

# Ecologist seeks unified study of carnivores

**Who:** Dr. Howard Quigley

**What:** Seminar on large carnivores

**When:** Barbecue at 5:30 p.m., talk at 6:30 p.m. Thursday

**Where:** Berol Lodge, AMK Ranch in Teton park  
**How much:** Barbecue \$5, talk free

By Aimee Chou

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" is Aristotelean logic Dr. Howard Quigley believes holds water when speaking of carnivore research in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Likening synergistic research to ingredients in a stew, the executive director and senior ecologist at Beringia South hopes it offers "tools" for policy-makers and stakeholders to "work together to develop a four-species picture of carnivore conservation" to mitigate human-animal conflicts.

In this stew are wolves, black bears, grizzly bears and cougars, as well as their researchers.

Seating "carnivore haters and lovers and businesspeople around the same table based on science" will help defeat myopic, disintegrated ecological research, he contends.

The table is set at tomorrow's University of Wyoming and National Park Service seminar at AMK Ranch's Berol Lodge at Leeks Marina in Grand Teton National Park. A barbecue precedes the talk at 5:30 p.m.

On the walls of Quigley's office, telemetry sketches reflect his 25-year quest to decode ecological ciphers. Among his globetrotting field studies are black bear ecology in North America, jaguar ecology in Brazil, a wildlife populations study in Guatemala and pandas in China.

Now, he and scientists at Beringia South's Northern Yellowstone Large Carnivore Working Group fixate their scientific inquiry on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Bears and wolves covering two-thirds of Asia are "successful" species. Yet they do not coexist for reasons of conflict, Quigley said. In Yellowstone, they do.

"What better place than here" for multi-species research, he asks. Yellowstone, he believes, is the stomping grounds for a new scientific paradigm.

Quigley referred to an image where the food chain is obvious: ravens and a cougar obeisantly circling a bear as it noshes on carrion. Not always obvious are "little interactions" between species.

"What you have is the cougar being the original supplier of a meal for two other species," he summarized.

Yet, "how often, where and when" these interactions occur remains the ecologist's looming question if not seemingly the most immeasurable.

With limited "time, money and personnel," simultaneous multi-species research may have taken a back burner at the state level. Yet he said it's worth pursuing those questions: "Could carnivores be a legitimate focus? Can we find out the ecological requirements applicable for a conservation framework?"

Beringia South has been picking at these questions for five years, but instead of merely having answers, Quigley hopes to engage the audience in thought-provoking discussion tomorrow.

Without conscientious, long-term planning, he warned, "we are destined for conflict forever."

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