


Carl Hiaasen on his love-hate relationship with Florida
Bill McKibben asks if evangelicals will keep the faith on climate change
How prescription drugs end up in our drinking water


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Out There: You may not find it in *Zagat's*, but Minnesota's family-run Angry Trout Café is a great example of how to eat (and live) right.

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A publication of
THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

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GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR ONEARTH IS PROVIDED BY

Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund
The Josephine Patterson Albright Fund for Investigative Journalism
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NRDC is a national nonprofit organization with 650,000 members and a staff of lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists. NRDC's mission is to safeguard the earth: its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends.

EDITORIAL PURPOSE

onearth is a quarterly magazine of thought and opinion on the environment. It is open to diverse points of view; the opinions expressed by contributors and the editors are their own and not necessarily those of NRDC.

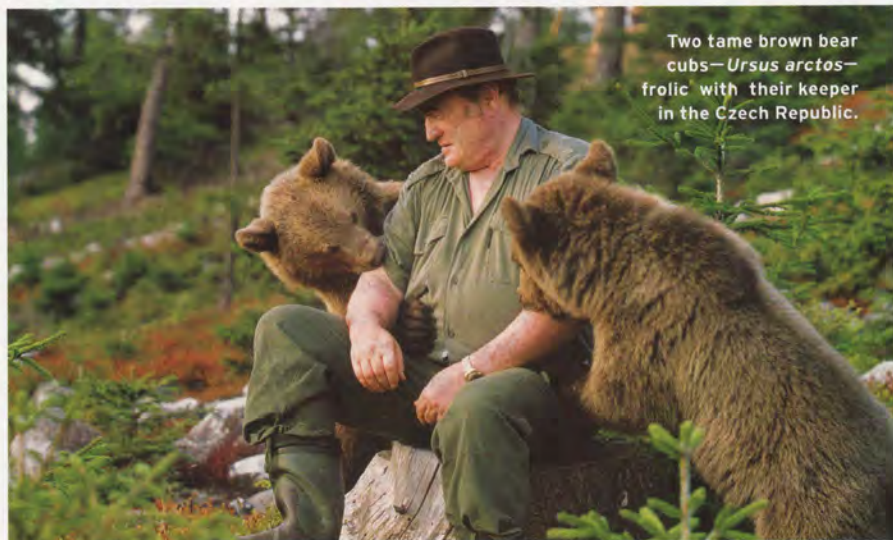
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onearth (ISSN 1537-4246) (volume 28, number 3) is published quarterly by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 40 West 20th St., New York, NY 10011 and printed by The Lane Press, South Burlington, Vermont. Newsstand circulation through Indy Press Newsstand Services, 415-445-0230; newsstand@indynews.org. Copyright 2006 by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Periodical postage paid at New York and at additional mailing offices. NRDC Membership dues \$15 annually. onearth is available to all members of NRDC upon request. Library subscription \$8, one year; \$15, two years; \$22, three years. Single copies \$5. To e-mail a change of address: nrdcinfo@nrdc.org. postmaster: Send address changes to onearth, 40 West 20th St., New York, NY 10011.

Beasts From the East

How the fall of the Berlin Wall helped bring big predators back to Western Europe



Two tame brown bear cubs—*Ursus arctos*—frolic with their keeper in the Czech Republic.

At dawn on June 26, after a month of raiding beehives and killing 35 sheep, the first brown bear to set its paws on German soil in more than 170 years was shot and killed near the Austrian border. The death of Bruno the Bear caused a minor diplomatic scandal, with the government of Italy (where Bruno began his travels) lodging a formal protest at the killing.

After centuries of merciless hunting and destruction of habitat, bears, wolves, lynx, eagles, and moose had all but disappeared from this part of the world. But now they're back, migrating westward from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Moose from Poland have made it to the gates of Munich. Brown bears from Slovakia and Slovenia have now established a resident population of about 30 animals in Austria. Italy's national parks

are home to more than 100 bears, and roughly the same number live in northern Spain and the Pyrenees. Wolf packs hunt in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the French Alps—and, since 2002, on a German army firing range. The lynx, virtually extinct in Europe, has re-established itself in the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Carpathians. Eagles have bounced back, and so have bearded vultures. River otters are advancing west at the rate of six miles each year.

The rewilding of Western Europe is the result of dramatic political and demographic changes. The fall of the Iron Curtain 17 years ago eliminated a major obstacle to their westward trek. Parts of the former no-go area in the heart of Germany, once dotted with landmines, have now been set aside as a "green band" to protect plant and

animal habitat. A shrinking population is steadily abandoning mountainous and wooded areas, and European agricultural policies are turning away from using every acre of land for food production.

Best of all, popular attitudes seem to be shifting. Once upon a time the big bad wolf was a staple of European fairy tales, but today people have an appreciation for the presence of these wild creatures. "We are now learning that red deer, bison, moose, wild horses, wolves, and bears not only are a luxury but play a key role in maintaining natural habitats," says Christoph Heinrich of the German Society for Nature Conservation. And while Bruno's manners may have been inappropriate, thousands mourned his untimely passing. The German chocolate maker Haribo even produced a candy bar in Bruno's honor, with part of the proceeds going to the World Wildlife Fund.

—Bernhard Poetter

LOGGING CREWS IN THE STREETS OF CHICAGO

Chuck Blumenthal, owner of the Chicago furniture company Bean Products, tries to use the most eco-friendly wood he can find. In the past that meant Forest Stewardship Council-certified hardwoods from American forests. But this year he found a better option: He started using only urban timber from the Chicago area. A supplier called Horigan Urban Forest Products collects dead, dying, or storm-damaged trees (or those that are in the way of building projects) and turns them into lumber.

Previously, the oak, elm, maple, walnut, and cherry trees—often larger than those logged from rural areas—would have been ground up for mulch or used as firewood. Now they end up as benches, paneling, flooring, even a bar top in one of the city's most popular nightspots, RiNo. Blumenthal especially likes the tight-grained oak, from trees that are 150 to 250 years old and not available on the regular market. According to the U.S. Forest Service, approximately 3.8 billion board feet (or 30 percent of all U.S. hardwood lumber) could be produced from urban tree waste each year.

—Jen Uscher

THE SILK ROAD

California artist Linda Gass finds beauty in unlikely places, hand-painting silk crepe de chine to make exquisite quilts. This one depicts Interstate 5 crossing the California Aqueduct, a man-made river built to irrigate farm fields that were once desert. Gass sees this transformation of the landscape as California's "second mining"—hence the title of this piece, *After the Gold Rush*.

