



Bear In Mind: The Story of the California Grizzly

From the California Exhibition Resources Alliance (CERA)

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Over the centuries, the relationship that Californians have had with the grizzly bear is one of dualities – expressed in fear and fascination. Although extinct in the state, the grizzly has been a central character in California’s history. “Bear In Mind: Story of the California Grizzly” is a traveling exhibition that tells the compelling story of one of California’s most beloved and feared animals.

“Bear In Mind” uses striking images, informative text, memorabilia, a variety of historical and scientific objects, and hands-on activities to engage visitors of all ages. The exhibition is divided into three thematic sections:

1. Loss of the Grizzlies

This first section discusses the reasons behind the extinction of the California grizzly, documenting early Californian’s attitudes about the bears through powerful quotes and historic illustrations and photographs.

2. The Truth About Grizzlies

This section presents scientifically accurate information about bear biology, dispelling many of the myths surrounding the legendary predator. The section’s topics include what we knew about California grizzlies before the extinction, the differences between the California black bear and grizzly bear, where grizzlies can be found today, and the lessons learned from the loss of California grizzly that can be applied to other threatened species.

3. Bears In Our Imagination

Today, the California Grizzly lives only in our imaginations as symbols of things desired and things lost. This final section investigates how the image of the California grizzly have been used as an icon, advertiser, and entertainer.

Children’s Area and Hands-On Activities

This exhibition includes sections created especially for children of all ages. It offers a simulated bear den, colorful books and puppets, and special text panels written at a 4th grade reading level to help children understand the story of the California Grizzly. “Bear In Mind” also provides hands-on interactives that feature a map showing a timeline of the grizzlies’ demise; comparing and contrasting grizzly size, scat, and paws; and a bear image sorting game.

The “Bear In Mind: The Story of the California Grizzly” exhibition is produced and toured by the California Exhibition Resources Alliance (CERA). The exhibition was developed in concert with The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley and Heyday Books. CERA is a network of professionally operated museums and cultural organizations that collaborate to create and tour smaller, affordable, high quality exhibitions that enhance civic engagement and human understanding. CERA is supported by generous grants from the James Irvine Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, and the California Council for the Humanities, with additional support for this exhibition was provided by the Bank of the West.

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