

# OPINION



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## ANOTHER VIEW | COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE

# Dancing with wolves makes ranchers fume

It takes chutzpah to offer soothing embrace to people whose livelihoods are destroyed

Looks like cattle ranchers were a no-show for Colorado's first workshop intended to teach them how to get along with wolves.

It's galling when you consider the devastating impact the recently introduced wolves are having on livestock herds — just as the ranchers had predicted. And the state's response is to stage a meet-and-greet.

Colorado has scheduled educational meetings in the counties where wolves have killed dozens of livestock. A handout for the inaugural gathering promised "nonlethal wolf conflict reduction training" that included discussions of relationship-building and communications.

Yes, really.

You've got to hand it to Colorado Gov. Jared Polis and his crew. It takes chutzpah — or is it tone-deafness — to offer a soothing embrace to the people whose livelihoods they are helping to destroy.

This is administration, after all, whose Office of Just Transition — yep, it's a real state government agency — aims to retrain once highly paid coal miners and power plant workers who have lost their jobs to Polis' green agenda. What exactly they will be retrained to do and still be able to support their families in places such as Craig and Meeker is anyone's guess.

Apparently, it was their unjust reward for keeping Coloradoans' lights on and homes heated.

Similarly, the livestock producers now in harm's way are reaping what was sown by largely urban and suburban voters in 2020. Voters hadn't a

clue introducing gray wolves at the behest of the national animal-rights movement would wreak such havoc. Perhaps it's the thanks our state's ranchers get for putting dinner on our tables. ...

It's hard to blame the ranchers for ditching a group hug when wolves are eviscerating their cattle. As Colorado Politics noted, the state workshop also was intended to educate the ranchers on "Wolf 101." That includes identifying scat, tracking and the like, as well as how to properly haze a predator using flags, lights and other "scare" devices. "Livestock protection dogs," too — gee, ya think? — and even drones.

Needless to say, it's stuff ranchers know and either are doing or don't have the time and resources to invest in. No wonder some ranchers called the half-baked attempt at rancher reeducation "insulting."

It's not just that ranchers don't need to be taught how to herd cattle. It's that the whole effort by the state comes across as a patronizing and half-hearted attempt to offset the very real threat facing our state's livestock producers.

And that threat was so unnecessary. Wildlife management is a science, literally, and it should be left to experts, not forced on voters.

It's why banning mountain lion hunting in complete ignorance of what Colorado's mountain lions need also has no business on this fall's statewide ballot.

Critics have denounced these measures as ballot box biology. And they're right.

## MY VIEW | MICHAEL RAMIREZ



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# Lies, liars and lying are threatening our democracy

At a recent campaign rally in Michigan, former president Donald Trump claimed that "Kamala has spent all her FEMA money, billions of dollars, on housing for illegal migrants."

Could it possibly be true?

This is the sort of question Duke

University's Bill Adair and a team of student reporters have been asking themselves for 17 years as they've fact-checked politicians and other public figures for the PolitiFact website that Adair created in 2007.

The answer, of course, is no. As William Shakespeare might have said, it is a lie "told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The truth is that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has two distinct funds. One is to help cities temporarily house migrants. An entirely separate \$20 billion fund was created by Congress for disaster relief. This one is running low because of the number and scope of disasters this year, but the two funds are not interchangeable, nor is either being used for purposes other than those intended.

During and after Hurricanes Milton and Helene, FEMA has been present and working to help victims, largely to the acclaim of state and local leaders.

At a news conference to address Helene's damage to parts of the state, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, a Republican, said federal assistance had "been superb." He mentioned that President Joe Biden, Transportation Secretary Pete Butt-

igieg and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell had each called to offer support.

This is what one would expect from federal officials during a crisis, and it wouldn't require highlighting but for Trump's intentional lies.

As a rule, I'm not one to use the words "lie," "lying" or "liar." Their power to destroy someone's reputation is too great for comfort. But Trump has forced many of us, including Adair, to abandon the soft-pedaling etiquette of euphemism and to say what is factual. Lying, for Trump, is so reflexive that he needn't bestir his fourth-grade vocabulary to seize headlines and malign those he finds inconvenient to his purposes.

Will things ever change? Not soon, says Adair. Unfortunately, lying pays dividends in today's universe of partisan television, radio and social media, and for a complicit political base manipulated by sophisticated and sometimes immoral consultants. Fact-checking lies has had to become an industry, but it can't possibly keep up. What's needed is more fact-checking, which means more money and more staff, and for Americans to demand that the lying stop.

Over the years, Adair and his revolving teams of students have created a methodology and a "Truth-O-Meter" for assessing the accuracy of a given statement. Rankings from "true" to "false" to "pants on fire!" are assigned based on findings, which are explained and sourced on the website.

Adair is quick to note that political lying began long before Trump. President Richard Nixon lied about the Watergate burglary out of self-preservation. President Bill Clinton lied

about "sex with that woman, Monica Lewinsky," because he was in very hot water.

In a sense, Trump is the inevitable benefactor of a culture of lies that has become normalized through passive acceptance of lying as the nature of politics.

Adair explains in his new book, "Beyond the Big Lie," that politicians every day try to score points with key constituencies: voters, party leaders, influencers and media figures. "A decision to lie is a simple math equation: *I am likely to score enough points with this lie that it will outweigh any consequences it might have from voters/donors/the media.*"

Adair states that Republicans lie more than Democrats do, according to a statistical analysis detailed in the book. He spends several pages explaining how "facts" are selected for scrutiny, but it basically comes down to whether something just doesn't sound right. For example: Does it sound right that Harris "stole" FEMA money to house illegal migrants rather than help hurricane victims?

Actually, no — which is why PolitiFact gave Trump a "pants on fire!" rating for telling this easily disprovable lie.

Voters concerned about truth and the consequences of lying might want to check with PolitiFact at least as often as they check the polls. They'll learn that Trump, contrary to what he recently told Hugh Hewitt, has never been to Gaza. And that Harris' claim that unemployment is at a historic low for all groups of people was rated only "half true." It's good to know the truth, even if you don't like it.

Parker writes for The Washington Post.

# Climate change costs more than gas, sweaty T-shirt

I was mowing my lawn in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, as Hurricane Milton's outer bands and the tornadoes it brought with it began to lash Florida last week. Though the

lawnmowing was trivial compared to the lashing, a slight inconvenience alongside a pending catastrophe, I couldn't help linking the two because of climate change.

In all my years as a homeowner, I don't remember mowing my lawn this consistently this late in the season. I took out the lawnmower, edger and clippers a couple of weeks ago as well. The hedges had regrown to heights they usually reach at the end of spring.

All it cost me was a few dollars of gas money and a sweaty T-shirt. No biggie. But a change

in the climate, even a modest one, could be costly to places such as Myrtle Beach. Despite the draw of Broadway at the Beach, the SkyWheel and Ripley's Believe it or Not!, weather remains the top reason some 20 million people flock here every year. Sitting on the beach taking in the beauty of the Atlantic becomes less palatable without mild, stable weather.

The good news is that the fight to persuade people we are undergoing change is over. NASA says there is "no question that increased greenhouse gas levels warm Earth in response," even if scientists may not be able to say definitively that my lawn is changing or Milton's historic strength was directly caused by climate change because climate is more than just individual weather events.

Nearly 80% of South Carolinians now believe climate change is real, according to Winthrop

University polling. That's higher than the national average of about 72%.

The bad news is that fewer of us are in agreement about its causes and what should be done, or if climate change is an urgent matter at all. While 55% of North Carolina residents believe recent extreme weather events are related to climate change, only 47% believe it's an emergency, according to High Point University polling. That's even while knowing rural areas are most vulnerable, which Hurricane Helene has unfortunately just illustrated in devastating ways.

In Florida, the gap is starker. While 90% of Floridians believe climate change is real, less than half would be willing to pay \$10 a month to strengthen that state's infrastructure to weather hazards.

In Congress, when Democrats talk about climate change or "green" projects, many Repub-

licans criticize them. Only 13 House GOP members voted for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which represents the country's biggest investment in the climate change fight. More needs to be done, but President Joe Biden signed it into law just a couple of years after President Donald Trump spent his time in office rolling back such efforts.

It's akin to knowing an out-of-control freight train is screaming down the track. Instead of working to either try and stop it or get people out of the way, we're stuck arguing if it's really an emergency worth the sacrifice of short-term political wins or a few extra dollars to equip those who can mitigate the damage with the tools they need.

The truth is we've been forking over extra dollars anyway. Some of it has been in the form of having to mow the lawn and cut the hedges a few extra times, the kind of thing that feels small

but will add up over time. We've even accepted the occasional house on the North Carolina coast falling into the Atlantic because of rising seas as a curiosity rather than calamity.

In other ways, it is easier to see that the freight train that is climate change has already arrived. In recent years, a variety of storms and other natural disasters around the nation have caused damage that is approaching nearly \$100 billion annually — the highest it's ever been.

While we can't say with absolute certainty that the damage from Helene and Milton is a direct cause of climate change, we'd be fools to believe it isn't, and bigger fools to let partisanship stop us from committing to doing something serious and sustained about it.

Bailey writes for The Charlotte Observer: [charlotteobserver.com](http://charlotteobserver.com).