

October 2001



Dear Everybody,

When a Bemba tribesman is sad he will say, "My heart is very sore." For years Mark and I have seen and felt the suffering of many African people and thousands of wild creatures: Children dying of simple diseases on mud floors, wildebeest strangled by fences, elephant faces

hacked open for their ivory. I thought I had felt the deepest of sadness. But at least we were able to find some comfort by offering help: supplying a bush clinic, building a school, saving a game reserve, giving a job to a poacher.

Now my own fellow Americans, who I believed were safe and secure in our strong skyscrapers, have been attacked for no reason. There is nothing in the natural world with which this senseless terror can be remotely compared. My heart is very sore, as I know yours is. We can be comforted by knowing that we are 'a people', 'a tribe', a 'troop', standing shoulder to shoulder, facing our enemy together. This is the way we started: a tightly knit group on a distant savanna, staring down a lion. A robust group is the strongest fabric of the natural world, and it will not fail us. I have never been so proud to be an American, and to share this nation with you.

In these times of human suffering, it may seem unimportant to think about grizzly bears, elephants, or conserving wildlife habitats. Recently Mark and I watched some grizzly bears moving through a golden alpine meadow in Montana. They were oblivious to our presence, or even our existence, and to the uncertain world we have fabricated all around them. This calm, ever-natural scene brought such joy and peace to my heart that I was reminded once again how much nature can help us heal. I hope you can find a moment to watch an ant crawling through the grass, a goose migrating across the sky, or a squirrel twitching his tail. When our modern world is shaky, it is reassuring to feel the solid earth beneath our feet, and to remember that the natural world – the forests, the water, the soil, the critters, the diverse plant life – is the foundation on which we truly depend. We must not turn our backs on earth even in these times.

So, I am pleased to report that *Hope*, the collared female of the Selkirk grizzlies, emerged from her den with two new fur-ball cubs in the spring. Meanwhile, her teenage offspring were spotted foraging on the verdant, nutritious bottomland that you helped secure. In the late summer they foraged together in the wild huckleberry patches of the mountain slopes. But the berries dried up quickly in the summer heat, so the bears once again looked for greener pastures. They found them in the (not-so-natural) apple orchards on the 'bear-corridor' properties you helped to buy.

It seems impossible, but the Owens Foundation has been assisting the *Selkirk Grizzly Bear Recovery Project* for five years. We are so grateful for your contributions that have made a significant difference to the recovery of the bears. The project biologist reports that the bear population density is increasing, there is less mortality, more sightings of bears, and more support from local people to conserve the bears. We feel that our support has provided the conservation officers of Idaho Fish and Game's Selkirk Project with critical equipment and salary support and we have been honored to work with them. With this State run project strengthened by our previous support; we plan to concentrate our future efforts in other areas of bear conservation that also need help.

We continue our work to assist local people who live near wild areas both in the USA and Africa. Villagers on the outskirts of North Luangwa National Park are being trained and equipped for more beekeeping and sunflower presses. Hammer Simwinga has conducted the job of training and assisting the villagers for seven years now. I can still see his broad smile from here, and miss visiting the villages with him. He bounces along on his motorcycle- funded by Prince Bernhard - working with ex-poachers and other local people to improve their lives. In northern Idaho we continue to raise money and assist in the planning of the Head State and

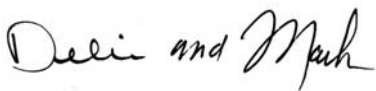
Education Center for the 'bear country' children and adults. Your wonderful donations also allow us to continue our work in habitat protection and our wetland restoration is slowly taking shape.

Mark and I have been back from Africa for five years. Sometimes I still mistake clumps of grass for lions in the brush, or double take on a gray boulder, thinking for an instant that it is an elephant moving through the trees. Those sights and sounds still fill my mind and heart. On a more practical note, our elephant data still fill our computer disks! We have not had the time to complete the data analysis on all of our elephant research. On our return from Africa, we learned of the plight of the grizzlies in our own backyard and could not turn away to work on our data. But now we must learn from the bears, and stay in our dens for the winter. The UN parties to the CITES convention will meet soon to vote on whether or not to allow commercial trade in ivory. Our data is needed to assure that the ban is not over turned. In our spare personal time, we are finishing our third book as well as material for *Chicken Soup for the Outdoor Soul*. Reaching others is an important part of what we do.

We will continue our work in North Idaho and North Luangwa. So, we very much need your support and appreciate whatever you can share to help the people and wildlife of our world.

In the mean time, we are going into our dens at the first sign of snow. See you in the Spring. God Bless America, and God Bless Our Earth.

Cheers,



Delia and Mark

#### ***Updates from Mary:***

- **CHANGES OF ADDRESS:** Again – if you have new address information, please let me know. It saves so much time and money and makes me smile!
- **EMAIL UPDATES:** If you would like to receive conservation updates by email, please send your address to me at [marydykes@compuserve.com](mailto:marydykes@compuserve.com)
- **GRIZZLY HUNTING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:** The 3 year moratorium on grizzly bear hunting in British Columbia has been overturned by the new ruling party. The hunting season opened September 1<sup>st</sup>. Please contact Premier Gordon Campbell, Legislative Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4, FAX: 250-356-4348, PHONE: 1-800-663-7867 and express your support for a moratorium so that Canadian biologists can conduct an accurate census of the grizzlies in BC. This information is needed to allow Canadian officials to create an effective conservation strategy for grizzlies. You can send a free pre-worded fax to Premier Campbell at [www.raincoast.org/action/action\\_centre.html](http://www.raincoast.org/action/action_centre.html)
- **BEAR PROTECTION ACT:** This legislation to ban the import, export and sale of bear parts is once again languishing in committee. Please urge your Representative to support this important bill to prevent the senseless abuse of bears to support the multi-million dollar Asian market for medicines and cosmetics. Phone the Office of the Clerk of the House at 202-225-7000 to obtain contact information on your representative. Or, you may link to [www.house.gov/writerep](http://www.house.gov/writerep) to send a direct email.
- **SCHOOL/MEDICAL SUPPLIES:** You can send donations of school and/or simple medical supplies directly to North Luangwa and no matter how small, your help will be important and greatly appreciated. Contact me for more details at 770-270-0729 or by email at [marydykes@compuserve.com](mailto:marydykes@compuserve.com)