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## Defenders of Wildlife Blog (/)

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24 September 2013

# Drawing the Curtain on Grizzly Bear Compensation in Montana

Posted by: [Erin Edge](http://www.defendersblog.org/author/eedge/) (<http://www.defendersblog.org/author/eedge/>) | [1 comment](http://www.defendersblog.org/2013/09/drawing-the-curtain-on-grizzly-bear-compensation-in-montana/#comments) (<http://www.defendersblog.org/2013/09/drawing-the-curtain-on-grizzly-bear-compensation-in-montana/#comments>) | Share:

***Erin Edge, Rocky Mountain Regional Associate***

In 1997, Defenders of Wildlife established the Grizzly Bear Compensation Trust to help reduce grizzly bear-related economic losses for individual ranchers while promoting grizzly bear conservation. This program reimburses ranchers full market value for livestock confirmed to have been killed by a grizzly bear.

Grizzly\_Michael S.

Quinton\_Nat Geo



Grizzly bear, ©Michael S.

Quinton, National

Geographic stock

FWS\_LIT\_003436

Since the program's inception, we have paid over \$400,000 in compensation payments, but we've always walked a fine line. Some wildlife advocates consider it a waste of money to pay ranchers who often have little interest in restoring [grizzly bears](http://www.defenders.org/grizzly-bear/basic-facts) (<http://www.defenders.org/grizzly-bear/basic-facts>). Some ranchers have said the payments aren't enough to make up for the perceived and real risks of living near grizzly bears. The truth lies somewhere in between.

Compensation, while not a perfect solution, has helped lessen the financial impact on ranchers and their families and increased tolerance for grizzly bears. But we have always known that helping ranchers find ways to [safely coexist](http://www.defenders.org/living-wildlife/working-ranchers) (<http://www.defenders.org/living-wildlife/working-ranchers>) with grizzly bears would be the only real long-term fix.

That's why we're pleased to be able to [hand over our compensation program](http://www.defenders.org/press-release/dow-grants-25000-montana-prevent-grizzly-bear-conflicts) (<http://www.defenders.org/press-release/dow-grants-25000-montana-prevent-grizzly-bear-conflicts>) next month to the state of Montana. Doing so will allow Defenders to focus on developing new coexistence projects, build on our successful [electric fencing incentive program](http://www.defenders.org/got-grizzlies) (<http://www.defenders.org/got-grizzlies>) and expand our reach into neighboring states.

The transition was set in motion last year when the Montana legislature adopted House Bill 323. This new law allows the Montana Livestock Loss Board (MT LLB) to reimburse livestock producers for animals killed by grizzly bears, in addition to the compensation they already provide for losses to wolves. Since the MT LLB's compensation program would duplicate ours, Defenders decided to end our compensation program in Montana, effective Sept. 30.

Electric fencing around bear attractants like chicken coops can make a big difference in keeping bears away - and safe.



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Furthermore, the MT LLB agreed to include in their program a grizzly bear conflict prevention grant for ranchers. We are encouraged that the MT LLB will be promoting the use of and assisting with funding for conflict prevention tools such as range riders, carcass removal and redistribution programs, electric fencing and livestock guard dogs. To assist Montana with the start of this program we are providing a grant of \$25,000 to the Livestock Loss Board, specifically for grizzly bear conflict prevention projects.

While our compensation program will soon end in Montana, Defenders will continue to offer compensation in Idaho and Washington (Wyoming already has its own compensation program). At the same time, we will strive to broaden the use of nonlethal, preventative tools and techniques that save the lives of grizzly bears. Additionally, we're looking to expand our outreach and preventative project capabilities to the states of Idaho and Washington, where grizzly bears have only begun to recover.

Me with one of our posters, spreading awareness of our electric fencing incentive program.



Me with one of our posters, spreading awareness of our electric fencing incentive program.

Whether we are paying compensation or working on conflict prevention projects, we must continuously work collaboratively with many different stakeholders. I was once asked to name the two most important things for working effectively in groups with varied interests, and I replied, “coffee and beer.” Some of the most meaningful conversations are often had when you take the time to sit down and have a cup of coffee with someone or visit in the evening over a nice cold brew. These are times when you can slow down long enough to actually listen to one another, which is usually all it takes to find the middle ground.

With things moving in the right direction in Montana, it looks like it’s time to order another round.

Categories: [Grizzly bear \(http://www.defendersblog.org/category/grizzly-bear-2/\)](http://www.defendersblog.org/category/grizzly-bear-2/), [Living with Wildlife \(http://www.defendersblog.org/category/living-with-wildlife/\)](http://www.defendersblog.org/category/living-with-wildlife/), [Rocky Mountains and Great Plains \(http://www.defendersblog.org/category/rockies/\)](http://www.defendersblog.org/category/rockies/)

## ONE RESPONSE TO “DRAWING THE CURTAIN ON GRIZZLY BEAR COMPENSATION IN MONTANA”

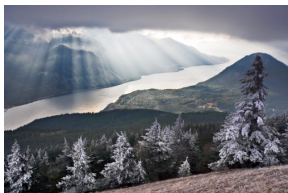


**KAREN** | September 26th, 2013 (<http://www.defendersblog.org/2013/09/drawing-the-curtain-on-grizzly-bear-compensation-in-montana/comment-page-1/#comment-140076>)

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I’AM ALL FOR CO-EXISTING, WOULD BE NICE IF THE RANCHERS COULD FEEL THE SAME. THEY MOVED INTO GRIZZLY HOMELAND AND FEEL ITS HARD TO LIVE WITH THE TREATS GRIZZLYS’ CAN BE, REALLY, THEY WERE THERE FIRST , YOU ARE THE INTRUDER RANCHER, YOU OWE THEM THE RESPECT OF CO-EXISTING! U GET SUBSIDIES, YOU ARE PAID FOR ANY KILL A GRIZZLY MAKES AND U STILL AREN’T HAPPY. GET A LIFE, SHARE , STOP BEING SO TYPICALLY HUMAN———GREEDY.

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Defenders of Wildlife work in the Northwest creates opportunities to promote wildlife protection and sustainable management of public lands.