A scenic forest landscape with a stream and a bicycle with a crate. The background shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees, some with brown needles, under a blue sky with light clouds. A stream flows through the center of the image. In the foreground, a bicycle with a green crate attached to the front is lying on a gravelly path. The text 'ferry county cycling federation' is overlaid in large, yellow, stylized letters at the top. Below it, 'Barstow Dispatch Volume 3, Number 2' is on the left and 'Summer Solsticish, 2023' is on the right.

ferry county cycling federation

Barstow Dispatch
Volume 3, Number 2

Summer Solsticish, 2023

Subscribe to Barstow Dispatch

Subscriptions are cheap! But they must come by snail mail. No email.

New subscribers, send us a one-time payment of a book of stamps (20) or something homemade (a picture, a poem, a rhubarb pie, whatever) and your mailing address. Re-up every year or so by sending a postcard or letter (no stamps or pie required) to let us know that you're still in.

John @ FCCF
1 Rooner Way
Kettle Falls WA 99141

Contributors:

Writers: Alex Wetmore, Bart George, Liza Mattana, Thomas Yeates, Don Goodwin, Ty Talbot, Stine Hansen, Rory Cameron, Tyler Tjomsland

All visual, layout, and font magic: Stine Hansen (@theaugustinemachine)

Photos are attributed inline. We make a best effort (well, at least an effort) to identify photographers for photos that we pinch from the internet.

Gripes, comments, ideas, submissions, etc.? Bring it! ferrycountycyclingfederation@gmail.com

On the covers

Front: Tom Creek, 2023 John.

Inside: Kluckstet, Washington, Spring 2023
Rory Cameron.

Inside Back: Humping it up the stairs,
Alex Wetmore.

Back: Early morning on Trail 82 off of KCT,
2023 John.

Solsticish issue

The plan was to have this land around solstice time. But a surrmer issue is better. And this particular issue is the best yet.

We rounded up some great content by some of my favorite people. Dr. Don is back, with an assist from buddy Ty Talbot, with a music column that is just the beginning of a series that will culminate in a map of music. Liza comes in with a debut book review by local author Kate Lebo. Rory lays out a bike build for us on a proper Elephant hardtail. Alex delivers a fantastic front-end bike description that I've been bugging him for months to write. In addition to making all the visit magic happen, Augustine snuck in a column about a tool you need. And Thomas turns 40 and wastes no time obsessing about birds and birdwatching gear, naturally. Thank you all!

But if there's a theme outside of the bikey stuff, I think it would have something to do with the fact that we (royal we) really have to manage wildlife – like wolves and cougars. This is a new position for me. Read the issue for more on this.

I was able to snag two amazing experts to talk to about wildlife management. Holy shit. Eli Francovich just wrote an amazing book that is reviewed in this Dispatch. He also agreed to chat with me and a transcription of that is here too. His book changed my mind. It's so good. Go buy it and one for a friend. We want this guy writing more books.

The other guy I talked to was Bart George. He is a professional wildlife biologist. After we went back and forth on some ideas, he allowed me to publish a version of an excellent piece that he wrote for the Spokesman-Review. I'm hoping he'll agree to give us some more about riding in cougar country in a future issue.

Also: dig the centerfold. It's a picture that has haunted me for years. It was taken right after the Stickpin Fire back in 2015 by the talented Spokesman-Review staff photographer, Tyler Tjomsland. As this Dispatch was developing around the wildlife management theme, this photo kept creeping back into my mind. It so vividly encapsulates a bunch of intersecting issues: public land grazing, beef production and the global market, climate change, forest management, wildlife management. Whew!

Enjoy summer!



GETTING RAD ON TAYLOR RIDGE, JUNE 2024

PHOTO: RORY CAMERON

Kettle Crest tidbits

Mo money mo maintenance

In May, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and the Forest Service signed a maintenance agreement for the KCT and Selkirk Loop! This summer, Evergreen will get about 3 weeks of work for paid staff and volunteer work parties, and then next summer it's full time. Evergreen will be hiring at least 2 crew to maintain trails all summer! The total agreement is about \$250K. According to Yvonne Kraus, ED of Evergreen, this deal took a long time to get the scope and amounts figured out based on USFS funding options, but it's signed, sealed, and delivered.

This means a few things. Most significantly, the deal requires 780 hours of volunteer match obligation. So getting a few hours of hard labor on KCT each year from the local tri-county mountain bikers is a requirement. There are folks who are out logging and brushing KCT and feeder trails, but who don't report back that time. If you are one of those people, please log your hours. Scan the QR code and save that URL.

This also means we should have an opinion on prioritizing maintenance projects. The funding source for this work comes from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), which specifies that all money goes towards backlogged trail maintenance and the aging recreation infrastructure. This means the money can't be used for new trails and projects. But there's tons of maintenance that can be done. For example, deep brushing/tread work to remove vegetation layer from trail surfaces, water related stuff (riprap, bridges, waterbars, culverts), brushing, trail repair and restoration.

The FCCF is clearly in favor of all KCT improvements. In fact, we'll be pushing for some deep brush work on Upper Taylor and some reconstruction on Lower Taylor. As we noted in Dispatch v 2.3, we would also like to see Big Lick trail restored along St. Peter's Creek. If you have specific trail work you want to see done as part of this big project, let us know and we'll batch up a request. Email: ferrycountycyclingfederation@gmail.com.

Relatedly: Here's a reminder that Evergreen is hosting Kettle Fest this year July 19-23. Home base for this action is Jungle Hill Campground. Northern Ales hang evening is July 22. We (the royal "we" including you and other cyclists in the tri-county region) should make a point of representing. At a minimum, show up for beer hang. But in addition to riding and hanging, Evergreen will be hosting a work party and some trail maintenance training. Here at FCCF, we're bullish on Evergreen. Evergreen wants to be more bullish on this region. The big sack of money that they scored for trail work here is an indication of this renewed commitment from Evergreen. We should counter by showing up and representing this region and welcoming the Kettle Fest participants, who are mostly from the west side. In the KCT, we've got one of the most spectacular backcountry remote epic trails in the state. The more cyclists we can bring into the KCT fold, the more likely that the trail will be better maintained and will continue to avoid the "close this place for wilderness designation" list.

You can view more details and register for Kettle Fest at the Evergreen site. Hit this QR code to land on the Kettle Fest page:



Taylor Ridge brush out

Holy Zeus! Upper Taylor is a shitshow of alder saplings. A right shitshow. In mid-June, FCCF hosted a brushout work party. We had 8 folks brushing on Upper Taylor and another 2 logging out the rest of Trail 13 between Boulder and Taylor. We got about 3 miles of Taylor brushed out to a good-enough state, but mile 4-5 is where the saplings have reclaimed their space. Basically we're looking at year 8 of post-Stickpin Fire. The alder came in quietly at first, their delicate young saplings popping up in year two or so. And they kept coming. And growing. And multiplying. And now, they're in charge: sprawling willy-nilly all over the trails.

The FCCF trail czar has dictated that we must trudge up there with gas-powered full-on not-fucking-around mega hedge trimmers to knock these saplings back. Thus it shall be. If you're interested in joining that ongoing effort, let us know and maybe we can coordinate/meet up. If you want to go it solo, then be sure to log your hours!



BRYN UNLOADS LOADS OF TOOLS AND BIKES FOR BRUSHOUT, JUNE 2023. PHOTO: JOHN

VOLUNTEERS CHILLING AFTER BRUSH OUT WORK ON TAYLOR RIDGE, JUNE 2023. PHOTO: JOHN



Correction:

In the 3.1 Dispatch, our editor introduced the "Expert Opinion" column citing how Dr. Goodwin whiled away his youth "transposing" jazz solos and tunes. In fact, he pissed away his time transcribing jazz solos and tunes. As everyone knows, transposing music is the work of a lowly scribe, simply porting existing music from one context to another, whereas transcribing music is the Sisyphean process of listening to the music, figuring out the minutia, plunking it out on a piano, and then writing it out.

The difference is stick drawing to the Mona Lisa. Checkers to chess. Hard scrambled to soft-cooked. Cup-o-soup to Il Timpano. Gravel bike to 'cross bike, verily! Naturally, the editor who made this egregious error has been sacked.



COURTESY OF A FEMALE COUGAR

Sustainable wildlife management

By Bart George

Bart George is a professional wildlife biologist in Northeast Washington who specializes in the study of cougars and human-wildlife conflict avoidance. A version of this column originally appeared in the Spokesman-Review. Here, he does a great job of providing context to explain some wildlife management practices that are often misunderstood or misinterpreted. All photos courtesy of Bart George.

The science of wildlife management is guided by research and data generated over the last several decades. Population dynamics, birth and mortality rates, carrying capacity and ecosystem-wide habitat composition are just a few variables we consider when managing predator and prey species, as well as their relationship to each other and humans. Wildlife managers are not gambling with outcomes, as we take a very cautious approach to any possible negative impact to those populations. Further, we have 100 years' worth of data from which to draw. In short, we know what works and what does not. And we continue to improve our understanding of complex biological relationships and adjust management schema as new technology increases our ability to collect more and new data.

To deny modern wildlife management is to deny science and history in favor of rhetoric and emotion.

Thankfully, most reasonable Washingtonians understand this, even if they personally don't hunt. While it's perfectly acceptable for a philosopher to cherry pick data to bolster hypothetical musings, a scientist must look at the context of the data comprehensively. For instance, while a survey commissioned by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) did find a substantial decrease in the approval of hunting (which was at an awe-inspiring 88% in 2014), the full context of that paper found that an overwhelming 75% of Washington residents approve of legal, regulated hunting (with 44% strongly approving) in 2022. The survey found a mere 10% disapproved. Further context reveals that the small minority of disapproving residents feel that way because they are against the killing of animals for any reason.

Unfortunately for science, emotion usually wins. People today believe what they want to believe and sadly, confirmation bias tends to win the day. We're seeing this very paradigm unfold at the highest levels in Washington. Professional biologists from the WDFW have presented overwhelming data supporting a permit-only spring bear hunt that would remove 160 bears (from a total population nearing 30,000) from specific areas to avoid property damage and conflict with humans. However, those trained wildlife biologists with

years of schooling and decades of cumulative experience have been unilaterally overruled by political appointees with ideological or financial conflicts of interest.

That's a loss for science. That's a loss for wildlife. I understand it's hard for most people to wrap their head around the fact that killing wildlife saves wildlife. It is a logical challenge that apparently evades even philosophers, and as a simple wildlife biologist, I'm not sure I can explain it ... but I'll try.



BAFF TURKEY HUNTING WITH HIS SON

The North American Model of Conservation is borne from our historical acknowledgment of what not to do. We know where we erred in the past: unsustainable harvest of natural resources and wildlife during Westward Expansion and the Industrial Revolution.

From that, we have created a sustainable model that produces funding for wildlife management, habitat conservation, biological studies, law enforcement and more. For the last century, this model has reversed the unsustainable practices of our forefathers while producing abundant populations of wildlife for future generations.

In fact, most people today don't remember a time when there was a lack of wildlife. But not long ago our wildlife hung in the balance. If not for people like Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell, many species of America's wildlife would be extinct.

Roosevelt and Grinnell, recognizing our unsustainable harvest of wildlife, founded the Boone and Crockett Club. The organization, composed of hunters, initiated legislation for our national parks system and the first science-based wildlife management laws, including the Lacey Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as well as conservation-based funding which created the Federal Duck Stamp Act and Wildlife Restoration Act.

This model has only improved over the last century, and those historic legislative achievements are still used today and fund the scientific wildlife management model in the U.S.

And while hunter numbers are dropping nationwide (although, contrary to some claims, spiked during the pandemic), sportsmen contributed \$1.5 BILLION to conservation (nearly \$1 billion from hunting), which equated to more than \$11 million for Washington state conservation from just hunting taxes. In addition to those excise taxes, purchases of hunting-related gear contributed \$343 million to Washington's GDP and supported 4,700 jobs.

Perhaps one of the greatest misnomers related to hunting is the word "trophy." This word has been hijacked by 10% of the population that philosophically oppose hunting in order to advance their ideological beliefs. In truth, "trophy hunting" is responsible for the preservation of wildlife globally.

Roosevelt and Grinnell, recognizing unrestrained killing of wildlife, upon creating the Boone and Crockett Club hunting club, espoused forgoing the killing of females and young males of the species they pursued. To incentivize hunters to pass on these specimens, which would be left to reproduce and recover depleted populations of deer, turkey, elk, bear, cougar and more, they created a book of records that acknowledged the most mature examples taken each year. They were the "trophy" animals that were killed while younger animals were left to ensure sustainability of a species.



"HALING" - AFTER SHE WAKES UP, BART LETS DOGS BARK AT THE COUGAR TO RUN HER OFF AND TO ENCOURAGE FEAR OF HUNSMAN AND DOMESTICATED DOGS

Genetically speaking, a mature animal has served its biological purpose. It has passed on its DNA for many breeding seasons, thereby ensuring survival of the species.

As a hunter, pursuing an older animal means I pass on opportunities at "legal" animals that do not meet my personal standards for size or maturity and, as a result, might not kill any animal during the season. By choosing to be selective and pursue a personal "trophy," fewer numbers of animals are actually killed. But the term "trophy" often implies the animal is not eaten. That's not true. Trophy deer, cougars and elk are eaten here while elephants, lions and more are eaten abroad. In fact, there are "wanton waste" laws requiring hunters to use all edible portions of game animals and laws that protect against senseless waste of useful portions of harvested wildlife.

The inaccurate use of the word "trophy" goes hand in hand with other loaded words, such as "sport" and "game." Again, context matters. Historically, the word "sport hunting" was used to differentiate hunters who obeyed newly developed restrictions guiding hunting seasons, methods, bag limitations and selective harvest of only mature males from the market hunters of yesteryear who provided meat, feathers and hides in an unsustainable and unregulated manner to city dwellers for food and fashion.

As "sport" hunters, we strive to use the animal in its entirety - meat, hides, bones, antlers, feathers - on our dinner plate and, hopefully, on display for decades.

As a scientist, I have tried to provide historical- and data-driven facts. As a hunter, I have attempted to relay how sportsmen challenge themselves when afield and revere the animal after the kill. As a hound handler who contracts for Washington state, I can tell you this: when cougars are killed due to a human-wildlife conflict call, that animal is wasted. It is killed and summarily thrown in the dump, its meat, hide and skull rot unused - and at a cost to taxpayers.

A mount on display might seem a barbaric "trophy" to some, but everyone should agree that using every portion of a killed animal is more respectful and ethical than the alternative. Today's "sport hunters" do that; when agencies kill animals, they are wasted. I know, I have been involved in dozens of agency removals and can recognize the shameful waste of an animal discarded as trash.

I can promise one thing when it comes to wildlife management and the use of emotional arguments instead of science to drive conservation outcomes: those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.



Profile: Eli Francovich



TRAVELING - FRANCOVICH TRAVELING. PHOTO: INSTAGRAM (@ELLIFRANCOVICH)

Eli sat down with me (John) a few weeks ago in Spokane and survived the gauntlet of the world's worst interviewer with grace and good humor. The chat came in at 30 minutes or so with my talking well over 50% of the time. Good lord. I have excused a bunch of my wandering pontification that rarely led to a proper question. I tried to take a tight touch to Eli's answers here, but I did edit a bit to make it easier to read.

FCFF: How did this book happen?

Eli: This book came out of a 2019 story in the (Spokesman) Review that was published based on a story about Daniel Curry. And then, a local press reached out to me and said, "Hey, this might make a good book."

And I was like, oh, that's an interesting idea. So I got a proposal together and was going to go with them, but we couldn't reach a deal. So I pitched it to the Timber Press.

Then in 2020, the paper was gracious enough to give me a six months unpaid sabbatical. And so I spent just six months working on this book. I did the majority of the writing in that six months and then reporting. I came back to work in November 2020. Then two and a half years editing, back and forth.

FCFF: Wow. It took that long? Is that standard?

Eli: Yeah, it was a long process. And there were a few extensions. COVID sort of changed some things.

Also I just needed more time, a couple of times. And talking to my editor, though, I guess I felt bad about asking for extensions. But he said normally authors often ask for four or five.

FCFF: So do you have another book in the pipeline?

Eli: I have some ideas I'm kicking around. I talked with the same editor about some of them and he liked them. I liked working with him. But there's the business side of it. They kind of want to see how this sells first before

FCFF: Is there any early indication yet that it's selling well?

Eli: Oh, it was the second best selling book at Aunties in April.

FCFF: I ordered one from Aunties in the first week. Their online store said "In Stock." Then you did a local reading event before I could pick up the book. And I missed it. Had to wait a week or two for the next batch.

Eli: Yeah, Aunties sold out that night. I don't know how many they sold. Maybe 200 copies I think?

FCFF: There's a part in the book where you mention the feedback you get from readers at the Review when you write about wolves, where you have people writing in: "You're a pro-wolf geek! Or 'You're an anti-wolf asshole.' You just get it from all over the place. And as you explain this in the book, there's a lot going on in this issue. A bunch of nuance and complexity. So, as you untangle this big subject, I feel like I get the answer to why you would write this book. But I wondered a few times as I read it, like, did you have a goal, other than untangling and explaining?

Eli: I don't know that I knew this exactly when I was going in. But, I mean, the initial thing was, it's just a good story. And I think I told that story in the book: meeting Daniel.

But...wulf stuff, people are so passionate about it on both sides. Then what you actually do as a journalist, a lot of times, is write these very dry stories just about, I don't know, the ecology of it, or the politics. And these elements are important, but there's so much passion in this subject.

So meeting Daniel, I was like, "Oh, this guy, I can hitch my horse to his life directly, because it's so interesting."

So I think that was the initial draw. And that's why I did the initial story. As I worked through the book, and now that it's done, and I'm doing a tour and talking about it, I think the thing that I hope that is most useful about it is this idea: We've got a lot of issues in our world that people try to solve just by throwing facts at each other. So whether it's climate change, or I don't know, abortion, or any hot topic. Whatever side of it you're on, you can find some facts that back up what you believe in, and you just toss those facts at the other side. I just think that's such a bad way to try to make anything happen because people don't make decisions based on facts. They make decisions based on their heart and their experience and their passions. And it's an irrational process. I realized that the wolf debates really highlight that: there's this animal that everyone I think has an opinion on for the most part. And people are trying to figure out how to live with them. And the most effective way I have seen is like the Daniel character who's actually going there and setting aside his strong beliefs enough to see the other side and work with it. So I don't know if that makes sense - it's kind of a rambling.

FCFF: Totally. You're touching on an element that I love about this book, which is the way that you kind of smuggle in a bunch of history and biology and ecology through the narrative of Daniel, but also through the narrative of all the people working on this problem. Like, there's so much craftsmanship in the way that you do that. It's so good.

Eli: Well, I think back to the goal question, that was the initial goal, too. I like people-driven stories. And so I wanted to write about wolves but I wanted there to be a narrative, not just a bunch of facts. So I was hoping to kind of pull Daniel in to thread him all the way through.

FCFF: You're coming from a reporting-journalist background. So I'm assuming that as you're building this book, you're stacking up all the facts. And the facts are interesting, but they don't make the whole story. And so was that the intention from the start? To use the narrative to transport all the facts and science?

Eli: Yeah. Ben Goldfarb [Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter] is a great example, but my favorite non-fiction writers, generally speaking, are the ones that have some narrative thread that holds all these facts and truths together. And that's a challenge to write.



SHOW ON WATSON CREEK ROAD, COOLIDGE NATIONAL FOREST. PHOTO: JOHN

FCFF: Yeah. What's really cool is that you have that main thread of Daniel Curry going through but you also have so many little vignettes of all these other people and some of your experiences interacting with them. You've managed to hang this whole thing together in a way that in retrospect feels like a Trojan horse. The narratives are so engaging, while they smuggle in a bunch of data and facts. I guess, part of the question around the goal was: Are you trying to change minds? Are you hoping? And if so, to what?

Eli: I didn't go into it with a desire to give it a point. I think I wrote my way into a goal, and it's bigger than wolves, right? A lot of stuff comes down to this urban-rural divide. And there's obviously a lot of nuance and exceptions. Especially in a place like Washington, but in the US generally, there is a very pronounced divide between urban and rural America. And so I think that both sides need to get outside of the clichés and try to understand why the other side thinks and believes the way that they do. So I don't know.

So specifically to the question of wolves in Washington, or really, with any animal in Washington or anywhere in the West: we have all the tools we need to coexist with these animals. We know what to do. So, is there that social and political desire?

FCF: I came to this book not so much for-or-against wolves as I am anti-cattle on the Kettle Crest trail. But after reading your book, I've cooled a bit in understanding the complexity of where the ranchers are coming from historically and culturally. And I empathize with them. I still don't think grazing cattle is the greatest use of public lands. And grazing was one area I wanted to spend time on. As somebody who recreates up there the cow destruction always drives me crazy.

Eli: You probably know this, but the ranchers put their cattle out in the spring and then pick them up in the fall. There's not a whole lot of interaction after that, which was fine... well maybe not fine for recreationists. But when there weren't wolves around there weren't that many losses. I mean, cattle would die each year.

In Portland, I had someone ask, how many cattle are actually killed by wolves each year? And it's not a very big number, right? Even if you assume that they're not finding all the ones that are killed, which I'm sure they're not. It's still not a huge number.

But I think that goes back to understanding and trying to put it all in context. This is something you would know: there's been a massive loss of wealth in Ferry County and in any of the rural, especially Eastern Washington counties, which are now some of the poorest in the state. They've seen their whole ways of life just disappear and not get replaced by anything.

So then that puts you on the defensive like, "Well, we've been doing this for generations. I'm gonna hold on to the ghosts." And that's a stressful way to live.

I describe the scene at the cattle producer's dinner. The guy's giving this speech, where he says it's not the wolves that are the main issue. It's the economy. It's these political decisions that have been made. All of this has made it so hard to be a rancher, so then having 10 cattle die—that actually is an issue. You're operating on the edge and you are socially attacked and you feel on the ropes economically. So that's not really fair to put that on wolves.

I grew up in Coeur d'Alene and the Silver Valley area. I always think about that. Like, if you lived in the Silver Valley in the 60s, 70s, or 80s, you had a really good paying union job at the mine. It had some dignity to it.

You're getting the metal that builds everything. And now that's gone. And now maybe you're a server at a restaurant and, you know, getting treated like shit. There's not a lot of dignity in that kind of work. So then, if you can be a rancher and still hold on to that. I think it puts it in context a little. Where maybe someone like me, who's like, why would you even keep doing that? That seems miserable.

FCF: There was a section of your book that was really surprising and excellent. It was this notion—and I certainly have come at conservation from this perspective—that we need to bring back things to where they were like "previously." This may be sort of a mistaken idea. Humans have always managed our natural environment. There's not really been a garden of Eden.

Eli: Yeah, this whole idea that we don't even know what things were like before. It's a shifting baseline. But it goes the other way too: How did that massive loss of Indigenous life impact wildlife? And that's (Dan) Flores. He wrote a lot about that. I got some of those ideas from Coyote America, which is an excellent book you should read if you haven't. It's awesome. He's an amazing natural history writer.

FCF: So now that you're out of the official journalism thing? How are you spending your writing or intellectual time or reading time, whatever. How are you going to spend your time aside from being a fireman?

Eli: Well, right now, I've just been doing the book tour stuff. I stopped at the paper just about a month ago. So I've been pretty much focused on book stuff. And that's one thing I'm curious about. I'm really happy to uncouple my making a living from my writing. Yeah, I don't know. I'm hoping that this rejuvenates my writing. But maybe it won't. I don't know.

FCF: Maybe it was just one book in there? You're done.

Eli: I don't know. My hope is that in a month or two, I'm really itching to get back at it.

FCF: Was this a slog? Writing a whole book?

Eli: Yeah. It was very hard. Yeah. You probably don't care about this for the article. But like, I always imagined

like, oh, maybe writing books is what I want to do. You know, move out of daily journalism. But after doing it for just six months, I realized that I don't want to just do that. It was too insular. Too much in my own head.

FCF: What was your tenure at Review?

Eli: Eight years.

FCF: How did you become Outdoor Editor? Talk about shoes to fill. (Rich) Landers was an institution.

Eli: Landers has been gone for four years. So I was at the paper and I was doing other stuff: courts and education. When he retired four years ago, they offered the job to me. I thought about it because it was intimidating to step into his job. It was the best thing I did. The move to Outdoor probably kept me at the paper quite a bit longer than I would have. Because it was such a great job. Yeah. It wasn't an easy thing to give up. It was a lot of work though.

FCF: Why go now?

Eli: I realized that I needed to make some sort of change because I wouldn't get these good story ideas or I would and I knew it was a good idea, but I just couldn't get excited about it. So I needed to switch it up. It was just kind of spinning my wheels and doing the minimum grind, which didn't feel good. And journalism in general is a tough industry. It's all insecure even at a place like the Spokesman. So this seemed like the right time to make a shift.

FCF: Any other stuff you want to talk about?

Eli: Yeah, I think the one thing. I've mentioned that this book is obviously about Washington. But I think there's some real lessons for like the Western US more broadly, and probably elsewhere, too. But Washington, and I say this in the book, is a cool place. Because it's the smallest state geographically in the West. And it has the second most people. Population is about 8 million. And so those that's a bunch of people living—in at least for the Western US—in a small space, with a full suite of native carnivores. We got wolves, we got black bears, we got cougars, we have grizzlies occasionally,

wolverines, etc. That's really a pretty unique setup in human history. Mostly, throughout history, coexistence has meant, we're going to be over here and you're gonna be over there. And if we ever meet, we'll probably kill each other. So let's just keep it separate.

That's not really possible anymore. And so I think a lot of the challenges that Washington has had and has dealt with in some good ways. What's going to happen in Idaho and Wyoming and Montana, these states that have less people, and have had pretty homogenous cultural and political views. So if you're in Idaho, most everyone has a pretty similar view on politics or lifestyle.

But that's changing. Boise was like the second or third fastest growing metro area in the country last year. And that's changing the demographics. So it's changing governance. So they're going to be running into the same issues: How do we balance these? And Colorado had it too. They voted to reintroduce wolves two years ago. And that vote came down to 51% to 49%, to reintroduce. And that was mostly people in Denver saying, Yeah, let's do it.

So I think a lot of the stuff that's happened and is happening in Washington, will be relevant to other states. Wyoming too.

FCF: Do you think there's going to be a time when there's some kind of compromise? Where both sides of this are going to be equally unhappy about where they're at but settling for it? Do you think that's possible?

Eli: I think Washington's there. The wolves are doing well. The packs keep growing. A few are killed each year. A few cattle are killed. There were about 7 wolves that were poached last year in Ferry County, so maybe that counteracts what I'm saying. That indicates some unrest. But if that's just a blip, that's not going to crater the wolf population. If wolves can make it to other parts of the state and become delisted, that's a huge step.



SELF-CLEMSING • FRANCISOVICH'S OTHERWILE INTERESTING INSTAGRAM FEED HAS PREVIOUS FEEL PICS OF HIM, HE'S THE GUY IN YELLOW HERE. PHOTO: INSTAGRAM @BELLARICHOLAS08

FW: You Stuck Today at 14:02
From: Danielle Jamboulin
Sent: Sunday, May 19, 2025, 1:10 PM
To: "Eli"
Subject: You Stuck
Wolf bait

A SAMPLING OF FRANK FRANCISOVICH RECEIVED WHILE WRITING ABOUT WOLVES AT SPOKESMAN REVIEW. PHOTO: INSTAGRAM @BELLARICHOLAS08

Self-Clemsing Today at 06:43
From: Eli Francovich >
To: Eli Francovich >
Hide
Asshole Today at 16:17
Fuck you

Self-Clemsing Today at 06:43
From: Eli Francovich >
To: Eli Francovich >
Hide
Asshole Today at 16:17
Fuck you

Think you're special? Just another piece of shit with nothing to offer society.



REYNOLDS FIRE, CALIFORNIA NATIONAL FOREST, 2002.
PHOTO BY TYLEA TRAMBLER
REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE LOCKHART-REYNOLDS

Book review
Return of the Wolves
Author: Eli Francovich
By John

Eli Francovich's debut book, "Return of the Wolves," where much of the action is set in Ferry County, is likely to be of great interest to the readers of the Barstow Dispatch. Francovich's book digs into the wolf debate generally, but more specifically, the bulk of the discussion centers on NE Washington.

While it seems improbable that anyone reading is somehow unaware of the wolf debate in question, here's the Cliff's Notes. In 2008, after reintroduction into Idaho, Montana, and Yellowstone, wolves were reintroduced to Washington by WDFW with a goal of sustaining a set number of packs and individual wolves in the state. Free-range grazing of cattle on public lands has persisted in rural E WA since before the formation of the state. Wolves are apex predators. Both cattle and wolves occupy the same deeply rural and forested public lands of E WA. The obvious conflict ensues. To call it a debate, actually, elevates the conflict inaccurately.

More accurately, Francovich quotes wildlife biologist, Ray Entz, who summarizes the conflict as "... the most divisive wildlife issue on the planet. You are pro-wolf or you are anti-wolf."

And that's where we all come to this book. Unsurprisingly, we generally fall in line behind these camps as we do in so many other issues that seem to become more ossified and resistant to nuance as we dig in our heels. Francovich aligns these camps to "mutualist" views and "traditionalist" views. Mutualists believe animals "have their own intrinsic value, separate from serving human needs." While a traditionalist view perceives "wildlife as a resource to be of use by humans." If you are urban, liberal, and "head to the mountains on weekends for adventure and play," you're likely coming at this as a pro-wolf mutualist. Whereas if you're rural, generally you're politically conservative, living "closer to

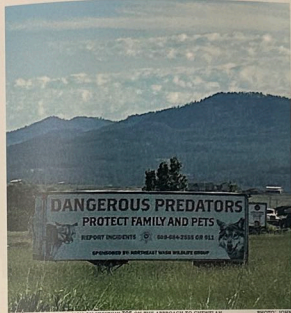
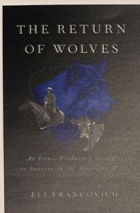
the natural world... working with animals," you're likely coming to this as an anti-wolf traditionalist. Francovich makes a point of calling out these categories as generalizations. No one is all one thing or another. But he's generous in calling this out as a generalization. Because, it seems more than ever we are often one thing or another when it comes to polarizing issues. We've somehow set up a game here where to cede any point or to grant any consideration to an opposing idea is grounds for dismissal from the group. This is the beauty of Francovich's book. Approach it with integrity and an open mind and you may not

change your mind outright, but at a minimum, you should find yourself slightly reorienting your position in the conflict. Perhaps we can agree to disagree while empathizing with the other side.

So how does Francovich work this dark magic? Right off the front, he frames up the discussion in a way that at once positions facts and scientific process as "invaluable tools," but also recognizes them as inadequate to the task of resolving discussion that "pits questions of science against questions of belief." This simple juxtaposition acts as an undercurrent for a discussion that weaves in cultural, historical, political, and scientific threads of the wolf conflict into a coherent presentation.

Belief is hard to capture, as it's subjective by definition, informed as it is by individual, anecdotal experience. And as hard as it is to capture, belief that is not our own is even more difficult to understand when we don't share it. Francovich helps the reader navigate and interrogate these beliefs in part, by introducing us to history and people that may surprise us.

For example, he describes one theory of early post-contact, pre-American history where a Spanish explorer rolls through what is now Florida and



STOP ON PLEASED OUT. SIGN ON HIGHWAY 395 ON THE APPROACH TO CRESWELL. PHOTO: JOHN

Mexico in the early 16th century. The explorer, a careful keeper of detailed journals, notes the density of people, starvation conditions, and a relative lack of fauna. In the following century, the people populating this area would be decimated by diseases brought by European explorers. Big animals, like crocodiles (an animal not mentioned in the journals), return. According to this theory, much of the now-North American land and game was highly managed by native people. There's no dispute that many native peoples across the continent practiced controlled burning, for example. The great wild American landscape that confronted many European pioneers in their trek westward was not so much the undisturbed land of Eden as much as it was a garden that had gone feral since the "viral holocaust" of its original keepers.

The reason this history is pertinent to the wolf discussion is in how we conceive of a natural or "pre-contact" state of our forests and wildlife. As we build policy around wolf management, we focus efforts that seek to emulate a natural state, to repopulate and rewind the clock to the extent possible. But what if our conception of what was, was not really that way? How might that change the way we think about wildlife management?

As for surprising people, one of Francovich's interesting specimens is Valerius Geist, whose resume as a wildlife biologist is as impressive as it is romantic

in an Indiana Jones sort of way. He falls surprisingly on the anti-wolf side of the ledger, but makes the best fact-based arguments of anyone in the book. Francovich devotes about 10 pages to telling Geist's story. There's also Francisco J. Santiago-Avila, a PhD student studying carnivore coexistence. Santiago-Avila is primarily concerned with understanding the experience of the wolf as a primary factor informing coexistence policy. The argument is that science and resulting policy often focuses only on population-macro level and not the micro. And by missing the micro, we miss the opportunity to tune policy towards more tolerance for wolves.

No doubt the most intriguing of people is a professional range rider that Francovich attaches himself to for the duration of the book. If the wolf is the main character of this book, then Daniel Curry plays the reluctant leading man. Absolutely pro-wolf to the core, Daniel Curry's story drives the narrative of the book, which in turn, smuggles in loads of historical and scientific supporting facts. Daniel Curry's story makes the medicine go down without even knowing you're taking it. Each chapter of the book includes a piece of Curry's story and experience as a true individual thinker, loner, and consummate doer, one who is obsessed with bridging the gap between the anti and pro. Curry is deeply pained when conflicts arise that result in wolves being killed. Francovich does a good job of presenting Curry as a fully dimensional person, complete with bravery, self-doubt, strong-will, and faulty thinking.

Francovich's debut book is as important as it is a great read. His careful research and on-the-ground reporting honed from years as the Spokesman-Review's outdoor editor clearly inform his thorough presentation. This journalistic discipline is evident as he introduces the biologists, policy wonks, cattlemen, range riders, politicians, public employees, and myriad characters that animate the deep conflict that the return of wolves has ignited.

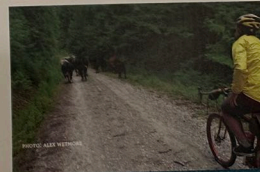


PHOTO: ALEX WETZEL

Nocs Provisions Zoom Tube review

by Thomas Yeates (@onshitballs)

In my 40 years, I've never felt like I needed any sort of optics. I recently visited the Grand Canyon where I picked up a crappy set of binoculars in the Visitor's Center and started looking around. Despite their finickiness and less than stellar construction, I instantly enjoyed being able to bring far away things closer and I felt a little more in touch with my surroundings. My mind wandered to how this could enrich my bicycle rides so I started looking for an upgrade.

Being a millennial, I'm on Instagram way too much and Nocs Provisions (@n_o_c_s) found their way into my algorithm. While I am likely square in the demographic cross-hairs of their marketing strategy, their offerings promised quality optics in an affordable package and also came in lots of fun colors!

On the bicycle, I felt their Standard Issue Binoculars might take up a little too much space for my tastes so I opted for the Zoom Tube Monocular. Half the size of binoculars, this little 241g telescope found a home in my top tube bag with room to spare.

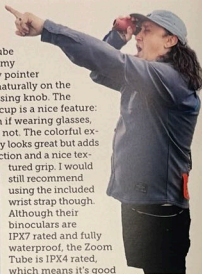
The Zoom Tube is 8x32, meaning 8x magnification and a 32mm objective lens, 7mm larger than their 8x25 binoculars, it allows a little more light to reach my eyeball for a brighter image. 8x also hits the sweet spot of ample magnification while still having a stable image when hand held. There is also a standard 1/4" 20 thread on the bottom if I want to use a tripod. See their website for the specifics but Nocs sourced the best glass they could find and I am very happy with the clarity. The glass is also multi-coated and the unit is nitrogen purged so it should never fog up.



The Zoom Tube fits nicely in my hand and my pointer finger rests naturally on the knurled focusing knob. The twist up eye cup is a nice feature: leave it down if wearing glasses, twist it out if not. The colorful exterior not only looks great but adds impact protection and a nice textured grip. I would still recommend using the included wrist strap though. Although their binoculars are IPX7 rated and fully waterproof, the Zoom Tube is IPX4 rated, which means it's good in a drizzle but won't enjoy being submerged in water and will likely need to be dried out afterwards. This is the only compromise I've found with the Zoom Tube.

On my bike rides, I've used it to observe and identify birds, spot trout from a bridge and it greatly enhances the viewing experience from the summit. With the Inspector Microscope attachment (sold separately), I can also turn the Zoom Tube into a 32x field microscope for anything I want to get a REALLY close look at. Great for nerding out on wildflowers, insects, rocks or inspecting cracks in a carbon frame.

The Zoom Tube retails for \$75 and includes the monocular, nylon wrist strap, soft carry bag, lens cleaning cloth and a No-Matter-What Lifetime Warranty. While there are more and less expensive options on the market, Nocs crushed it in the bang for your buck department. It's added a new dimension to my bike rides and I can't see myself ever leaving it at home. Lastly, it also serves as a great reminder to slow down, take a break, have a snack and take a closer look at what's around me. There's always more going on behind the scenes than I thought!

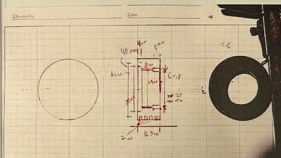


Evolution project: Drop bar mountain bike

by Rory Cameron

I started riding mountain bikes back in the mid 1990s. At that time, my favorite mountain bike was a Joe Murray designed Voodoo Wanga. I liked it because the short chainstays and low top tube made it feel quick and nimble. I had a lot of great rides exploring the Cascades, like Ranger Creek or the Pilchuck Tree Farm.

Over the years, I would look at the changing mountain bike scene, and would wait until it looked like the tech had gotten to a place where it made a meaningful difference in my ride. For instance, I didn't have disc brakes until roughly 2012 when I got a Salsa El Mariachi. I used this bike to experiment with some items I've been thinking about over a while. For instance, it had a much longer top tube than the Voodoo Wanga because I wanted to try out the Gary Fisher 'Genesis' geometry I heard about (from 2002). I also used this bike to experiment with an Alfine 8 internal geared hub, as well as 27.5+ tires.



I liked this bike with a lot of those items, but I never really liked how large it felt. After thinking about what I liked for the last 20 years of mountain biking, I had a list. I liked the geometry of the Voodoo, the 27.5+ tire size, disc brakes, and an internal gear hub. In 2018 I asked Glen of Elephant Bikes to make a mountain bike frame with these criteria in mind. He obliged, and away we went.



The bike turned out great. I rode it all over the Pacific Northwest, from my old haunting ground in the Pilchuck Tree Forest, to new places, like Quadra Island and Revelstoke. This bike has been great for the 5 years I've had it, and adding items like a dropper seatpost or changing from Alfine to Rohloff has only improved the ride.

Also, in the mid 1990's I read a magazine called 'Mountain Bike', and they had this one article in 1996, that compared a Cannondale Super V to a Rivendell All Rounder. I was enamored by that Rivendell. It had drop bars, AND fat mountain bike tires. The rider was taking this drop bar bike down trails that looked awesome, and I couldn't help feeling that I wanted to do that. And I've always been pushing cyclocross bikes or other drop bar bikes that had fatter tires to go off road.

Fast forward to 2019 and I start to see Lael Wilcox riding this super awesome specialized hardtail on her long distance rides with drop bars. That bike looked awesome. Its front suspension, it had fatter knobby tires, and it was going all the places.

I started thinking about how I could make something similar like that, and looking up frame and fork combos, but just could never justify having yet another bike. One day when I was riding my Elephant on the road, I thought the only thing this really needs is some drop bars, and I bet it would be pretty comfy for some road riding while being able to take on some single track.

After I felt I wanted to change the Elephant, I figured out the bars I wanted. I went with the PNW 52 drop bars since they were wider than the ones on the Bontrager. I had some TRP Hylex from a different bike project, so those were going to be great for this bike. But then came the Rohloff shifter.

Rohloffs come with a grip-shift style twist shifter. It allows you to flip through all 14 gears in one twist of your hand. I use the Gebra Rohbox on my road bike, and it's nice that you can shift with road levers like Campy Ergo, but you can only shift 2 shifts at a time. While the Campy is fine for road riding, there are times when I'm riding my mountain bike I like being able to shift from the highest gear to the lowest gear in one twist, which the Gebra doesn't do.

I also wanted to mount the shifter on the top of the road bars, and not at the end of the bars, which is an option with some other accessories. To do this, I could either get a CoMotion shifter, or a Berthoud shifter, both of which are expensive when compared with other shifters.



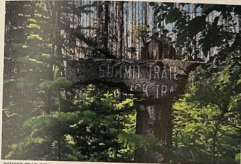
Instead, I took the Rohloff shifter apart, and found that the shifter consists of a piece of plastic that the cables attach to that spin on a piece of aluminum tube in the shifter. When I measured the piece of aluminum, I found that it's diameter is close to an average road bar's diameter. So, all I had to do was take the aluminum tube out, and it would be able to fit on the bar. Luckily, I had the help of Alex and his Lathe to help remove the tube, and was able to get the shifter onto the bar.

After I got all this together, I've been riding it around, and I have to say, the new bar setup makes this more fun to ride. It's got more places to move my hands around, and it's more comfy on the longer rides. While I have it currently setup with 27.5+ tires, I'm not ruling out rebuilding the wheels into 29ers, and seeing if this couldn't be a little bit lighter and better for the road setup....

The OG Big Lick trail?

Words, photos, and rubbish map by John

In V2.4 Dispatch we wrote about the Big Lick trail. The Big Lick trail is a feeder trail to the KCT spine that comes up from the west side of the range from the Curlew-Malo area. The trail mostly follows St. Peter's Creek. St. Peter's Creek has some historical interest in that there was a significant and apparently persistent camp along the creek occupied by Chinese placer miners in the late 19th century. In that article, we tried to make the case to restore the trail as part of the work that is being planned by the Forest Service and Evergreen. Set that aside for a minute and ponder the picture here with the old sign.



SUMMIT TRAIL SIGN.

I uncovered this old sign during the brush out of Taylor Ridge this year. The sign has clearly been there for some time. I've not seen the Dept of Agriculture symbol on any trail sign before. And the title of the sign "Summit Trail" is odd given the placement of the sign. As I lunched at the sign and stared at it, I wondered if "Summit Trail" referred to the summit of Taylor Ridge. But at the time this sign was made, Taylor Ridge was not a trail. It was a road. In fact, I think it was a road until perhaps the 80s or maybe even the 90s. And by road, I mean "road" — like, double track: barely double track, and then only with a high-clearance 4WD.

Taylor Ridge was built by a forest crew under the supervision of Jasper Taylor of Orient, WA back in about 1911. Taylor was the first ranger of what was then called the Orient District.

As I pondered this sign, two things struck me at once. Firstly, its placement on the side of a road. The only reason to put a trail sign on a road is if it's a trailhead. And secondly — the remaining letters of the other trail name appear to be ?CK or ?SK or ICK. Maybe it was once connected to the Big Lick trail?

I ran Gaia GPS on my phone with downloaded maps of the Forest Service and some historic maps. When I fired it up and enabled the historic layer, sure enough: I was standing at the top of a long trail that terminated at St. Peter's Creek, AKA: Big Lick. The historic map layer does not give this trail a name, but what's interesting is that the trail pre-dated the Kettle Crest Trail.

I bushwhacked through the dense wall of Alder that surrounds the sign and lines this section of Taylor Ridge trail. When I got into the open forest behind the sign, there was a trail. See the picture. That's a trail dammit!



THIS IS CLEARLY A TRAIL. THAT IS A NEAR-CLOSELY WELL PRESERVED LITTLE SECTION OF TRAIL.

So of course, the immediate thought here is to restore this trail. It would make a fantastic connector-loop: South Boulder + Old Stage (or Stick Pin) + Kettle Crest + Historic Big Lick + Taylor Ridge. Whether it makes sense to restore trails when we struggle to maintain those we have is a fair question, but outside the scope of this fantasy. It's exciting to find these old relics and even more exciting to piece together the clues into what seems like a pretty viable story.



THE RED TRAIL IS THE RCT FOR CONTEXT. MAP CREDIT IS FROM CALTOUR. YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY PAY FOR A CALTOUR OR GAIA GPS SUBSCRIPTION. I DO NOT BECAUSE THEY HAVE DIFFERENT MAP SETS AND SUPPORT DIFFERENT FUNCTIONALITY

Destination: Galbraith

Here's an idea: spend a few days riding Galbraith in Bellingham. Galbraith is a massive mountain bike trail system on the edge of Bellingham. It's over 3000 acres and has about 65 miles of trail. And this is well-designed, built and maintained trails that are purpose-built for mountain biking.



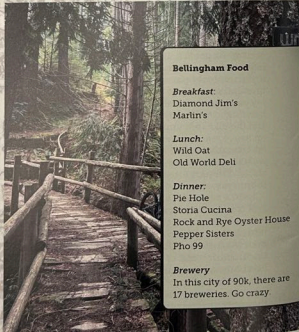
As someone who has come up in eastern Washington riding trails, most of my riding is on trails like Kettle Crest, which likely started out as paths for game and humans. Over the years, trail builders have improved switchbacks and water drainage and maintained these trails, but most of the trails I ride were suited for hiking first. We have a few proper mountain bike trail systems in eastern WA, but nothing on a scale (in size, variety, and grandeur) of Galbraith.

And riding trails that have been legitimately designed for mountain biking is a huge treat. From what I'd read and heard, I assumed that Galbraith would be a monster-gravity trail system. And while you can get your fill of big drops, gaps, and structures at Galbraith, what surprised me after 4 days of riding there was how excellent and extensive the trails were for continual flow riding. What this means to me is that the climbs are rarely intense – rather, they tend to wander and twist gently up and up. There are plenty of short root hops to pop over and some little punchy sections, but overall, you can easily climb 2000 feet over a dozen or so miles without exploding. Compared to a place like Kettle Crest, where climbs have emerged from history as steep, persistent, and relentless, the terrain at Galbraith feels almost curated. Smooth switchbacks interrupted by flat sections connect with gentle rises and paths lolly-gagging through dark cedar forests. Much of the trail surface is buffed out, but there's plenty of rock and root.

The system includes a handful of descent-only trails, most of these are black diamonds with ride-arounds, so really nothing is off limits, though for an old XC'er like me, I found myself puckerup a few times on some droopy-steep bits. If the trail isn't marked as descent-only, then in every case, I found that it made an excellent climb. There's plenty of flowy flat sections as well.

For as much planning and designing that's gone into this area, there's an equal emphasis on signage and mapping. There are many map kiosks throughout the park. Of course all of the trails are on Trailforks. And there's an excellent waterproof paper map for the geezers at local bike shops.

You hear the phrase "destination trail system" and it sounds like hype, but Galbraith really is worth making a trip for. If you can swing it, give yourself a few days to check it out. If not, then study the map and do some interneting to figure out how to best spend your time there.



Bellingham Food

Breakfast:
Diamond Jim's
Marlin's

Lunch:
Wild Owl
Old World Deli

Dinner:
Pie Hole
Storia Cucina
Rock and Rye Oyster House
Pepper Sisters
Pho 99

Brewery
In this city of 90k, there are 17 breweries. Go crazy

Book review: The Book of Difficult Fruit: Arguments for the Tart, Tender, and Unruly (with Recipes)

Author: Kate Lebo
By Liza Mattana

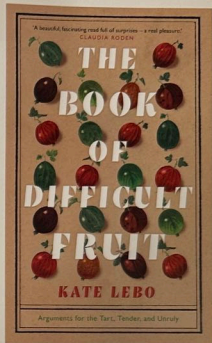
"How are you a difficult fruit?" asks my friend Cara at our recent book group. Are you sour, prickly, hard, fragile? The Book of Difficult Fruit by Kate Lebo is about some interesting fruit and the parallels they have with our human experience.

Author, Kate Lebo, compiles historic and botanical data, personal vignettes and recipes in her book, and it's a great blend. I suggested this book to my book group because I kept hearing about this Spokane author, and I was curious about her work.

What a great read. I recommend you try it if you like history, mixed in with personal stories and accompanied by interesting recipes. A recipe that I tried was Thimbleberry Kvass. But since Thimbleberries aren't in season yet, I improvised and made it with Rhubarb. So good! Serve on ice and with a tender shoot of rhubarb for fun.

I enjoyed Lebo's inclusion of local fruits like huckleberry, blackberry, elderberry and wheat. The recipe for rhubarb pickles will be sampled this summer and maybe some plum jam. Other fruits will probably not enter my kitchen but I loved learning about them. I've never heard of medlar. Have you? Maybe if you studied Shakespeare in college you remember it being mentioned in Romeo and Juliet. This old-world fruit is also known as open-arse or dog's ass. Juniper was a fascinating chapter as well where Lebo delves deep into its medicinal uses in the past 200 years. "In eighteenth-century England, gin earned its nickname 'mother's ruin' not only for its inebriating effects, its addictive properties, and its reputation as a woman's drink, but because juniper, its primary botanical ingredient, contains terpene-rich essential oils that thin blood, regulate menses, and in higher quantities cause miscarriage." I had no idea, and probably never would have without reading this book.

Lebo is laugh-out-loud funny, so don't think that this is a dry read. In one chapter Lebo, notices the selections on her mother's bookshelf and when How Not to Die catches her eye, she asks, "Isn't How Not to Die the primary lesson we give our children when we nag them about bike helmets



and looking both ways and no candy from strangers?" Yes, it absolutely is. Too much of parenting is teaching and reteaching this lesson for each stage of childhood. It's a funny way of looking at a serious job.

There are also words on how to be a good person. In Yuzu, Lebo writes about an aunt, estranged for 40 years: the younger sister of her father, who was cut off abruptly by the authors grandparents. The aunt is rarely talked about. In this chapter, Lebo sees her aunt, and their meeting provides knowledge and healing. Lebo confesses to her aunt that she wrote the obituary for her grandfather and didn't bother to mention her. Lebo owns her mistake and the pain that it caused her aunt, and she apologizes. Lebo writes with tenderness and ties our human life-lessons within the lessons on plants.

Food is nourishment, energy, culture, sustenance, medicine, entertainment. I really enjoyed this book and hope you will too. Check out Lebo's website for more info: katelebo.com You can also join Lebo at Stevens County's own Quillisascut Farm, August 9-13 for a writing workshop: <https://quillisascut.com>

NEEDFUL TOOLS:

THE DANISH DOUGH WHISK

YOU'RE DONE WITH KITCHEN GADGETS. YOUR STAND MIXER TAKES UP TOO MUCH SPACE, SO YOU'D RATHER TOUGH IT OUT, MIXING DOUGH WITH YOUR BARE HANDS. AND PERHAPS YOU ENJOY CLEANING STICKY, GOOPY, CLUMPY BATTER FROM A FLimsY WHISK.

COOL.

BUT IF YOU'VE EVER PonderED A BETTER WAY, A DANISH WHISK MAY BE FOR YOU. ALSO KNOWN AS A BREAD WHISK, IT HAS THE JOISTY TO HOOK DOUGH AS A MECHANICAL PADDLE OR HOOK MIGHT, BUT PROVIDES YOU, THE USER, WITH A TACTILE SENSE OF YOUR DOUGH OR BATTER'S PROGRESS, AND NONE OF THE HASSLE OF ANOTHER LARGE FOOTPRINT SMALL APPLIANCE. THE WHISK IS FIRM—YEA, STIFF. IT STRES LIKE A SPOON, BUT ITS MINIMALIST STRUCTURE GUTS THROUGH CLUMPS, AND SCRAPES THE CORNERS OF A SAUCE PAN WITH EASE. AN ESSENTIAL TOOL WITH LOOSE/WET DOUGH (GLUTEN FREE BREAD, ANY ONE?), IT'S AN ABSOLUTE DREAM WITH PANCAKE BATTER.

EASE. EFFICIENCY. EFFICACY. THE THREE MARKS OF A GREAT TOOL. BONUS POINTS FOR A TOTALLY WTF APPEARANCE AND DOUBLING AS A VERY SMALL EVG BEATER.

★★★★★



oven pancake



