in decline. The most recent scientific estimate of 695 bears in 2016 is down from 757 bears two years earlier. But why the sudden decline?

The most pressing threat to grizzly bears in Greater Yellowstone today is their dietary shift to a more meat-centric diet to compensate for the loss of some of their traditional food sources. Yellowstone cutthroat trout have declined rapidly with the introduction of predatory, invasive lake trout. And a second food source — seeds of





Photos by National Park Service

the whitebark pine tree — have been in decline due to pine beetles and disease, exacerbated by climate change.

Now, with catastrophic declines affecting trout and pine, grizzlies are turning to meat. And with that shift, they're at higher risk of coming into conflict with hunters, ranchers and even other bears. As a result, the death rate for grizzlies has spiked, with hunters killing bears to defend themselves, ranchers calling upon the state to kill bears that prey upon livestock, and bears killing and chasing off other bears for food.

But the Fish and Wildlife Service is ignoring the numbers and dismissing these threats in an effort to appease the states, which would rather profit off grizzly bears than protect them. All three states — Wyoming, Montana and Idaho — have put into place regulations that will allow trophy hunting of grizzly bears around Yellowstone, likely to start in the spring of 2018. Although quotas and hunting areas have not yet been set, the states have made it clear that they will profit from the sale of hunting tags.

People travel from all over the world to Yellowstone National Park and surrounding areas in hopes of catching sight of a majestic grizzly. But grizzlies generally try to avoid humans, so not everyone is lucky enough to spot one. Now, with the recent removal of federal protection, the chances of seeing a grizzly bear may dwindle further due to states' refusal to entertain common-sense suggestions.

These include the National Park Service's request to create a buffer outside Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks to protect bears that spend much of their time in the Parks from trophy hunters but also use lands outside Park boundaries.

We think Yellowstone's grizzly bears — and grizzly bears across the West — deserve better. So on August 30, we filed a lawsuit to overturn the decision to remove federal protections from these still-vulnerable bears. It's a fight we must win.

Andrea Santarsiere is a senior attorney focused on carnivore protection in the Center's Endangered Species program.





Photo by E. Lyman/NOAA

Lawsuit Urges California to Protect Whales From Dungeness Crab Gear

Every entanglement of a whale in commercial fishing gear is tragic. Ropes connected to heavy traps can wrap around the whale's mouth, flippers or tail, preventing the animal from resurfacing, and drowning it. If the whale doesn't immediately drown, the line can cut into its flesh, prevent it from feeding, and sap its strength as it tows heavy traps.

Whale entanglements are skyrocketing on the West Coast — and regulators aren't stopping them. Many of the whales getting entangled are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, meaning these entanglements are illegal as well as heartbreaking. That's why the Center is suing the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the agency that licenses and oversees California's commercial Dungeness crab fishery and is responsible for most entanglements in which gear has been identified.

A record-breaking 71 whale entanglements were reported along the West Coast last year, most of them clustered around the Monterey Bay area. Thirty whales were reported entangled in 2014, and 62 in 2015, breaking records three years in a row.

Despite our efforts to sound the alarm and provide recommendations to a stakeholder working group, entanglements keep happening with appalling regularity. We've found low compliance with voluntary measures — so clearly it's time for mandatory reforms.

California's commercial Dungeness crab season opens in mid-November. Humpback and blue whales — each

endangered species that suffered entanglements last year — are now feeding and migrating along California's coast. When the fishing season opens, these whales will suddenly face a minefield of fishing lines waiting to ensnare them.

In one gruesome incident in 2014, a severed humpback whale tail was discovered with two sets of Dungeness crab ropes and buoys attached. In 2016 two entangled whales in Mexico and one in Canada carried California Dungeness crab gear. Also in 2016, the most well-known blue whale in all of California, known as "Cadillac" and "Delta" because of her unique tail shape, was entangled in Dungeness crab gear.

State regulators must take responsibility for the dangers this crab fishery is presenting to these magnificent creatures, whose populations that are still recovering from the commercial whaling that drove them almost to extinction.

The Center is taking California to court because it's responsible for a fishery that's harming and killing whales.

No one wants a crab on their plate with a side of whale.



Kristen Monsell, oceans program litigation director and senior attorney, works with the Center's Oceans program to protect marine species and their habitat.



Photo by K3nna CC BY 2.0

Using a Landmark Law to Shine a Light on Trump's Darkness

As a Center attorney who specializes in forcing our government to hand over public records, I'm reminded virtually every day, under the Trump administration, of why the Freedom of Information Act is so essential.

When the Interior Department refused to release public information about Secretary Ryan Zinke's efforts to shrink our national monuments, the Center sued to get it. When the Environmental Protection Agency failed to release public records of closed-door meetings with states and industry groups about Trump's plan to eliminate protections for millions of acres of wetlands critical to clean water, we sued to get them.

Passed into law back in 1966, the Freedom of Information Act was designed to give every person the right to gain access to information that discloses what our government is up to. And with an administration committed to put the profits of industry before the duties of government, the legal tools provided by the Act have never been more important. Since January the Center's public records requests have more than doubled, jumping from 215 in early February to more than 460 by the middle of September.

But getting public records — records to which we're legally entitled — is no easy task.

When the Center requested public records detailing the Department of Agriculture's push to ban some employees from using terms like "climate change," the agency blocked their release under an exemption so abused that it's become known as the "withhold it

because you want to" exemption. The 65 pages of records detailing the USDA's anti-science campaign were released only after the Center's appeal successfully challenged the agency's inadequate records search and improper redaction of information. As the Trump administration doubles down on secrecy, the Center has ramped up its legal challenges of the repeated delays, denials and FOIA violations across the executive branch.

So far this year we've filed 11 lawsuits to force the administration to comply with its legal duty to make records available to the public. Since we're still waiting for many agencies to release public records, we don't yet have the full picture of the environmental cost of Trump's policies.

The Freedom of Information Act — our powerful open-records law — is one of the only reasons we have a partial picture of the extent to which the Trump administration favors the wishes of special interests while silencing scientists and other experts.

Without it we'd all be in the dark.

Meg Townsend is an open government attorney at the Center. She works with all the Center's programs to ensure government transparency and compliance with open-records laws.





Still by Russ McSpadden/Center for Biological Diversity

Center Releases New Video of Wild Jaguar in Arizona

The Center released the first video footage of a jaguar living in the Chiricahua Mountains of southern Arizona in early September. The cat has been named Sombra, Spanish for “shadow,” by middle-school students at Tucson’s Paulo Freire Freedom School. The images were picked up and celebrated around the country and around the world in sources ranging from cat blogs in the United Kingdom to newspapers in Australia.

The jaguar in our footage appears to be the same one photographed in the nearby Dos Cabezas Mountains in November 2016. After we released the video, an Arizona Game and Fish biologist revealed in an email that the animal is a male.

“This beautiful cat has now appeared in images taken seven months apart,” said the Center’s Randy Serraglio. “It has apparently established residence in excellent habitat more than 50 miles north of the border — great news for jaguar recovery.”

Check out the footage at ProtectOurJaguars.org.

Cities Take Lead On Stopping Trump’s Assault on the California Coast

President Trump has promised oil companies unrestricted access to oil and gas reserves under America’s oceans, and their plan to dramatically expand offshore drilling threatens every ocean and coastline in the country. With a moratorium on offshore fracking in the Pacific recently lifted by the federal government, marine wildlife and California coastal communities face the imminent threat of oil spills, toxic pollution, and more pipelines and offshore oil platforms.

In response, the Center’s Oceans program has launched a bold campaign to halt Trump’s assault on California’s iconic coastline, focused on organizing local resolutions opposing offshore drilling and fracking in the Pacific. So far, Santa Barbara, Cayucos, Arcata, Berkeley, San Luis Obispo and Goleta have all passed resolutions calling for a halt to new offshore drilling and fracking, and we’re just getting started. We won’t stop until we’ve protected the California coast from expanded offshore oil and gas drilling and the devastation that comes with it.

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Igniting Change

From the Director

Kierán Suckling

No one can deny that wildlife, wild places and the planet's climate are under phenomenal pressure right now.

Donald Trump, the far-right in Congress and the profiteers behind them want to carve up our public lands for profit, sacrifice endangered species on the altar of private industry, and roll back the hard-fought wins we've achieved in working to preserve a stable climate.

But it's an exciting time for the resistance, too. On Sept. 24 the Center launched our biggest-ever grassroots initiative, inspiring people around the country to take action to save wildlife, wild places, clean air and water, and our climate.

Ignite Change is a national network that focuses on local volunteers coming together to speak up for what's right by calling out members of Congress, organizing and attending rallies and becoming a powerful, sustained voice for the planet. We've staffed up our organizing team and are working around the clock to give our volunteers everything they need to get involved.

Our launch in September was wildly successful, with 70 events taking place around the country on a single day to get people caught up in this movement. The network's first campaign, Stand for Lands, is fighting to protect our national monuments and other public lands from Trump. We'll be raising our collective voice to put pressure on members of Congress to stop Trump, Zinke and others

on his shortsighted cabinet team in their tracks, as they try to open public lands up to more oil and gas drilling, grazing, logging and destruction.

I'm proud that Ignite Change is off to such a strong start and can't wait to see where it goes from here.

Thanks to all of you who already joined us — and to those who haven't yet, now's your chance. Sign up at www.IgniteChange.org and be swept up in this powerful movement to save what we all love.



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HUMPBACK WHALES
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Because life is good.