Just by chance, I left my house at the right time—as the sun was cresting the mountain. Just by chance I walked in the right direction—on an infrequently used trail, and just by chance I left my dog at home.

On this special morning in early July, I took a quiet walk behind our cabin in the Hoback Canyon, south of Jackson Hole. Leaving early enough, it is not unusual for me to see moose and deer stripping leaves from tree branches before bedding down for the day, but just by chance I saw something even more special.

As I rounded the corner of the high, grassy trail, I saw the outline of a head with rounded ears. In my amazement, there was a momentarily delay of acknowledging my good fortune, but there was no mistaking it—I was looking at a mountain lion.

I wonder what I should do or if I should be afraid. But as I stood still, the cougar came out of the grass, turned its head, and stared straight into my eyes.

It was incredible. I was captivated by the wildness and beauty of the animal. Ten or fifteen seconds of eye contact and the magnificent creature, with one quick turn of its long, luxurious tail, was gone.

After watching the cougar disappear into the brush, I pondered my next step: return home to share my experience with my family or continue my walk. I did not feel afraid—if the cat had wanted to hurt me, it would have. Exhilarated I continued down the trail and into the summer morning.

Jackson Hole is remarkable, but not because of the many restaurants, art galleries and high-end homes. It is because of the many opportunities for just such a chance encounter with something magical.

Randy Luskey and his family spend their summers at the southern edge of Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the Hoback Canyon. They generously share their City Kids Wilderness Project Lodge for our Cougar Posse program at no cost to The Cougar Fund.
Effects of sport hunting on cougar population, community, and landscape ecology

Abstract: Cougars (puma concolor) are managed on the traditional density dependent, compensatory mortality, game management model. In population ecology, hunting is believed to result in reduced numbers of cougars, increased female reproductive success, population growth, and sustained yield. In community ecology, hunting is believed to result in reduced predation on game animals. In landscape ecology, hunting is believed to result in decreased conflicts with humans. We conducted six separate field experiments from 1998 to 2011 (13 years) in Washington to test these hypotheses. High hunting mortality of males resulted in compensatory immigration by males, decreased kitten survival and increased infanticide, and female population decline—with no net change in total cougars. Low hunting mortality of males resulted in compensatory emigration by males, high kitten survival and female population increase—with no net change in total cougars. Intrinsic growth rates (excluding hunting mortalities) were +14% throughout Washington. High hunting of males and increased male turnover corresponded with sexual segregation. Females with kittens avoided males and switched from numerous white-tailed deer at low elevations to sparse mule deer at high elevations in heavily hunted areas. Only very high harvest of females reversed high predation on mule deer. High hunting mortality resulted in a doubling of home range size and overlap for immigrant males—increasing the probability for cougar/human interactions. Younger immigrants used human-occupied areas more than older residents.

Increased hunting of cougars did not reduce cougar complaints and livestock depredations. Our results suggest that the traditional game management model does not apply to cougars. We recommended a harvest strategy of less than 14% per year (based on intrinsic growth rates of cougars) to allow cougar population equilibrium (no net immigration or emigration) throughout Washington. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife adopted this new equilibrium management plan for cougars statewide in 2012.

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My name is Phil Anderson. In May of 1996, a cougar in the Elwha valley of the Olympic National Park attacked me. He was a juvenile tom between 80 and 100 lbs.

I take full responsibility for my cougar attack! I was alone. I was in his back yard not mine. I was illegally mountain biking! I do not want my attack to justify the killing of cougars. I am not anti-hunting, but I oppose the sport hunting of cougars. Look for my full story in an upcoming Cougar Fund newsletter.

Anne Marie Letko is a world-class long-distance runner who competed in the Olympics in Atlanta and Sydney. Her career was cut short by Lyme disease. At a low point in her life, she had a chance encounter with a wild cougar, which was a positive, life-changing experience. Now she is a Cougar Fund supporter and volunteer. In September she won the women’s 5k race at Old Bill’s Fun Run in Jackson, Wyoming. She named The Cougar Fund as the non-profit to receive the $1,000 grant for winning the race. Thank you Anne Marie for all of the ways you help cougars!
Creative Ways to Support Our Work

• **Lisa and Steve Robertson** donated a hickory rocking chair that retails for $1,400. We are looking for interested buyers.

• **Nancy Eaton and Jeff van Ee** donated a dozen ink cartridges saving us hundreds of dollars in office supplies.

• **Shop to Change the World** will donate a portion of their sales when you select The Cougar Fund as the benefiting non-profit organization. www.shoptochangetheworld.com

• What are your creative ideas? Email them to us info@cougarfund.org

Recent Grants

A huge thank you goes out to Patagonia for their recent, generous grant to help us with our campaign to minimize the number of cougars killed and kittens orphaned through citizen involvement in the season and quota setting process for each western state.

Thanks to a grant from The Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, we were able to purchase a cougar costume and other equipment needed for Cougar Posse. The children from the Kelly School (Teton County, Wyoming) loved the cougar! If you missed reading about Cougar Posse in past newsletters, check it out on our website under “Cougars and Education.”

Cougar Posse would not be possible without support from the Wildlife Land Trust and Florida Gulf Coast University—Wings of Hope. Thank you for supporting cougars, children’s education, and Cougar Posse!
Jean Craighead George was an environmental advocate, prolific children’s author, and friend to all wildlife. Perhaps best known for her Newbury award winning books *My Side of the Mountain* and *Julie of the Wolves*, Jean wrote a book for The Cougar Fund to support our work and help educate children about cougars. Her book *Shadow: The Cougar from Flat Creek* is scientifically accurate and as entertaining as all of her previous stories. She finished the book in May, 2012, just days before she passed away. The Cougar Fund is currently looking for a publisher and the funds needed for this treasure to be put into print.

These photos were taken as she put the finishing touches on her last book.

In loving memory

Jean was born July 2, 1919. As the daughter of an entomologist and sister to renowned wildlife biologists—Frank and John Craighead—Jean’s life was filled with animals and nature from an early age. Her life was full of interesting family pets starting with her first, a turkey vulture. She hiked and camped with her family learning first hand about life out of doors.

After graduating from Penn State University, she was a member of the White House Press Corps, reporter for The Washington Post, and writer for Reader’s Digest. Her first well-known book, *My Side of the Mountain*, was published in 1959. With her storytelling, Jean related to children and drew them into the natural world—continuing to do so until her death earlier this year.

In a 1990 interview conducted by the School Library Journal Jean said, “Remember me as somebody who talked about nature, who awakened them to a new world, and helped them restore it.”

We will, Jean. We will.
Cougars in the Prairies

Why a book on the cougars of the prairies? And why now? As little as 10 years ago, such a book would be similar to one on the yeti or Nessie the Lock Ness dragon. It would be a book about mythical creatures that spark the imagination but fall short in reality.

But today, things are different. People are being shaken from their post pioneer slumber and complacency from living in a land long devoid of its wildness. After a hiatus of over a hundred years, there is undeniable proof that cougars have been sighted in every Midwestern state of the prairie region.
Ecology of prairie cougars.
What can we say about the role of the cougar and how important it was in the prairie ecosystem? Was it a minor actor, whose passage from the stage was hardly noticed? Or was it a star with a leading role that was pivotal in the functioning of the prairie ecosystem and whose loss had a significant impact on ecosystem function?

Being cats, cougars are stalking predators. Instead of chasing their prey with the hopes of eventually overtaking them, cougars evolved another method. They stealthfully approach an unwary prey until they are close enough so that with a short burst of speed, they could spring onto the animal and subdue it. The first necessity for this hunting approach is cover, something to hide behind. This in itself could explain the cougars’ avoidance of short grass areas, there is just no place to hide! So, because of the evolutionary strategies of their ancestors, the bounty of the plains was literally out of reach for prairie cougars.

What remains are the river breaks. It is in these stands of shrubs and trees where the cougar comes into its own, the silent stalkcr, the shadowy presence ... the phantom of the prairie.

We can assume the main ecological role of the river lions was as the guardians of the integrity of riparian habitat. Just as the wolves were the shepherds that kept the bison moving and prevented overgrazing of the grasslands, cougars probably protected the riparian habitat and thus the health of the river and stream ecosystems.

Future of the cougar in the Midwest?
Cougars moving onto the Midwest will be like the dust settling in a prairie home. Once finding a sheltered spot, they and dust will settle. As dust accumulates in the large, hardly used, attics and basements, cougars too, will gather in the larger more remote forested areas and become functional populations. How long dust or cougars remain in these areas depends on us. It depends on how tidy, how settled, we want our environmental home to be. Just as dust is rapidly cleaned away from the more orderly homes, cougars attempting to settle in tidy ecological homes, too will be swept away. If we tidy up too much, desire too much order in our ecological home, there will be no room for dust or cougars, even in our attics. If we are willing to keep some wildness, some dust on the bookcases, cougars will persist in these areas and thus, in the Midwest.

Epilogue: Though some may accuse me of not being objective in my assessment, I counter that my presentation is the only way to be objective in the case of the cougar. To present the cougar’s role and place based on our historical...
and cultural misconceptions or our fear and greed would not be objective. Contrary to many who view predators as evil and savage or at least “weeds in the garden,” I see them as only making a living as they have evolutionarily learned how. They do not do this out of malice or hate but out of necessity to survive. In doing so, over evolutionary time, predators have earned themselves an essential place in the ecosystem, one we cannot, we should not deny them. For the health sake of the ecosystems that support us, we as humans have to make room for predators wherever we can. I hope that this book in some small way will help more people see that need, make that room. If this book alters the fate of at least one cougar’s encounter with humans in its favor, I will have succeeded.

**Biography:** John Laundré was born and raised in the Midwest (Wisconsin) and received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees there. Since receiving his PhD from Idaho State University in 1979, he has been working in large mammal predator-prey ecology for over 30 years in the western U.S. and northern Mexico. His experience includes working with cougars, wolves, coyotes, bobcats, deer, elk, bison, and bighorn sheep. He has conducted one of the longest (17 years) studies of cougar ecology and behavior to date and has published numerous scientific articles. He is the originator of the concept of the landscape of fear that proposed that fear of prey for their predators maintains the balance between prey species and their habitat. He is currently living in Upstate New York in Oswego where he is a visiting faculty member at SUNY Oswego and also active in issues concerning cougars in the Northeast. He is the vice president of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation whose goal is the eventual re-establishment of viable cougar populations in the Eastern U.S.

Joanna joined The Cougar Fund for the summer of 2012. Originally from Durango, Colorado, in 2011 Joanna graduated from Colorado College with a B.A. in Sociology and Environmental Policy. After graduating, Joanna moved to Jackson, Wyoming. Seeking a way to put her talents to good use in the conservation field (and willing to do so for free) she applied for our internship program. We welcomed her talent and passion for the natural world. Joanna made great progress on updating and adding to content of The Cougar Fund website, including developing a page for our Cougar Posse program, expanding Cougars in the Arts, and adding helpful information for those who believe they have seen a cougar in the wild. Jo also personalized our donation page and has helped the staff in the details of website content management.

We have been so lucky to have Jo and wish her the best in the future—she will do great things!
NEW

Cougar Fund Merchandise
for sale through our online store

Our new coffee mugs hold a generous 16 ounces and are Made in the USA! The substantial pottery and smooth matte finish will have you reaching for this mug every day.

Checkout our cool, new long-sleeved t-shirts that are organic cotton and Made in the USA! Original art painted by Lawrence Ormsby from a wild cougar photo.

ORIGINAL merchandise also available: Books, t-shirts, ball caps, travel mugs, grocery bags and totes.

Limited Edition Prints by the late Clayton LeFevre

Clayton LeFevre created two pieces based on his interpretation of works by the co-founders of The Cougar Fund, Cara Blessley Lowe and Thomas D. Mangelsen. Lithographs of these paintings are signed by LeFevre, the creator of the original work, and LeFevre’s inspiration—Jane Goodall, DBE.
South Dakota just increased their cougar-hunting quota. Their reasons lack science and logic. To read The Cougar Fund’s comments opposing the increase visit: www.cougarfund.org/conservation/states/sd/ and click on “advocacy.”

Current website updating: We are currently in the process of updating the information on cougars in each of the western United States. You will find a general overview, hunting status, management plans, advocacy opportunities, governor and wildlife agency contact information, and links to research.

Does our news and your mail keep up with you?

If you divide your time between homes, please share your addresses and approximate dates of residency with us. We can alternate your mailing address accordingly so that you don’t miss any news from us.

If you haven’t already, “Like” us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter for more frequent cougar snacks.

For information that is more in-depth than Facebook and Twitter and more frequent than our biannual printed newsletter, register for our free e-newsletters: click “E-Newsletter: Sign Up Today” on the homepage of our website.
Cash for Cougars

Without donors like you, these cats don’t have a voice.

There are many ways to support our work:

• Mail a check today to:
  The Cougar Fund
  PO Box 122
  Jackson, WY  83001

• Use your credit card to donate by visiting: www.cougarfund.org.

• A gift of stock may be made through Wells Fargo Advisors at (307) 733-0797;
  The Cougar Fund, Inc.; DTC #0141; Account #70074188.

• Join our Monthly Giving Circle by mailing a check monthly or signing up for a monthly recurring gift on our website: www.cougarfund.org.

• Help us plan for our future by making a three-year pledge.

• Host a fundraiser to benefit The Cougar Fund.

• Give an in-kind gift or service. Please call us at (307) 733-0797 to discuss your idea.

• Remember The Cougar Fund with a planned gift when making your estate plans.

• Volunteer to help with social media, special events, mailings, public comment and so much more.

Enclosed is my membership of $___________ ($30 or more).

I am joining the Monthly Giving Circle with a gift of $___________/month.

I am making a three-year pledge of $___________/year.

I would like to make my donation by credit card:

- Visa  - MC  - AMEX  - DSCVR  - Exp: ___/___  - CSC # ________ (required to process card)

CC Number: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________________________________________________________

Name: ________________________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________

City: ____________________________ State: ____________________________ Zip: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________

We do not share or sell our membership list with outside parties.
Mission Statement

The Cougar Fund protects the cougar throughout the Americas by educating children and adults on the value of the species, by funding and promoting the use of science as a guide for wildlife management decisions, and by monitoring state policies to assure a lasting place for this graceful creature.