

Vital Ground Foundation's "Strength in Connections" campaign utilizes a number of images I shot for them on a misty morning in June.

Bismark Meadows, near Priest Lake, is prime spring habitat for the Selkirk Grizzly population.

VITAL GROUND PROTECTING VITAL GROUND...ONE ACRE AT A TIME

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STRENGTH IN CONNECTIONS CAMPAIGN

Dear Friends of Vital Ground,

I am excited to announce a tremendous conservation opportunity and the launch of Vital Ground's new Strength of Connections Campaign. This will be Vital Ground's largest, most ambitious conservation fund raising effort since its founding in 1992. The \$2 million campaign will run from now through our 20th anniversary year of 2010.

As we embark on this momentous challenge, I am pleased to report that we have already secured contributions or pledges of nearly \$400,000, or close to 22% of our campaign goal. This includes a very generous pledge of support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

This provisional grant—up to \$100,000 via the Northwest Wildlife Conservation Initiative—is specifically to help us secure additional grizzly bear habitat at one of Vital Ground's premier project areas, Bismark Meadows, located in the Selkirk Mountains of northern Idaho. The grant requires a 3:1 match and must be met by October 2010.

Vital Ground has already acquired two critical parcels of grizzly bear spring habitat in Bismark Meadows. We have a third parcel under option agreement and a fourth is actively for sale. Your contribution today will help Vital Ground bring these two additional properties under conservation ownership, and allow us to continue working to protect other vitally important core habitat and linkages in Grizzly Country.

The online brochure located here describes how the Vital Ground's Strength of Connections Campaign will address the issue of habitat fragmentation in the northern Rockies head-on by permanently protecting crucial habitat on private lands for the benefit of grizzly bears and other wildlife.

Please help us respond to this urgent conservation challenge and matching grant opportunity by making a secure online donation today. Thank you!

Yours in Conservation,

Gary J. Wolfe

Gary J. Wolfe
Executive Director

P.S. With a contribution of \$25 or higher, we'll send you a free DVD copy of Vital Ground's video *The Strength of Connections*. This compelling video details actions we must take to protect and restore the grizzly bear, and highlights Vital Ground's critical habitat conservation work.

Strength of Connections Campaign

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Bismark Meadows - Vital Ground's premier project area in northern Idaho.
Photo by www.fatgrain.com

Vital Ground's work in the region is already well underway and is making a difference:

Bismark Meadows—A Magnet for Grizzly Bears

In the Selkirk Mountains of northern Idaho, Vital Ground has acquired two critical parcels of grizzly bear spring habitat in Bismark Meadows. We have a third parcel under option agreement and a fourth is actively for sale. **Your contribution today will help Vital Ground bring these two additional properties under conservation ownership, and help us maintain an important secure seasonal foraging area for grizzlies and other wildlife.**

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has received reports of a grizzly sow and two cubs, another single grizzly of undetermined gender, and a large grizzly bear using the meadows in the spring of 2009. A senior IDFG biologist estimates that at least four and perhaps as many as eight grizzly bears and offspring use the meadows each spring. This is an impressive amount of grizzly bear use given that less than 5 dozen grizzlies are believed to inhabit the entire Selkirk Ecosystem.

"We sincerely thank Vital Ground for enabling our family to finalize a Forest Legacy project in a form that will protect the family farm, the working forest and the great wildlife habitat."

— Lan Merrifield, landowner
Bonner County, Idaho

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www.vitalground.org

The grizzly bear image is not mine. Thankfully, I did not encounter any bears.