



Wind River Bear Institute

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Selected Testimonials from the Field: 1996-2009

“I am in favor of animal rights as well as human rights. That is the way of the whole human being.” -Abraham Lincoln

“The greatness of a nation, and its moral progress, can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” -Mahatama Gandhi

WILDLIFE AGENCIES

“We believe that this Program has changed the way we manage “nuisance” bears in Montana and believe that the methodology has far reaching implications that will change the way other species of “problem” wildlife are managed throughout Montana and perhaps the world.....This is arguably, the most important tool currently available for grizzly bear conservation”.

November 15, 2000, Patrick G. Graham, Director, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks.

“Due to the effectiveness of the WRBI programs that have been implemented in the area, we did not have one female grizzly bear that died due to a management removal in this populated area. This has not happened (in 7 years).” **December 19, 2001, Patrick G. Graham, Director, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks.**

“The WRBI team works extremely well with the public (landowners and tourists alike), to prevent bear problems by identifying and securing or removing attractants. A tool that makes this prevention program so unique and successful is the Karelain Bear Dogs. The dogs prove an opportunity to “break the ice”, discuss the problem and to provide effective alternatives for dealing with the situation.” **Oct. 3, 2001 Chris A. Smith, Chief of Staff, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.**

“The collaborative efforts between Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and WRBI have had enormous success in dealing with “problem” bears and addressing human-bear conflict concerns across the region.” **June, 2007, Jim Williams, Montana, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Regional Wildlife Manager, Region One, Kalispell, MT.**

“I firmly believe that WRBI’s programs will benefit bears and the public, across Montana and the rest of North America. The Partners-In-Life program is dealing with the root causes of human-bear conflict. I look forward to continuing our working relationship with WRBI. The unique, innovative, and effective approaches used by WRBI are worthy of your consideration and support.” **June, 2007, Jim Williams, Montana, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Regional Wildlife Manager, Region One, Kalispell, MT.**

“We view your work as a good opportunity to work with bears so we can keep them in the ecosystem, reduce conflicts, and maintain public safety. The program also offers a valuable public education component that has the capacity to effectively reach large numbers of people on how to behave while in bear country.” **October 17, 2005 John T. Jorgenson, Alberta Sustainable Resources. Alberta, Canada,**

“We are impressed by the professional work being done by the Wind River Bear Institute, and feel that our own investment into the Bear Shepherding training has been very worthwhile. The training has greatly enhanced our ability to respond to bear/human conflict situations by providing a proven technique that meets the needs of the public and of personnel responding to such situations.” **October 28th 2005. Ken S. Berg, Manager, Western Washington Fish and Wildlife Services, Lacey, Washington.**

“We (Mishka and Bruce Richards) have worked together on tracking bear and cougar, educating bear by “hard release”, finding injured wildlife, and he (Mishka) was instrumental in finding elk bones in Olympic National Park from a poached elk shot a year before. Without the dog, this major case could not have been resolved successfully.” **October 18, 2008, Bruce Richards, Enforcement Officer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.**

“Mishka is an invaluable tool in black bear management in Region 4, and been a great media tool used to inform the public of black bear management. To date he has been seen by more than 800,000 people in this area through TV and newspapers.” **October 18, 2008, Bruce Richards, Enforcement Officer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.**

“That dog is gold. In the bear world, having a dog like that (Mishka) can let us know where the bear is before we ever see it.” **July, 2008. Chris Moszeter, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Officer.**

“Mishka turns 3 years old in March 2006 and during his brief career in Washington has treed seven bears and four cougars, on his own. He has also located several dozen cougar killed deer and elk in dense vegetation that would not have been possible without his skills. His vital role in several bear aversive conditioning activities involves helping to train bears to respect human boundaries, thus saving bear lives. He is an ambassador for bears, our Agency, and has gained appreciation from the public on his accomplished work. Mishka has forever changed for the better the way I do my job” **February 21, 2006, Rocky Spencer, Carnivore Specialist, State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.**

“Your methods and techniques in the use of Karelian Bear Dogs are cutting edge and one of the most important contributions to bear management in the past 30 years.” **July 23, 1999 Darrell Croft, Head Park Interpreter, Alberta Sustainable Resources, Pincher Creek, Alberta.**

PARKS

“We have worked with the Wind River Bear Institute three times over the past five years, a relationship that has positively influenced bear management practices in the North Cascades National Park Service Complex. Implementation of strategies created for us by the WRBI appears to have reduced bear mortality and bear-human conflict.” **2006, Anne Braaten, Bear Management Biologist, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.**

“The Stehekin Valley, within Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, has long been a focal point for bear-human conflicts. Beginning in 2000 we have been employing the use of “bear shepherding”, a bear behavior-based conditioning technique, to “train” wild bears to maintain their wariness of people. The apparent results of this have been reduced bear mortality and fewer bear-human incidents in the Valley.” **September 20, 2004, William F. Paleck, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park.**

“Given our positive experiences and the considerable potential these dogs show for working with bears, cougars and the public, we believe the addition of Karelian bear dogs would be a positive addition to the WDFW wildlife management team.” **September 20, 2004, William F. Paleck, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park.**

“We have had relatively few situations involving aggressive behavior by bears, and no bear maulings since the formation of Kananaskis County 30 years ago. We firmly believe that this success is due in part to Wind River’s contribution to the aversive conditioning program.” **November 13, 2008, Randy Axani, Human Wildlife Conflict Prevention Specialist Kanakaskis District Conservation Officer, Alberta Sustainable Resources.**

“Your work with Tim Manley in the Glacier area over the past three years has proven successful beyond my expectations. Without doubt, many black and grizzly bears are alive today and many more people are aware of how to avoid behaviors that attract bears and reduce risk because of your dedication and perseverance.” **March 19, 1999 Steve Gniadek, Wildlife Biologist, National Park Service.**

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

“I am writing to thank you for providing the opportunity for Sentinel High School’s students to volunteer with the Karelian Bear Dogs. Every Thursday I looked forward to seeing the dogs and your amazing, dedicated staff....The best part, though, was seeing how well the kids responded to the dogs. The Karelians meant the world to some of the students. I frequently had students come to my office on Monday to ask if we were going to go to the Wind River Bear Institute on Thursday!

Some of them would come in every day to make sure that we were still planning to go.” **June 7th, 2006, Jennifer C. Gale, Vista Volunteer & Service Learning Coordinator, Sentinel High School, Missoula, MT.**

“Volunteering at Wind River also taught me patience and the importance of working with others, this is something I soon realized because it’s impossible to do everything yourself, no matter how hard you might try.” **June 7th, 2006 Amy Butler, Sentinel High School Student, Flagship Program, Missoula, MT.**

“The staff at the WRBI encourages students to take pride in their work, attending to every detail and seeing how their task fits into the bigger picture. Many students have used their experience at the WRBI to gain employment later on.” **February 11th, 2008 Linnaea Renz, Youth Development Coordinator, The Flagship Program Sentinel High School.**

“Through this work, I have seen the students grow in a number of ways—they have developed a stronger work ethic, a better understanding of the need for giving back, and a connection to positive role models.” **February 11th, 2008 Linnaea Renz, Youth Development Coordinator, The Flagship Program Sentinel High School.**

“We had WRBI’s program in 2003 and 2004 which showed great progress in Karuizawa’s bear conservation.” **September 14, 2006 Masaya Kusube, Director, Marketing, Picchio Co, Nagakura Karuizawa, Nagano Pref. Japan.**

“I have known Carrie Hunt and her research for approximately 15 years. Throughout this time she has been one of the few individuals trying to understand management of bear behavior in the context of conflict situations with people. Her research on red pepper spray made a fundamental and important contribution regarding the efficacy and use of what was then little more than an idea, and now has become and important tool for personal safety in bear country, as well as an important conflict management tool.” **March, 28, 1996. Stephen Herrero, PHD, Professor of Environmental Science, and Co-chair IUCN/SSC Bear Specialist Group.**

PUBLIC

“All the neighbors opened their doors for Carrie and her trained bear dog. All of us learned so much that we did not realize about bears and attractions. And all of us were relieved when our bear, after we organized our attractions, stopped dropping by.” **January 19, 2009, Jean and John Atthowe, Landowners, Stevensville, Montana.**

FROM MEDIA FILES

“The Karelian Bear Dogs are a tool used in managing bear behavior.” **February 11, 2009, John Clark, Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officer, Alberta Sustainable Resources**

Calgary Sun, February 2009, Nicole McClaws, Sun Media, Page 6, “Kids and adults alike can approach Clarke's pups - in fact, he says his dogs have met about "60,000 people so far. This breed, you have to socialize them with people and animals; he says. We socialize them with everything from chickens to cows because if we have to go into a farmer's property, we don't want them chasing livestock." **February 11, 2008, John Clark, Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officer, Alberta Sustainable Resources.**

“Trained from birth to track and "shepherd" bears, Karelian bear dogs like 5-year-old Mishka are an unquestioned boon to wildlife enforcement, officers say.” Issaquah Reporter, “Wildlife service dogs are like 'gold' for officers”, **Jul 21 2008, By WENDY GIROUX Issaquah Reporter Editor.**

“The bear dog is nice because it's more of a surgical process. You can use the dog to track it, trap it or tree it," Moszeter said. "It's just more precise." **Jul 21 2008, By WENDY GIROUX Issaquah Reporter Editor.**