



Get 4 FREE ISSUES plus instant digital access

CLICK HERE

Digital Subscribers



Caitlyn Jenner: 'I Like Ted Cruz' Despite His Stance on Trans Issues

FROM EW: Alejandro G. Iñárritu Sets Record Straight on Clapping for Jenny Beavan Vine at

MOST WATCHED WATCH: Maria Menounos' Backyard Will Blow Your Mind

PEOPLE PREMIUM Read the Cover Story: Blake & Gwen: The Look Love



The Ethics of *Jurassic World*: Scientists Debate the Real-Life Possibility of Bringing Back the Woolly Mammoth

1.1k SHARES



GETTY

BY ALEX HEIGL @alex_heigl 06/11/2015 AT 03:55 PM EDT

With *Jurassic World* hitting theaters, you'd think more people would have second thoughts about reintroducing historical creatures to modern worlds.

But you'd be wrong.



Can *The Magicians'* Hale Appleman Perform Magic Tricks in Real Life?



VIDEO: Kate Hudson Shows Off Shorter Locks and Rock-Hard Abs at The Golden Globe Awards



Maria Menounos's Backyard Will Blow Your Mind

Recommended by

SEE MORE VIDEOS

For example, there's the Long Now Foundation. A San Francisco-based nonprofit, the Long Now Foundation is interested in "de-extincting" woolly mammoths. "For the past 200,000 years human beings have played an active role in causing extinction, changing the planet in an ignorant, blind way. Now we can play an active role in evolution," the Foundation's [Ben Novak tells the BBC](#).

There's no way to actually "re-introduce" woolly mammoths as they existed back into the wild. Cloning requires a living cell, and even mummified mammoths aren't a viable source of them. But in April, [scientists properly sequenced the entire genome](#) of a woolly mammoth, an important step in "de-extincting" them.

For more inspiring stories about real-life heroes and can't-miss articles found only in PEOPLE [subscribe now](#).

"We can't clone mammoths in the traditional sense," Professor Beth Shapiro Shapiro, author of *How to Clone a Mammoth*, explained to the BBC. "But we can change the genome of an Asian elephant, the closest relative to the mammoth."

It's possible to create a sort of mammoth-elephant hybrid, Shapiro told NPR in May, "by editing the genome sequence of an elephant cell in a dish in a lab using new genome-editing technology, and swapping out bits of elephant sequence for the mammoth version of sequences that we think are important in making a mammoth look and act more like a mammoth than like an elephant." However, she's keen to discuss the ethical implications of such an act.

Elephants fare poorly in captivity, she says, and "much less in captivity for some crazy scientific experiment ... It's extremely powerful technology. I don't want to talk about my worries because I don't want to put those ideas in bad people's heads."

Novak disagrees. "It's like producing a safe-haven backup herd of elephants," he told the BBC. "If elephants ever become really endangered, there's that herd of mammoths ... we can always turn those mutations back around and get them right back to [the] original elephant they started with."

But to what end do people want to re-create mammoths, other than for the reason that it would be cool? (Which obviously it would be.)

The answer to that question is tied to the work Russian scientist Sergey Nimov has been doing since the late 1980s – introducing herbivores to Siberia. The herbivores graze on the vegetation in the tundra, in turn exposing the soil to the frigid Siberian air, which slows the release of carbon trapped there – carbon that, as you may have



The Hottest Watch of 2016 – with an Exclusive Discount



SPONSORED BY DUNKIN' DONUTS

Minka, Paul and Katie Reveal Their Secret to Getting Ready for Hollywood's...



SPONSORED BY BUZZIFY

15 Last Images Of Celebrities Before They Passed In 2015

heard, contributes to global warming.

"There is a lot of carbon trapped in the Siberian permafrost, and if these animals slow down that melting, we can slow the release of that carbon, potentially slowing the rate of global warming," Shapiro told the BBC.

It's only been two months since scientists sequenced the mammoth's genome, so we're not likely to see any sins against God rambling around the Tundra anytime soon. But as more people like Novak argue strenuously for "de-extincting" mammoths, it's going to become a progressively harder argument to ignore.

AROUND THE WEB



LIFEDAILY.COM
20 Fascinating Facts You Never Knew About Donald Trump



LENDAGE.COM
Donald Trump's Advice For Paying Off Mortgage (It's Genius!)



THEWEBTROVERT
Stars Who Ended Their Marriage For Their Mistress



BEVERLY HILLS MD
How To Repair Crepey Skin - The Essential DIY Guide



CHECKTHISYO.COM
19 Horrible Stories Of The Rudest Celebs In Hollywood



CYBER BREEZE
Funniest PhotoBombs Ever

Recommended by

Share this story:

Your reaction:

12 VOTES

1 1 5 1 4

THE LATEST



FROM EW: Alejandro G. Iñárritu Sets Record Straight on Clapping for Jenny Beavan Vine at Oscars



Read the Cover Story: Blake & Gwen: The Look of Love



SPONSORED BY FAME FOCUS

15 Star Kids Who Look Just Like Their Gorgeous Parents

Recommended by



The Morales Quadruplets' 1st Birthday: Life Without Mom

FROM OUR PARTNERS



AOL.COM
Monica Lewinsky Certainly Doesn't Look Like This Anymore



BRAVOTV.COM
What You Didn't Know About Yolanda & David Foster's Relationship



AOL.COM
Jon Gosselin's Stunning Admission About One of His Sons



BOSTON.COM
The Worst Dressed Celebrities at the 2016 Oscars



BRAVOTV.COM
What Caused David and Yolanda Foster's Split?



HOLLYWOODLIFE.COM
Why The Kardashians Were Banned From The Oscars Party



Kelly Rowland, Plus Kevin Hart, Kim Kardashian West, Orlando Bloom & More!