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August 14, 1984

Mr. Ronald B. Taylor
Times Staff Writer
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, CA 90053

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I read with interest your article Monday, August 13, 1984 on grizzly bears at Yellowstone. You did a lot of research in preparing the article.

You state, however:

"...that feeding the bears in the dumps was the first step in a process that ultimately would jeopardize the grizzlies' very existence.

A grizzly has quickly associated human contact with an easy source of food. The more aggressive grizzlies hung around the dumps longer, often ambling into camp grounds, scattering tourists and tearing up camps."

The National Park Service has long asserted that the garbage dumps accustomed grizzlies to human contact. Studies by the Craighead brothers show that this is not the case. The garbage dumps were a seasonal source of food for grizzlies, but grizzlies who used the high country garbage dumps remained wild. The Craigheads recommended that dumps be closed gradually so that the grizzlies would shift to elk carrion and to elk, which have been in over-supply in Yellowstone. Before the dumps were closed, the Craighead brothers warned the Park Service that abrupt closing, rather than gradual closing, of the dumps would send the grizzly bears into the areas of human use in Yellowstone, and that deaths would result.

We were attorneys in both the Walker case (the 1972 killing in Yellowstone) and the Parratt 1960 mauling at Glacier. In the Walker case, we prevailed in the United States District Court, but the Court of Appeals reversed on the specific ground that the government was protected by the exception in the federal tort claim act which allowed the government to take whatever action it thought necessary regarding grizzlies, without being sued for the results thereof.

I enclose a copy of the 1978 Senate Judiciary Committee report on Bill S 1476. This bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee to reinstate the judgment against the government in the Walker case. When the Bill came up on the Senate

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floor, one Senator, Senator Wallop, objected to approval of the Bill, so the Bill went on the Senate calendar with the late Senator Allen of Alabama (the Walkers lived in Alabama) in charge. Unfortunately Senator Allen died of a heart attack the day before the bill was calendered.

If you have questions about your statement regarding the garbage dumps and the grizzlies, please contact Frank Craighead. He lives in Moose, Wyoming as you probably know. Note that the Judiciary Committee found:

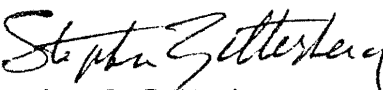
"Hindsight has proven that Dr. Craighead and his fellow experts were correct in their estimate of the situation, and the Park Service, while acting within its discretion, was in error...."

It is unfortunate that the research of the Craighead brothers at Yellowstone Park was terminated before the garbage dumps were closed. The Craighead brothers had been conducting a long range study on grizzly bears, but when the Park Service administration at Yellowstone changed in about 1969, the Park Service literally pushed over the Craighead laboratories, and prevented further study. The National Academy of Sciences stated in a report that with the termination of the Craighead study, "a uniquely rich data bank" was lost.

I enclose the last page of an article I wrote on grizzlies for the Claremont Courier of August 11, 1982. The last three paragraphs contain some tips on hiking and camping in grizzly country, which might be helpful to visitors to Yellowstone and Glacier National Park. You have permission from the Claremont Courier to reprint portions of this if you think it would be helpful in avoiding injury to some visitor to the Parks.

Very truly yours,

ZETTERBERG & ZETTERBERG


Stephen I. Zetterberg

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Enclosures