

In January 2010, the pilot episode of *The Bear Whisperer* aired on [Animal Planet](#) and was wildly successful. The pilot introduced the world to Steve Searles, Mammoth Lakes, and what Steve does with bears on a daily basis.

According to an article in Mammoth's local newspaper, [The Sheet](#), "As soon as it aired," said the show's Executive Producer Eric Schotz, who runs [LMNO Productions](#), "there were calls for pick up [of future episodes] the next day."

For that first, two-hour episode, Steve was equipped with a single cameraman, [Michael Slee](#). The two spent the summer of 2009 filming and documenting the bears around Mammoth, and Steve's interaction with, and training of these wild animals, as well as his message of coexistence. The pilot also featured interviews with several of Mammoth's locals.

This year, episodes may become more complex in plotlines, but Steve remains his down-to-Earth self.

"The great thing about working with Steve," joked Schotz, "is that he's never come to me and asked for makeup."

Director John Jopson claimed in *The Sheet* article that Searles is the most complex person he's ever worked with. Schotz agreed that it's Searles personality that drives the show.

"He's not just someone who's great with bears whose personality is otherwise flatline. Steve's an emotional character. There's a lot of up and down."

Jopson added that Searles is able to maintain his composure and do the job required and then reflect on what's happened and reveal his feelings afterward.

[See more video clips from the pilot episode here.](#)