

THE RIVER OTTER ALLIANCE TURNS 20 REFLECTION AND FUTURE PLANS

By,
CAROL PETERSON

The River Otter Alliance (ROA) was formed as a non-profit organization on September 11, 1990, over 20 years ago. We produced our first newsletter in the fall of 1991. It included my welcome to the ROA, as the first president, stating our purpose *to support research, monitor abundance and distribution in the United States and educate the public through our newsletter, The River Otter Journal, on the need to restore and sustain river otter populations.* The river otter in Colorado in 1991 was classified as a state-endangered species and on the decline.¹

In the past 20 years, we have seen many positive changes, along with a national increase in interest and

knowledge about the river otter. We have awarded national and international grants to further river otter

research. I commend the dedicated individuals who have contributed, serving on the board of directors, in their volunteer work and with financial support of the ROA. We have established a website, www.otternet.com/ROA, which includes past newsletters and an extensive book list for reference. Several state reintroductions were successfully



Photo © Eric Peterson

completed.

In 2003, river otters in Colorado were downlisted from the status of state-endangered to state-threatened. Prior to

(Continued on page 3)

¹Polechla, Paul. (1990). Action Plan for North American Otters. In P. Foster-Turley, S. Macdonald and C. Mason (Eds.), *IUCN/SSC Action Plans for the Conservation of Biological Diversity* (pp. 74-79). Broadview, IL: Kelyvn Press.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE—THESE ARTICLES AND MORE....



Photo © Diane Tomecek

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The Henry Doorly Zoo**
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Assessing Otter Presence in Nepal →
Story begins on Page 8



Photo courtesy Gandhiv Kafle

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Fall-Winter 2010 issue of *The River Otter Journal*. We hope you enjoy this edition, which includes a research grant update from Kerry Foresman, a research grant report from Gandhiv Kafle, a reflection of our organization over the last twenty years and much more.

The week before Thanksgiving, I journeyed by train to Santa Cruz, California for the bi-annual Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) Rally.

As with the 2008 Rally, I came away overwhelmed with the quality and talent of 142 collected individuals from 22 countries whose passion and dedication to protecting Nature is inspiring and motivating. What started out ten years ago as an adjunct to The Nature Conservancy (TNC)—and is still coordinated from within TNC—has become a partnership of multiple worldwide organizations, notable among them World Wildlife Fund, Greening Australia, National Audubon Society and Foundations of Success. Attendees came from these organizations as well as governments and other Non-governmental organizations around the world. CCNet is the vision of the late Dan Efrogmson, whose legacy endowed TNC to form a network of conservation professionals to become expert in adaptive management using the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. Its success is legendary.

Ancillary to the conference was a choice of field trips. I chose the kayaking trip to view up close the wildlife of northern Monterey Bay. While the trip was a bit on the strenuous side for a sedentary 67-year-old (we paddled almost continuously for three hours through the swells of an incoming tide), we were

awarded by sea otter sightings, many sea lions, and hundreds of brown pelicans, which forty years ago were threatened with extinction from DDT poisoning and have recovered remarkably.



Photo © David Berg

As I mentioned in my Spring-Summer message, I am retiring as President of The River Otter Alliance after four years in this office. I will continue on the Board to encourage and harass board members in their dedicated effort to continue the ROA mission. I thank the Board and the membership for your support during that time.

It is my distinct pleasure, then, to introduce you to your new president, Diane Tomecek, who was elected at our annual meeting on December 13, 2010. Diane, who will also continue as editor of *The River Otter Journal*, has been magnificent in that role since 2007 and has many fresh new ideas to broaden and penetrate a wider audience to participate in our mission. Congratulations, Diane.

David

The River Otter Journal is a semi-annual publication of The River Otter Alliance. Look for the next edition of ***The River Otter Journal*** in Spring-Summer 2011!

River Otter Alliance Mission

The River Otter Alliance promotes the survival of the North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) through education, research and habitat protection. We support current research and reintroduction programs, monitor abundance and distribution in the United States and educate the general public through our newsletter, *The River Otter Journal*, on the need to restore and sustain river otter populations.

Our goal is to be a center of communications among wildlife biologists, environmental organizations, fishermen and all interested parties on a national and international basis, in order to ensure the healthy future of the North American River Otter. The River Otter Alliance is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. All efforts to our organization are on a voluntary basis by those who share a common concern for the river otter and its habitat. We welcome any interested persons to volunteer their time at any level of the organization.

River Otter Alliance Board of Directors

President – David Berg
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Jo Thompson, Ph.D.

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Editor & Layout Design – Diane Tomecek

Scientific Advisor – Tom Serfass, Ph.D.



The River Otter Journal has been printed on recycled paper.

THE RIVER OTTER ALLIANCE TURNS 20

REFLECTION AND FUTURE PLANS

(Continued from page 1)

the downlisting, a recovery plan was developed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) with “the goal to reach delisting criteria by 2010.” The recovery plan also provides criteria needed to be met for the delisting.

Currently, the status of the river otter has improved nationally, including several areas in Colorado. Michelle Cowardin, a biologist for CDOW in Grand County, observes river otters quite often in her area. This is encouraging news. CDOW officials, Tom Nesler, the Wildlife Conservation Section Manager, and Eric Odell, the Species Conservation Coordinator, who are responsible for coordinating river otter recovery work said, "From the 114+ otters released in Colorado since 1976, it is clear they are persisting and expanding their range to suitable habitats throughout the state. They are doing this on their own with little assistance from CDOW other than regulatory protection from trapping and other “take.” In their expansion across Colorado, it is obvious they are reproducing, recruiting and increasing toward carrying capacity and have the capacity to be self-sustaining. However, "at the present time CDOW has not budgeted the necessary resources to complete all the survey work necessary to [conclude] the statewide delisting process. Delisting of the river otter in Colorado from its threatened status will hopefully occur in the next few years.” Additionally, Tom states that "the process for delisting otter will occur through the Wildlife Commission [and CDOW] plans to celebrate this accomplishment with [its] partners when the time is right." The River Otter Alliance will maintain contact with CDOW officials to ensure we keep you, our members, apprised of the delisting process.

The goals of the ROA remain the same as they were 20 years ago, as many threats to the future sustainability of the river otter remain, or in some cases, have increased. In Colorado and nationwide, water levels in rivers are threatened. The non-profit organization, American Rivers², designated the upper Colorado River as the sixth most endangered river in 2010. Additionally, Denver takes 65 percent of the natural flow of the Fraser River and the proposed Moffat Tunnel project would take another 20 percent. Pollution threats are also increasing nationwide. According to Nebraska Game and Parks, mercury, DDT, dieldrin and polychlorinated biphenyls have all been identified in river otter tissues. Little is known regarding toxic levels of these residues in otters or their affects on reproduction and long-term survival. These contaminants are known to cause a variety of problems in other wildlife and humans. In fact, because of the extreme toxicity of dieldrin, it is banned in most of the world. Habitat protection also continues to be a critical component to river otter sustainability as they have extensive river and land use requirements. Throughout the year, an otter may occupy 50 or more miles of stream.



Photo © Eric Peterson

We urge continued monitoring of river otter populations. Many states do not formally estimate populations as river otters are notoriously hard to count. Nebraska’s Mammal-Furbearer Program Manager, for example, recently indicated a population range estimate of “300 to 1000.”

The River Otter Alliance goals are to promote the survival of the North American river otter. We need every member and interested individual to take action locally, to get involved, become informed on the local status of the river otter and to communicate and educate through networking. Know that you can make a difference with your participation.

² According to their website, “American Rivers protects and restores America's rivers for the benefit of people, wildlife, and nature.” Learn more about them at www.americanrivers.org.

Otter Updates By Diane Tomecek



A reminder for those members interested in receiving *The River Otter Journal* online in lieu of a printed version, please provide your e-mail address on our membership form on page 12 or e-mail your request to riverotteralliance@live.com to receive a web link to future editions.



For our young and young-at-heart readers, visit the website www.iamotter.co.uk for some fun otter antics, animations, stories and more!! Enjoy, otter lovers!



The book, *Otter*, by Daniel Allen has just been released. Dr. Daniel Allen “reveals how the animal’s identity has been shaped by [a] variety of human interactions.”¹ By exploring mainstream media, “folklore, fables and traditions of the otter”² as well as how the otter was hunted to near extinction by many cultures, Allen reveals the complex cultural history that exists between man and otter.



If you are ever in Pacific Grove, California, be sure to visit the sea otter sculpture, pictured here, near Lover’s Point. The sculptor’s name is Christopher Bell and the photo is courtesy of The Otter Project. The sculpture itself was donated to the city of Pacific Grove through the assistance of the local Rotary club.

Photo © Allison Ford and The Otter Project



In the Fall-Winter 2008 edition, we introduced you to Dara, the only Hairy-nosed otter to be kept legally in captivity. We are saddened by news that he died in the Spring of this year. A post mortem was conducted and found he was suffering from a lung infection and also had stomach ulcers. Readers may recall he originally lived as a pet and then was taken to Angkor Zoo. After this facility was shut down by authorities, Dara went to his new home, the Phnom Tamau Zoological Garden and Wildlife Rescue Center near Phnom Penh, Cambodia. There, he was housed in a brand new enclosure, received good quality food and regular medical care. It had been the hope to breed him. For more information on Dara, please visit http://www.furgetmenot.org.uk/dara_the_hno.html.



In addition to the threats from *Toxoplasma gondii* and *Sarcocystis neurona*, sea otters in the Monterey Bay area have a new dilemma: the toxin microcystin. The toxin is produced in freshwater from a type of cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, known as *Microcystis*. This toxin has been linked to 21 sea otter deaths by a team of researchers conducting a study in central California. The study results were presented at the California and World Ocean Conference in September by Melissa Miller, who was first to hypothesize, and subsequently determine, the connection between *Microcystis* and the sea otter deaths. The finding is significant as it links **freshwater** pollutants to marine mammal mortality.

NOTICEBOARD

Commencing with the Spring-Summer 2011 edition of *The River Otter Journal*, we will begin e-mailing a link to the publication to our non-U.S. based supporters and members. The decision to move to an electronic-only version of *The River Otter Journal* for our foreign members and supporters will help defray printing and postage costs. The cost savings will allow more dollars to work for the ROA’s mission.

Please note that for any non-U.S. based member without access to e-mail or wishing to continue receiving a print copy of the newsletter via postal mail, we will gladly continue to send the printed version. Please contact us at riverotteralliance@live.com if you wish to continue receiving the printed version.

¹ & ² <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/presssite/metadata/epl?mode=synopsis&bookkey=10521314>

MISSOURI RESEARCH UPDATE

DNA ANALYSIS ON SCAT AT LATRINE SITES

BY,
REBECCA A. MOWRY

Editor's note: Our readers may remember that we reported on Rebecca Mowry's research of river otter scat at various latrine sites in Missouri. Her research study is currently being reviewed for publication in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, but she has graciously given us a brief update of her study findings here.

1,426 scat-anal jelly samples were collected along stretches of eight rivers in southern Missouri, and it was determined that the minimum population size along these stretches was 63 otters (ranging from 2-14 per river). A model was developed that uses scats per latrine and

latrines per km to predict otter population based on noninvasive latrine site surveys.

While the population survey was the primary objective, genetic patterns between rivers was also examined. Additionally, it was discovered that for genotyping purposes, the freshest samples actually did not function as well as slightly older samples, but that anal jelly provided the optimal source of DNA for genotyping across seven to ten microsatellite [loci]. Overall, 26% of the 1,426 samples [collected] could be genotyped across at least seven microsatellite [loci].

UPDATE ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF RIVER OTTERS IN THE UPPER CLARK FORK RIVER BASIN OF WESTERN MONTANA

BY,
DARIN NEWTON AND KERRY FORESMAN, WILDLIFE BIOLOGY PROGRAM AND DIVISION OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES,
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, MISSOULA, MT.



We initiated a study on river otters in the Upper Clark Fork River Basin of western Montana to determine their status following over 100 years of mining activity which has left this basin, and its natural resources, significantly degraded by heavy metal accumulation. The State of Montana settled a series of lawsuits with Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARCO) between 1999 and 2008 and has begun intensive reclamation efforts along the 130 mile basin. To address the river otter question, we began surveying the main channel of the Clark Fork River over its entire length, collecting information on otter sign, (e.g., tracks, scats and latrine sites, photographic evidence from remote cameras), and initiating DNA analyses of collected

scat and hair samples, as well as tissue samples from legally trapped individual [animals]. To date, 51 scat samples, 20 hair samples and more than 2,000 photographs have been collected. In addition, tissue samples from 58 legally trapped individual [animals] were available from this basin and adjacent, unimpacted drainages (Blackfoot and Bitterroot Rivers). Eleven microsatellite loci are being used to characterize the tissue samples and a subset of these, which work best on non-invasive samples, have been used for scat and hair analyses. Eight unique individual [otters] have been identified from the non-invasive samples. Detailed habitat information was also collected at locations of otter sign and at random sites. Analyses are continuing and a second field season will be conducted to expand upon and refine our methods. The study will be completed in the winter of 2011.



TRAVELING

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo—Omaha, Nebraska by Diane Tomecek



**Female sibling North American river otters
at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo
Photo © Diane Tomecek**

Recently, on a trip to Nebraska, my husband and I had the privilege of visiting Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. For any of our readers who find themselves traveling along I-80 through Nebraska, be sure to take an afternoon to visit this facility. For those who appreciate otters, three species of river otter call the zoo home. There are North American, African Spotted-necked and Asian Small-clawed river otters.

The zoological facility that eventually became Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo officially began as Omaha's Riverview Park in 1894. Animals, including deer, a grizzly bear and approximately 120 others, lived in the Park in the late 1800s. Through the early 1900s, physical improvements were made, exhibits were added and cages were donated to assist with the increased number of animals found in the Park. Then, in 1952, the Omaha Zoological Society was established to assist the city with care and operation of the facility. It was then, a little over ten years since the Society was formed, that Margaret Hitchcock Doorly donated \$750,000 with the caveat that the zoo be named after her late husband, Henry Doorly, who had been chairman of the World Publishing Company. Subsequently in 1965, the Omaha Zoological Society was reconfigured and began operating the zoo as a non-profit organization for the city, dedicating the first phase of the zoo to Henry Doorly. Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo was born.

Over the years, the zoo has expanded and created many additional exhibit areas that will appeal to most any animal lover. One of the unique exhibits is the *Desert Dome*, which makes the zoo virtually impossible to miss while driving along I-80. The dome houses the world's largest indoor desert and features the *Kingdoms of the Night* exhibit beneath the surface. The amazing indoor swamp, part of *Kingdoms of the Night*, gives visitors an up-close feeling of being in a swamp, alive with at least one American alligator, at night no less! Other notables of the Henry Doorly Zoo are: it is one of 18 zoos in North America to have the rare okapi on exhibit, it is one of four zoos to display Aye-Aye, the largest nocturnal primate, and it exhibits and breeds fossa, a member of the mongoose family.

The North American river otters at the zoo reside near the north entrance (circled on the bottom of the facility map on page 7) and can be accessed through the extensive trail system or via the train that winds through the facility (otter location marked by an otter paw icon on left side on the map). The otters have a good-sized pool in which they are quite happy to spend their time. There are four river otters at the zoo: two 18-year-old female siblings and a brother-sister pair that are approximately two years of age. The females were born at the Nashville Zoo while the male-female siblings were born in Michigan City, Indiana at the Washington Park Zoo. My husband and I were able to see the older female siblings frolicking around their enclosure; we enjoyed watching them as they jumped from a large tree, which extends into the pool, into the water and back onto the tree again.

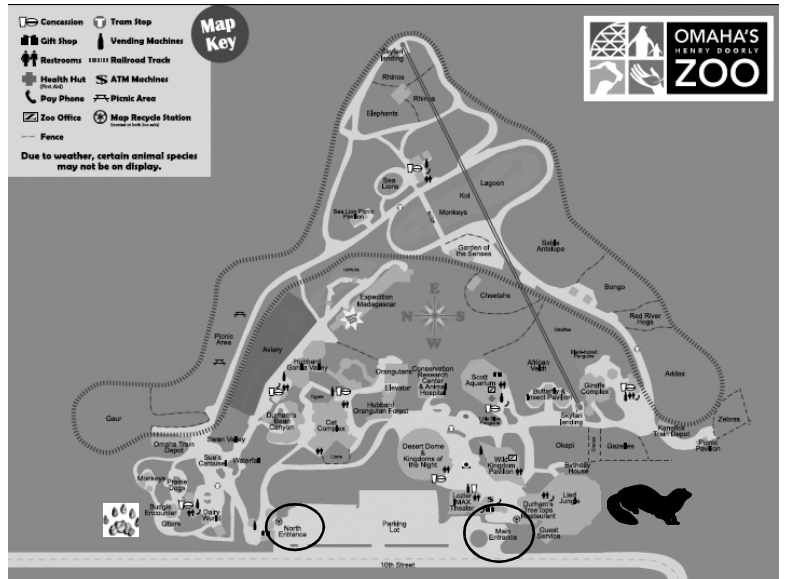
Two other species of river otter—Asian Small-clawed and African Spotted-necked otters—are also on display at the zoo. Conveniently located near the main entrance (also circled on the bottom of the facility map on page 7; otter location marked by an otter icon on the right side), the Lied Jungle exhibit houses both of these otter species. As with the North American river otters, the zoo has four Asian Small-clawed otters. The first pair includes Hadji, a 15-year-old male born in California at one of the Six Flags facilities, and Jackie, an eight-year-old female born at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The second pair includes Tong,

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WITH OTTERS



**Hadji, an Asian Small-clawed otter
at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo**
Photo © David Tomecek



(Continued from page 6)

a four-and-a-half-year-old male, which came to the zoo in 2008, also from Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Elina, the five-and-a-half-year-old female, arrived in 2009 from the Newport Aquarium in Kentucky where she was born. Hadji, pictured above, was quite active and animated during our visit. He seemed very interested in his surroundings, squealing often to tell us so.

As visitors continue to explore the Lied Jungle exhibit, Pfeiffer and Bill, the two African Spotted-necked otters on display, entice with their sleek beauty. Pfeiffer, the 12-year-old female from Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, arrived at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo just months ago, while Bill, the eight-year-old male, was imported from South Africa back in 2001. The Zoo hopes to breed the pair at a later date.

All three otter species at the zoo are in training programs which permit staff to obtain each animal's weight and to conduct a visual inspection of its health. The otters are also trained to transfer on and off exhibit and have continuous daily enrichment selected from a rotational calendar of items.

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo provides excellent exhibits for otter aficionados to witness three endearing species of river otter. Enjoying the river otters, as well as the many other exhibits, makes this facility well worth the trip.



**Female North American river otter
at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo**
Photo © Diane Tomecek

The River Otter Alliance extends its sincere appreciation to Christie Eddie, Curator of Small Mammals at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, for her assistance in providing information for this article. We also wish to thank Steph Husman, Communications and Marketing Manager, for referring us to Christie. For more information about Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, please visit www.omahazoo.com.

RAPID ASSESSMENT OF OTTER PRESENCE SITES WITH COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN NEPAL

By,
GANDHIV KAFLE, NEPAL REPRESENTATIVE, IUCN/SSC OTTER SPECIALIST GROUP

Three species of otter, the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), the Smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) and the Asian Small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinerea*) have been recorded in Nepal.

Baseline information on otters is not available for the majority of wetland sites within the country. Freshwater ecosystems, the preferred habitat for otters, are adversely affected by both human and natural causes (Kafle 2009). In this context, Friends of Wetlands in Nepal carried out a rapid survey in four districts of Nepal to identify the potential otter habitats in selected wetlands coupled with community awareness, in partnership with the Chester Zoo [in the United Kingdom] and The River Otter Alliance.

This paper provides an overview of the findings of otter survey in 20 wetland sites of four districts—Kaski, Lamjung, Kavre and Sindhupalchowk of Nepal using participatory methods (in-depth interviews, meetings and questionnaire surveys) and direct observations.

29 potential habitats of otter were found in 11 wetland sites: five in Kavre and Sindhupalchowk, five in Kaski and one in Lamjung. Dharke stream and Indrawati stream bordering Kavre and Sindhupalchowk districts hold potential for observation of Asian Small-clawed otter and Smooth-coated otter. Patene stream, Roshi stream, Nanimata stream and Punyamata stream hold potential for presence of three types of otter (as

indicated above). Water resources in Kaski district, especially lakes and Bijaypur stream hold potential for Eurasian otter and Smooth-coated otter presence. Chepe stream along Alkatar village and Chepeghat

range in Lamjung district has potential for Eurasian otter observance.

The least known population of otters and other aquatic animals are affected by a number of adverse factors in freshwater resources. Extraction of rocks and sand from the stream and rivers is prevalent in wetlands of Kaski, Kavre and Sindhupalchowk

districts. Fishing with use of electricity and poison is prevalent in streams and rivers of Kavre and Sindhupalchowk districts. The leakage of chemicals and nutrients

from the farming lands to water bodies has contributed to water pollution and eutrophication in the water bodies, affecting otter habitat and dietary diversity. Change of vegetation along stream banks was reported. It has contributed to habitat alteration and succession affecting survival of frog, snails and other small amphibians. Intentional killing [of otters] was reported in Rupa lake of Nepal due to predation of fish by otters. The drying of water sources, in the context of a changing climate, has affected fish population and their migration due to lowering water level and availability, subsequently affecting otter habitat and diet.

One of the major social factors hindering otter research and conservation in Nepal is the low, or in many cases, no level of awareness in the general

(Continued on page 9)



Local stream in Kavre, a potential habitat of otters

Photo courtesy Gandhiv Kafle

RAPID ASSESSMENT OF OTTER PRESENCE (CONT'D)

BY,
GANDHIV KAFLE, NEPAL REPRESENTATIVE, IUCN/SSC OTTER SPECIALIST GROUP

(Continued from page 8)

populace of the existence of otters. As found in this survey, elder people and those engaging in wetlands for subsistence are somewhat familiar with otters, but younger individuals are completely ignorant of the existence of otters. In this context, around 100 community people obtained knowledge on otters, useful for enhancing their understanding and value of the otters. In days ahead, some outreach materials in printed form will be useful. Local otter information centers with outreach materials are proposed.

It is early to initiate intensive studies of otters in Nepal. The current need is to conduct rapid assessment through participatory means of the wetland sites in which otters are found. This information is not available in many districts. Once this information is available, then intensive survey of otters to find the distribution and population status is possible. It will help to allocate scarce resources for use in research in potential otter habitat.



Stone and sand mining—a threat to otters

Photo courtesy Gandhiv Kafle

THE RIVER OTTER ALLIANCE SEEKS GRANT PROPOSALS

Gandiv Kafle's report and research as well as the report from Kerry Foresman and Darin Newton on North American river otter status in Montana were funded in part by The River Otter Alliance. To any interested individuals, The River Otter Alliance will fund grants up to \$1,000 each in the areas of otter-related research, education, reintroduction, rehabilitation or habitat protection. Proposals should state the purpose of the project, objectives, tactics, scientific methodology, follow-up, how the results will be utilized to benefit otters and how the grant funds will be used. The grant is for a period of one year and will require a written report of the findings at the end of that period, with the possibility of publishing the report or a summary of the results in *The River Otter Journal*.

If interested and for additional information, please contact:

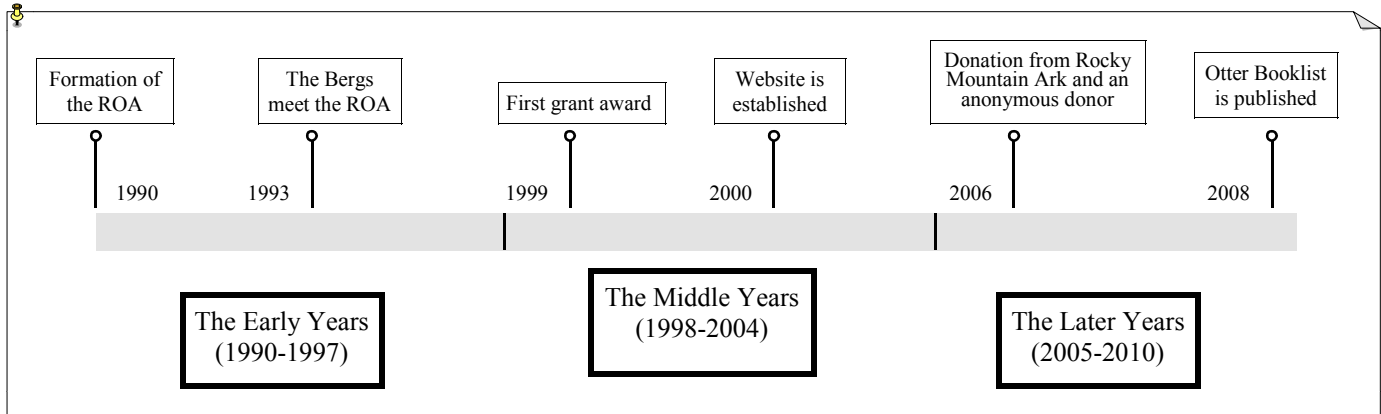
The River Otter Alliance
6733 Locust Court
Centennial, CO 80112
E-mail: riverotteralliance@live.com

THE ROA TURNS TWENTY (1990-2010) A REFLECTION ON LEADERSHIP AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By,

DIANE TOMECEK

MANY THANKS TO TRACY JOHNSTON, DAVID BERG AND CAROL PETERSON FOR THEIR VALUABLE INPUT TO THIS TIMELINE



September 1990

The River Otter Alliance is formed as a nonprofit organization. Founders were Leslie Malville and Joe Powell and Carol Peterson and John Mulvihill. Carol Peterson was the first President.

March 1993

Judy and David Berg meet Carol Peterson and John Mulvihill. They met while Judy was conducting research on the river otters of Rocky Mountain National Park [RMNP] in Colorado.

October 1996

Judy Berg becomes President.

July 1997

Dr. Paul Polechla, Associate Professor at the University of New Mexico, joins the ROA as Scientific Advisor.

November 1999

ROA's first grant award was designated and approved.*

May 2000

The ROA website established on www.otternet.com by Bob Fetterman.**

November 2000

Tracy Johnston becomes President.

May 2001

Dr. Merav Ben-David, Assistant Professor at the University of Wyoming, joins the ROA as Scientific Advisor.

Dr. Jo Thompson, President and Executive Director of Lukuru Wildlife Research Foundation, Inc., joins the ROA.

October 2003

Glenn Chambers, expert on river otters, producer of *On the Road with Paddlefoot Productions, Inc.* and collaborator to the Missouri Department of Conservation's river otter restoration program, joins the ROA.

September 2006

Donations from the Rocky Mountain Ark Wildlife Rehabilitation

Center and an anonymous donor allow the ROA to form a grant committee to fund grants related to research, education, rehabilitation, reintroduction and habitat protection.

November 2006

David Berg becomes President.

March 2007

Traveling with Otters article series begins with the purpose of linking the ROA to various zoos and aquariums to establish a collaborative force to educate the general population about all species of otter.

May 2008

The ROA compiles book list on otters for research and education.

November 2009

Dr. Tom Serfass, Professor at Frostburg State University, joins the ROA as Scientific Advisor.

Please note: The ROA is extremely appreciative of all past individuals who have served the organization. Individuals mentioned within this timeline serve currently or were past Presidents or Scientific Advisors only.

*This grant was designated to an individual that would continue the study of river otters in RMNP. No individual was ever found. After board consensus that student surveys met the original intent of the grant, the monies were distributed in 2004 to the University of Wyoming's Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society to help fund student bi-annual river otter surveys.

**The first edition of *The River Otter Journal* scanned and available on the ROA website is the Fall 1999 issue. In 2006, David Berg began management of the website.

The kids page

June 23, 2010
 Dear River Otter Alliance, That is awesome everything in there is cool and informational! do you have any plush toys or any more of that stuff? (pictures will work, of course!)
 I am a huge fan of otters. I will have to get back to you soon. Who is the head president? Sincerely,
 Sophia M. West 9 yrs. old
 Thank you!

Enter to win!!

The ROA received this endearing message from one of our supporters, Sophia M. West. Her letter has inspired us to begin a photo or drawing contest for our young readers.

All entries must be received by September 1st of each year. Entrants (or their parent or legal guardian) must be current members of The River Otter Alliance. If not a current member, **JOIN OR RENEW TODAY** by completing the application found on page 12 or the one found on our website, www.otternet.com/ROA.

Please submit your photos or drawings along with any applicable membership information and monies to:

The River Otter Alliance
 6733 S. Locust Court
 Centennial, CO 80122

A winner will be selected each year and will have their photo or drawing printed in the Fall-Winter edition of *The River Otter Journal* AND the winner will receive a stuffed otter toy.

Sophia has been selected to be our first honorary winner! Congratulations, Sophia!

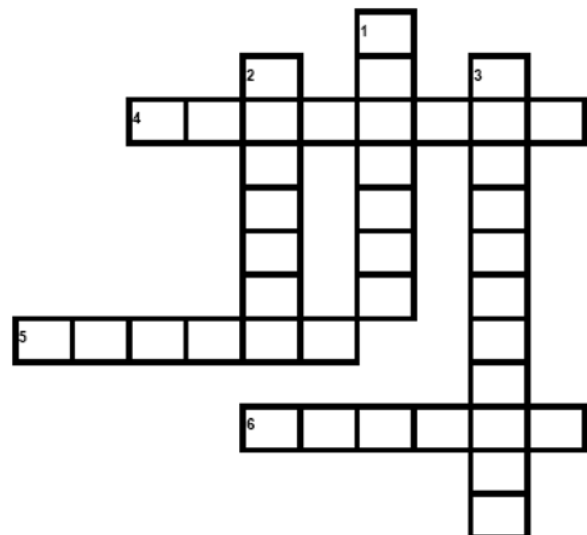
Enjoy this otter crossword puzzle*

ACROSS

4. Cousin to the river otter that lives in the ocean
5. How old is The River Otter Alliance in years?
6. North American river otter genus—hint: 1st word of the scientific name

DOWN

1. A river otter's toilet
2. The loss of this threatens otters
3. Zoo featured on Page 6 & 7 of this edition of *The River Otter Journal*



*Answers in the Spring-Summer 2011 edition



The River Otter Alliance

ENROLL NOW FOR 2011!

As a member you will be supporting research and education to help ensure the survival of *Lontra canadensis*, the North American River Otter.

You will receive *The River Otter Journal* (published semi-annually), with updates on otter-related:

Educational Programs, Environmental Issues, Research Information, River System and Population Surveys and much more!

Please Provide Your Address & Contact Information Below:

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Centennial, CO 80112

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Visit the River Otter Alliance Web Page at www.otternet.com/ROA
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The River Otter Alliance

