

RED, WHITE, & BLUE *SEA SANDS STRIES*

AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

• January - March 2018 •



*U.S. EMBASSY
RIYADH*

American Citizen Services Public Hours:
Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm
Email: RiyadhACS@state.gov
Phone: (966)(11)488-3800

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ACS OUTREACH AT ISHBILIA



The American Citizen Services (ACS) unit in Riyadh visited U.S. citizens at Ishbilia compound at the end of January. Vice Consul Jacob Surface started the event with a presentation on services we can provide to U.S. citizens in the Kingdom. ACS Chief Jason Chiodi discussed the Department of State's new travel advisory system (keep reading this newsletter for more information) and led a discussion with U.S. citizens regarding various issues they are facing in Saudi Arabia. One of the Embassy's Regional Security Officers gave a briefing on Saudi Arabia's current security environment and highlighted general emergency preparedness practices that all overseas U.S. citizens should consider (see travel.state.gov for more information).

ACS staff were on hand to answer questions related to passports, voting, and visas. We also accepted voter registrations from U.S. citizens who attended the presentation. A big thanks to Ishbilia compound for allowing us to host such a fabulous event!

U.S. EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAY

On February 12, 2018, Chargé d'Affaires Christopher Henzel hosted Governor of Riyadh Region His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, distinguished Saudi officials, and approximately 1,000 guests to celebrate the 242nd year of the independence of the United States of America. The reception was held at Quincy House, the official residence of the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Pictured below: Mr. Henzel and His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud cut the cake at the U.S. National Day celebration.



JANADRIYAH FESTIVAL



Riyadh's ACS team visited the Janadriyah National Heritage Festival in February. ACS learned more about the various Saudi government offices and how they may be able to assist our U.S. citizens. Many offices hosted their own tents and were eager to discuss their services with us. We were able to meet with representatives from the Human Rights Commission, the General Directorate of Prisons, the General Directorate of Passports, and the Civil Affairs Office, among others.

Happenings in Jeddah

Tabouk Town Hall

Consulate Jeddah led two public outreach events in Tabouk. On December 3, 2017 Consul General Matthias Mitman, ACS Chief Jason Gallian, and Consular Assistant Mohammad Shamma hosted a town hall for interested American citizens to inform the public about the availability of consular services, taking questions from the audience regarding passport renewals, and documenting the birth of

their children, among others. 25 people attended the event.

ACS Staff strengthened the Consulate's relationship with local officials by engaging with airport and municipal police authorities, and recruiting a new warden. These added connections will enhance the Consulate's ability to serve American citizens in the area.



CG Mitman and ACS Chief Jason Gallian speaking in Tabouk at a town hall for American citizens.

Consular Table at Jeddah National Day

During the National Day celebration in Jeddah on February 14th, consular officers Caitlin Nettleton, Andrei Parvan, and Megan McPhee fielded questions from American citizens regarding voting, passport applications, and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. The National Day theme was "U.S. National Parks" and Consulate General Jeddah ACS staff used the opportunity to showcase the wonder and natural beauty to be found in Arches, Everglades, Grand Canyon and Yellowstone National Parks while meeting with important local government officials, business contacts, and ACS wardens.



Consular booth staffed by Jeddah's consular officers at National Day.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SAUDI JAWAZAT AT THE CAUSEWAY

Dhahran ACS met with senior officials of the General Directorate of Passports (pictured below), which is also responsible for inspection of travelers at Saudi ports-of-entry, at the King Fahd Causeway in November. The visit included a tour of Causeway operations and discussions to enhance our working relationships and ensure the safety of American travelers. The meeting was an important step in U.S. Consulate Dhahran's efforts to strengthen relationships with Saudi officials.



DHAHRAN ACS CONDUCTS MINI-TOWN HALL AT PRINCE MOMAMMAD UNIVERSITY

Dhahran ACS was accorded a warm welcome by American educators at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU). PMU is one of the largest private universities in Saudi Arabia where Americans teach at all levels. The event began with a rendition of the Star Spangled Banner followed by the introduction of the American Citizen Services (ACS) team. Deputy Consular Chief Brian Santhumayor provided a brief on the range of services and online resources available to Americans through the Consulate. The ACS team encouraged educators to contact their resident wardens at PMU and to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

U.S. CONSULATE HOLDS ANNUAL AMERICAN CITIZENS TOWN HALL MEETING

Consulate Dhahran hosted its annual American Citizens Town Hall on November 1, 2017. The event featured a panel consisting of staff from the Consular Section, the Regional Security Office, and the Wardens which provided attendees with information on consular services, crisis preparedness, and the current security, economic, and business environment. Many of the audience's questions focused on the impact of ongoing changes in the Kingdom on Americans.

WARDENS PARTICIPATE IN A CRISIS MANAGEMENT EXERCISE

Consulate Dhahran hosted its Wardens for a tabletop crisis management exercise conducted by the Dhahran American Citizens Services (ACS) unit on January 30. The event brought together Consulate staff, security officers of private American corporations, and crisis management specialists from partner organizations with the Wardens to evaluate and enhance their state of readiness for responding to an actual crisis. Speakers highlighted their experiences during the crises in Somalia (1991) and Lebanon (2006). The tabletop CME was led by Minister Counselor of Consular Affairs Sean Murphy, Consular Chief Vito DiPaola and Deputy Consular Chief Brian Santhumayor. The wardens actively worked through various scenarios specific to the Eastern Province. The Dhahran ACS unit is thankful to all attendees who participated in the event.

U.S. PASSPORT EXECUTION FEE WILL INCREASE TO \$35

Effective April 2, 2018, the passport execution fee will increase from \$25 to \$35. The \$10 execution fee increase only applies to U.S. passport applicants using the DS-11 form, such as first-time applicants over 16, children under 16, and applicants who re-apply after reporting their previous passport lost or stolen. The \$10 fee increase does not apply to adults eligible to renew their passport using the DS-82 form.

Customers applying with the DS-11 form pay two separate fees: an application fee to the U.S. Department of State and the execution fee to the passport acceptance facility.

The Department of State generally sets consular fees at an amount calculated to achieve recovery of the costs to the U.S. government of providing the consular service. The latest Cost of Service Model showed that the costs associated with passport execution were higher than the current fee of \$25.

The proposed fee change was published in the Federal Register as a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and public comments were accepted until November 18, 2016, 60 days after the Notice's publication. **The Final Rule**, implementing the change, includes the Department's response to relevant comments received.

See **Passport Fees** for more information on the total cost of a U.S. passport book or a U.S. passport card and all associated services.



UNPAID TAXES MAY RESULT IN REVOCATION OR DENIAL OF A PASSPORT

If you have seriously delinquent tax debt, IRC § 7345 authorizes the IRS to certify that debt to the State Department for action. The State Department generally will not issue a passport to you after receiving certification from the IRS.

Upon receiving certification, the State Department shall deny your passport application and/or may revoke your current passport. If your passport application is denied or your passport revoked and you are overseas, the State Department may issue you a limited validity passport good only for direct return to the United States.

You can find more information on the [Internal Revenue Service's website](#).



Send your vote home

**AMERICANS CAN VOTE.
WHEREVER THEY ARE.**

Are you planning to vote in the U.S. midterm elections this year, but will be living overseas? No worries – you can still vote! While the process may seem a bit daunting at first, it's really two easy steps:

The U.S. midterm elections will be held November 6, 2018.

Check your state's deadlines on the FVAP website and mark your calendars to make sure your vote counts!



1 Request your ballot. We recommend doing this now – don't wait! If you are voting overseas, you must request your ballot EVERY YEAR. Even if you voted in previous years overseas and haven't moved, you need to tell your state that you want your ballot sent to you overseas again this year. Some states also require you to register. The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is a form that allows you to register and request your ballot all-in-one. You can obtain the FPCA from your nearest Embassy or Consulate or – even easier – online at the [Federal Voting Assistance Program \(FVAP\) website](#). The website will list your state's due dates and requirements and even walk you through filling out and submitting the form. Many states allow you to submit this form via email. We recommend following up with your local election office to ensure they have received your registration. Contact information for your local election official can be found at the [FVAP website](#).



2

Receive your ballot and vote! All States now allow you the option to receive your ballot by e-mail. Once your ballot arrives, print it, fill it out, and mail it to the United States. You can return your voted ballot to your local election officials free of charge via the nearest embassy or consulate or mail it directly at your own expense. Some states even allow you to return your completed ballot by email or fax! And new this year - the FVAP will provide an email-to-fax conversion service for voters who have difficulty sending election materials to States that do not accept emailed documents.

For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov) or visit www.FVAP.gov.

Not sure who to vote for?

Check out the [FVAP links page](#) for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain online. You can also read national and hometown newspapers online, or search the internet to locate articles and information.



MEET THE NEW AND IMPROVED CONSULAR TRAVEL ADVISORY SYSTEM!

The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) recently launched improvements to public safety and security messaging that will make it easier for U.S. citizens to access clear, timely, and reliable information about every country in the world. CA has replaced its former countrywide products, Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts, with a single "Travel Advisory" for each country. Each Travel Advisory for every country around the world will be paired with a level of advice based on one of four tiers:



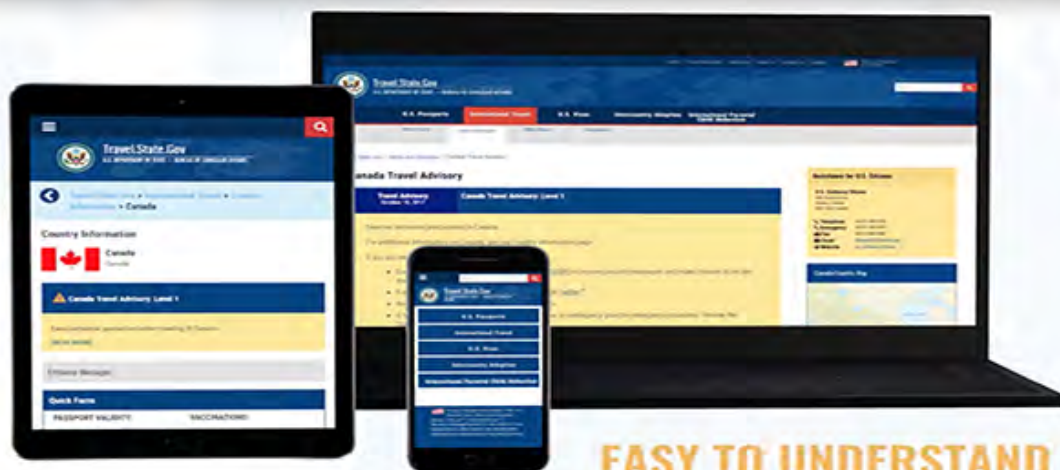
Every country will have a Travel Advisory, providing tiered levels of advice ranging from Levels 1-4. Further country-specific details such as entry/exit requirements, local laws and customs, health conditions, transportation, and other relevant topics will accompany these levels and be available on the same country page. The four levels of advice are:

Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.

Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 3 - Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 4 - Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. Government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country or leave as soon as it is safe to do so. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.



**EASY TO UNDERSTAND
SAFETY INFORMATION WITH
TRAVEL ADVISORY LEVELS**

Travel Advisories at Levels 2-4 will contain clear reasons for the level assigned, using established risk indicators, and offer specific advice to those who choose to travel there. These are:

- C – Crime: Widespread violent or organized crime is present in areas of the country. Local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.
- T – Terrorism: Terrorist attacks have occurred and/or specific threats against civilians, groups, or other targets may exist.
- U – Civil Unrest: Political, economic, religious, and/or ethnic instability exists and may cause violence, major disruptions, and/or safety risks.
- H – Health: Health risks, including current disease outbreaks or a crisis that disrupts a country's medical infrastructure, are present. The issuance of a Centers for Disease Control Travel Notice may be a factor.
- N - Natural Disaster: A natural disaster, or its aftermath, poses danger.
- E - Time-limited Event: Short-term event, such as elections, sporting events, or other incidents that may pose safety risks.
- O – Other: There are potential risks not covered by previous risk indicators. Read the country's Travel Advisory for details.

Not only will Travel Advisories follow a consistent format and use plain language to help travelers find and use important security information, but the four standard levels of advice will be accompanied by clear, actionable steps U.S. citizens should take to help ensure their safety.

Additionally, although CA will issue an overall Travel Advisory level for each country, varying levels of advice may apply to specific locations or areas within a country. After all, the security environment is not always level nationwide – especially in larger or less stable countries. For instance, CA may advise U.S. citizens to exercise increased caution in a country (Level 2), but to reconsider travel to a particular area within that country (Level 3).

In addition, U.S. embassies and consulates around the world will now issue “Alerts,” a single system to replace the former Emergency Messages and Security Messages. Alerts will be labeled according to their issue: Security Alert; Health Alert; Weather Alert; or Demonstration Alert.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE NEW ADVISORIES?

While the nomenclature and formatting is changing, the locations generally are not, with the exception that travelers can now access all safety and security information for any given country on a single page.

All Travel Advisories (formerly Travel Warnings and Alerts) will still be found on **individual country pages**, along with the new Alerts (formerly Emergency and Security Messages).

Alerts will also be found on **individual embassy and consulate websites**, which themselves have all been updated over the last year.

Updated Travel Advisories or newly issued Alerts will also be sent via the **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** to all enrollees.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: TRAVEL.STATE.GOV



INTERNATIONAL TAX FAQs

It's tax season again! You can find information and resources about the 2017 tax filing season for U.S. citizens abroad on [our webpage](#).

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) compiled the following frequently asked questions regarding general international federal tax matters impacting individual taxpayers. The answers to these questions provide responses to general inquiries and are not citable as legal authority. You can find additional FAQs on [their website](#).

1. I'm a U.S. citizen living and working outside of the United States for many years. Do I still need to file a U.S. tax return?

Yes, if you are a U.S. citizen or a resident alien living outside the United States, your worldwide income is subject to U.S. income tax, regardless of where you live. However, you may qualify for certain foreign earned income exclusions and/or foreign income tax credits. Please refer to [Publication 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad](#), for additional information.

2. What is the due date of a U.S. income tax return?

The due date for filing a federal individual income tax return generally is April 15 of each year if your tax year ends December 31st. Your return is considered filed timely if the envelope is properly addressed and postmarked no later than April 15.

However, if you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, who is either: (1) living outside of the United States and Puerto Rico and your main place of business or post of duty is outside of the United States and Puerto Rico; or (2) in military or naval services on duty outside of the United States and Puerto Rico on the due date of your return, you are allowed an automatic 2-month extension until June 15 to file your return and pay any tax due. For additional information refer to [Publication 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad](#). If you use this automatic 2-month extension, you must attach a statement to your return explaining which of the two situations qualify you for the extension.

3. Now that I live overseas, how can I find a tax preparer?

The IRS recently published a searchable directory, listing preparers in your area. The listed preparers currently hold professional credentials recognized by the IRS or hold an Annual Filing Season Program Record of Completion. See [Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications](#).

Visit our [ACS website](#)
for a list of local tax
advisors in Saudi
Arabia

KEEP YOUR IQAMA WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES!

The General Directorate of Passports **issued a reminder** that penalties will be imposed on residents who do not carry a resident identity card (iqama). Residents without identification may be subject to a 6-week prison sentence and a fine of up to three thousand riyals.

RENEW



FORGET

TRAVELING THIS SUMMER? RENEW YOUR PASSPORT NOW!

Beat the summer rush and make an appointment to renew your passport early. Don't forget to check your children's passports as well. Do the kids have an early dismissal soon? Use that afternoon to bring the whole family in! See **our webpage** for more info on how to make an appointment.



TEACHING IN SAUDI

Are you currently teaching or planning to teach in the Kingdom? Check out [our helpful teacher's guide](#) that provides information on iqamas, visas, contracts, and what to expect.

DEPARTING ON FINAL EXIT?

We recommend getting a Saudi police clearance before departing the Kingdom for good. A police clearance may be needed for future employment or immigration. You must be physically present in Saudi to get this clearance, therefore you will be unable to obtain one after exiting the country.

The Saudi police may require a letter from the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate General before they will fingerprint U.S. citizens for the clearance. Contact RiyadhACS@state.gov, JeddahACS@state.gov, or DhahranACS@state.gov for more information.



UPCOMING CLOSURES

The U.S. Embassy and
Consulates in Saudi
Arabia will be closed:

MAY 27

IN OBSERVANCE OF
MEMORIAL DAY

JUN. 14-20

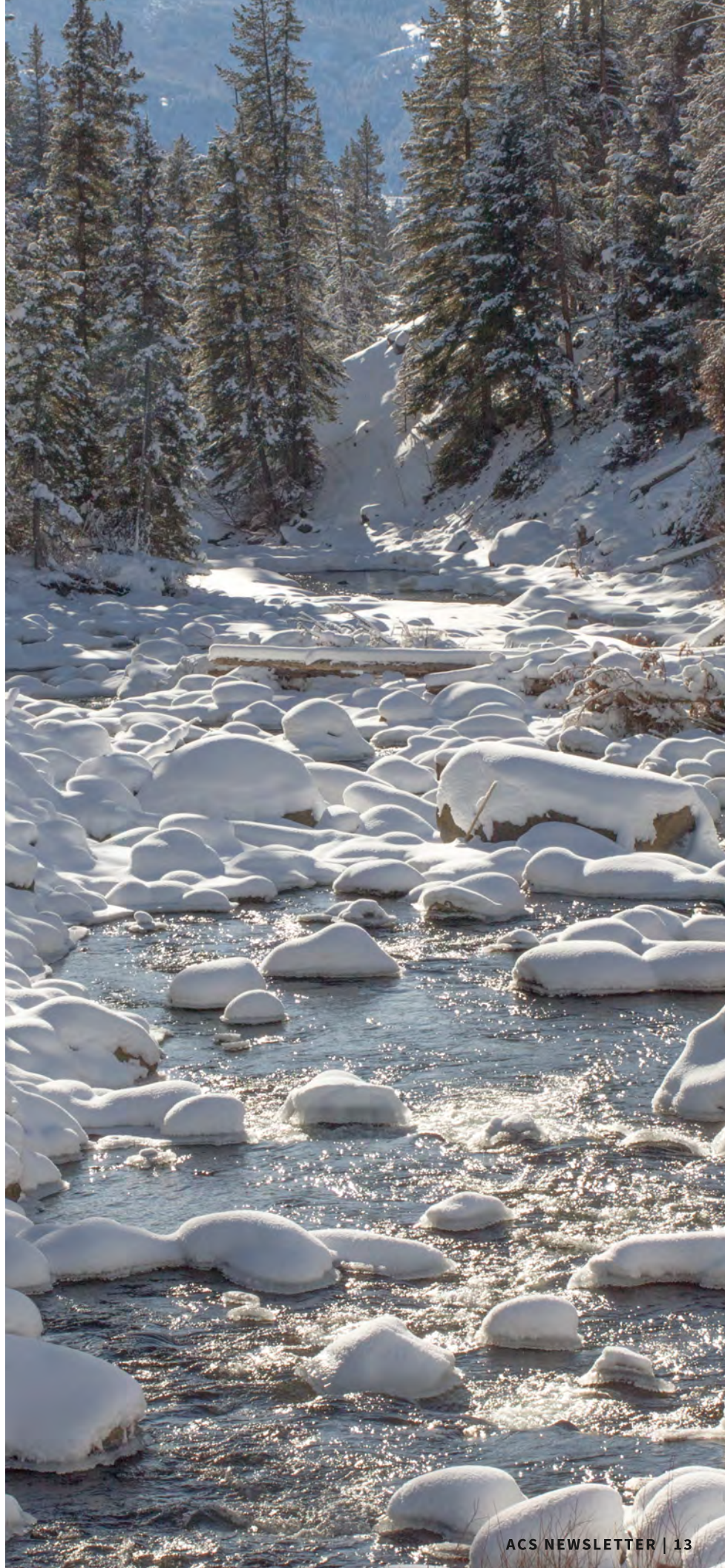
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INDEPENDENCE DAY

Find us online at:
<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>

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KIDS CORNER

WINTER IS HIBERNATION TIME IN THE UNITED STATES

Woolly Bear Caterpillar - Winter Predictor Or Not?

Most people in the Midwest or New England have heard at one time or another that if you want a forecast for the upcoming winter you should look for a woolly bear or fuzzy bear caterpillar. This same caterpillar is called the woolly worm in the southern United States. Whatever name they go by, they are often found in autumn after they have left their food plants in search of a dark and sheltered spot where they can hibernate for the winter.

According to folklore, the amount of black on the woolly bear in autumn varies proportionately with the severity of the coming winter in the locality where the caterpillar is found. The longer the woolly bear's black bands, the longer, colder, snowier, and more severe the winter will be. Similarly, a wider middle brown band is associated with a milder upcoming winter.



The popularity of the woolly bear caterpillar has resulted in several festivals honoring them. Since 1973, the residents of Vermilion, Ohio have held an annual "Woolly Bear Festival". Festivities include a parade, woolly bear races and an "official" analysis of the woolly bears and forecast for the coming winter.

FOLKLORE DEMYTHED

Even though it is widely believed that the woolly bear caterpillar can predict the upcoming winter's severity, the truth is that this caterpillar can't predict what Old Man Winter has in store for us. The woolly bear caterpillar's coloring is based on how long the caterpillar has been feeding, its age, and species.

In actuality, the woolly caterpillar's coat is how Mother Nature helps it survive winter. The fur is called setae and it isn't there to protect them from the cold weather. Instead it actually helps them to freeze more controllably. Here is something truly remarkable. Once settled in, the caterpillars hibernate. They freeze bit by bit, until everything but the interior of their cells are frozen. Most live in this state for two to four weeks before becoming moths.

Woolly bears can - and do - survive to temperatures as low as -90 degrees F. The woolly bear caterpillar has even been known to survive an entire winter completely frozen in an ice cube!

Article: National Weather Service www.weather.gov





NORTH AMERICA'S BROWN BEAR

THE GRIZZLY BEAR

GRIZZLY BEARS CAN BE FOUND IN MANY NATIONAL PARKS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Grizzly bears can vary in color from black to blonde. They can weigh between 200 to 1000 pounds and can measure almost 9 feet tall when standing on their hind legs.

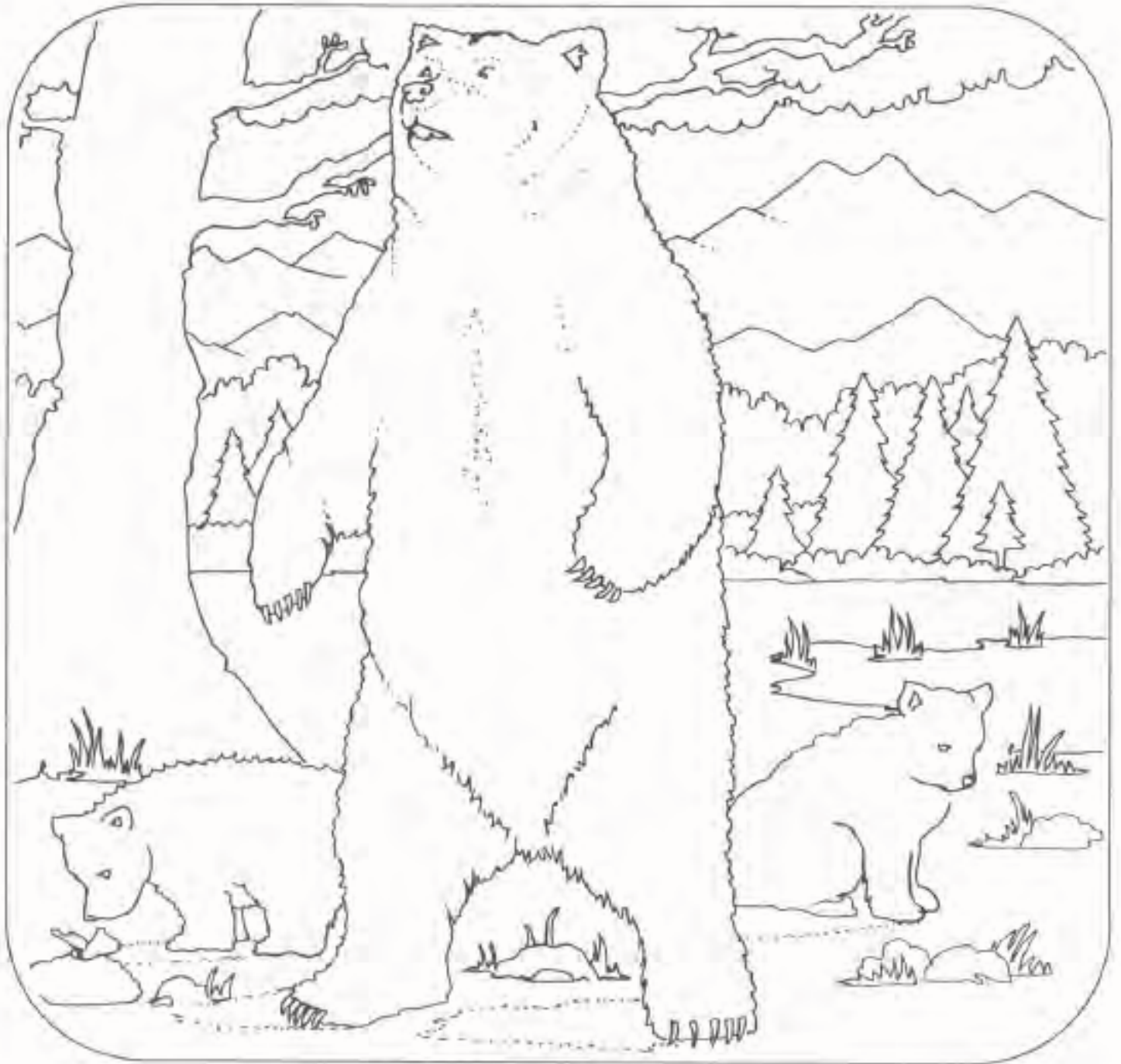
Grizzly bears are omnivorous, eating a mixed diet of plants, berries, fish, and small mammals. They spend most of their time feeding, eating up to 30 pounds of food per day to store fat for the winter.

Most bears spend the winter hibernating in dens to avoid the cold weather and lack of abundant food sources. During their winter slumber, bears' bodies drop in body temperature, pulse rate, and respiration. Their bodies use the fat they stored in the summer as energy. Depending on their location, they may hibernate for a few weeks or up to six months. Most grizzly bears, especially mothers with cubs, will sleep through the winter. Some bears may wake up and leave their dens to search for food.

Did You Know? When laying down to rest, Alaskan brown bears dig "belly holes" to accommodate their food-filled bellies—the bigger the belly, the bigger the hole!

Article: National Park Service www.nps.gov

Grizzly Bear



You'd look pretty short standing next to this 8-foot tall bear! The grizzly bear is one of the biggest animals in North America. Adult grizzly bears are shy and usually live alone. Young cubs stay with their mother for several years while she teaches them to hunt, fish, and find berries and nuts.

In what states is this species found?

