

NCDE Spring Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Deb Mucklow

Note Taker: Heather Seals

Business Topics:

IGBC – Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee 5 year work plan –reviewed draft prepared and accepted with updates related with the weed control and grazing of she and goats.

Action items: Get habitat standard in the 5 forests and in plans for GNP, BLM, MTDNRC, and tribal management plans using appropriate processes.

Get all agencies to sign a MOU to implement the NCDE Conservation Strategy.

Report NCDE trend estimate results using female survival and fecundity monitoring.

Improve conditions that allow for interchange and dispersal between NCDE and Bitterroot, NCDE and the Yellowstone, and Cabinet Yak ecosystems.

Vice Chair: is now Jim Williams

Conservation Strategy Plan Updates:

Draft conservation strategy went out for public comment in 2013 still working on demographic standards. Once completed will incorporate public comments hope to have a final by the end of the year.

Forest Plan Revision and Forest Plan Amendments:

Using the draft conservation strategy for habitat – scoping is occurring on an amendment for four forests (Kootenai, Lolo, Lewis and Clark, Helena) and with Forest Plan Revision for the Flathead NF; went out for public and those will be open until May 15th. Once we receive all those comments we will go over them.

May 6th, 2015

Planned timeline is Daft EIS by next year and then it will go out for public comment for another 90 days and a final will be issued after that.

Public Meetings at 7 locations around the state; Choteau, Lincoln Missoula, Eureka, Superior, Kalispell, Seeley Lake.

Salish Kootenai – majority of our habitat is in the Wilderness.

Tribe - Nothing has changed in the tribe's forest management plan. The plan won't be revised won't be revised for a while.

Park – Incorporates the CS into their process. Looking at Forest Plan revision to be completed by 2017 we will hopefully release the parks plan by early 2016 to stay on track with the Forest Service's timeline.

NCDE Data Base Manager updates

Got the 2013 motorized access completed.

Need to look at the funding next to incorporate BLM, FWP and park sites and roads.

If anyone wanted to complete a Funding agreement for next year we have the ability to handle that as well.

Food Storage Order Information

There was a desire within the Forest Service to move towards a more consistent food storage order. It did go out for limited public comment generating a wide variety of comments. No action is occurring or changing at this time.

What is the objective of changing it: The background of trying to change it was centered at enforcement and the differences across the forests.

We do have food storage orders in place on Lolo, Kootenai, Flathead, Helena and Lewis and Clark. The park service also has food storage orders. All need to implement them as they have been making a difference.

Education Updates

Five components the IGBC does:

1. Grants
2. Bear Resisting container and certification
3. Website Maintenance
4. Media
5. Projects that come up.

Website:

Meeting Information link will take you to the meeting calendar and the notes as well.

Grizzly Bear Educators

1. You can now download the calendar of the grants
2. There is also grizzly bear educator news – atta boys
3. Bear spray videos – human bear conflict prevention Video Library

Media:

New Be Bear Aware coloring book has been updated.

Still taking input/comments if you would like.

A small run of them will be printed the 1st of June with a color cover. You also can go online and print them in black and white.

You can also do that with the bear spray pamphlet that came out last year.

Grant Video:

The message needs to be: It is up to you to keep the bears from being food habituated.

May 6th, 2015

WY FWP looked for a video that was out there; they couldn't find one. So they decided to make a video to use to send this message. This video will be given to all services.

There will be eight videos: There will be multiple videos of how bears can get into a multitude of things when there are attractants nearby.

Maybe work with AK and to get their footage in order to use pieces of it.

Maybe make a video of a hunter that encounters a bear.

Also emphasize having the bear spray accessible and with the safety off when you encounter a bear.

Need to send a message that if a bear doesn't see you don't make your presence known unlike the common message to make noise.

Snowmobiling Enforcement, Flathead and Lewis & Clark NF's

We have two snow rangers who work from December to mid-April to educate what areas are open and closed to snowmobiles.

Also had flights to see where the snowmobile tracks are.

We also coordinate with FWP where we have known denning bears and snowmobile use this is reported to FWS

Snow conditions this year was limited and gone before bears started coming out.

Non-denning season we have employees who go around to campsites in order to educate campers how to lock up their food as well as

Snowmobile season started really well. The snow rangers were involved in the fun run.

Signs were posted at the control points; they were ripped down as fast as they went up.

May 6th, 2015

Badger/2 Med – issued approximately 7 citations.

Mission Mountain - issued 8 citations.

Trends are starting to change with the snow bikes as they can get into areas that snowmobiles cannot.

What are the forests doing to Monitoring and enforcement on the access roads that are not open to late season snowmobiling? There is a CFR to enforce for resource damage.

Bear Management Specialists

FWP – Jamie Jonkel provided general info to share – keep things secured, more activity with agricultural areas. Plan for more detail at fall meeting.

FWP Region 1 – Tim Manley, Flathead Valley

3 young grizzly's killed last year – Man was trying to scare them off with a .22 as the bears were trying to get into the chickens.

Mud Lake Area:

April 4th calf killed by a grizzly up by Ferndale in the Mud Lake area; set traps but never caught it.

April 9th – snares were set but the bear was not caught that way; was caught through a culvert trap. Released up in the Hungry Horse district made his way back to the mud lake area.

April 13th caught an 8 year old bear in a culvert up in Mud Lake released him on the Swan Lake District.

April 22nd – Bear got into a chicken coop south of the Ferndale area.

May 6th, 2015

April 24th – Female checking out a trap; never caught the family.

Creston Area:

April 23rd – Creston area family group of bears got into some wheat seed. Temporary electric fence was set around the hut.

April 1st through May 5th 10 incidents with bears have been reported; mostly involving chickens.

Monitoring:

Two bear Air – checked out the wedge canyon area. The infrared comes in handy to find females with their cubs for monitoring.

Augmentation Program:

2005-2014 captured 13 Grizzlies. 7 have stayed and dened and 4 have either moved back or died.

MFWP Region 4 – Rocky Mountain Front

Unusual movement of bears out to the east. 5 grizzlies out by Binum. Bears are starting to find livestock bone yards. Bears are out early this year. They are moving further and further out on the front. 3 encounters on USFS land. 18 gb conflicts confirmed on private lands. Females are staying in their dens but males and subadult bears were moving out of their dens. In 2014 68 livestock carcasses were removed and redistributed from RMF boneyards and bear conflict sites. They learn where they are and they are returning. Bears are feeding on barley, wheat, oats and now corn.

Rockport Colony-documented at least 18 individual grizzly bears using refuse site over the past 5 years, bringing bears into close proximity to residential homes and sheep...access deterred.

In 2014 a total of 6 grizzly bears were captured, marked and radio-transmitted to meet research.

May 6th, 2015

Glacier National Park , John Waller – Not a whole lot has happened since the fall report. The bears in the park have been pretty slow to come out of their dens.

Blackfoot Tribal, Dan Kearney – 3 depredations so far this spring. Up by Birch creek there was a calf the last one was an adult highland cow. No bears were captured. Put up an electric fence around one person's barley; should be gone soon and we will remove the fence. We will be putting up a fence around some pigs on another property. Have been cleaning up livestock carcasses at the moment and working with Blackfoot solid waste to try and prevent bears from getting into the garbage cans. Last year two bears were trapped in a garbage can after they climbed in and couldn't get out.

Mission Mountains, Stacy Courville – Female emerged from her den in late March and found her way down to the valley. Started hazing her for 12 days straight showed me 2 pits I didn't know about. She is now on the other side of valley along the Flathead River 2 Depredations one Mini-donkey and another by nine mile with chickens.

We have had 5 depredations so far this all cattle so far. March large male grizzly killing cattle on property last year we believe it is the same bear. Another bear depredation along a camping ground – put out hair traps and cameras. May 21st Thursday in Polson at the Quituknuk from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm there is a wildlife service non-lethal predator damage workshop; there will be twelve different topics, geared towards producers. Another part of the workshop will cover compost/dead pit.

Rubble Creek Bear Fair on June 20th in the afternoon– Educational event with the land owners in the Swan Valley.

Population Monitoring Update – Rick Mace

Research on grizzly bears here has been very active. Population study was formed in 2004. Trend monitoring program was implemented to know trends and size of the population.

May 6th, 2015

Mostly female grizzly bears are monitored with radio collars. The reproduction rates and survival rates are what are monitored.

23 units are identified and 21 of 23 units must have a reproductive female on average within a 6 year period. From 2010-2014 there has been 100%.

Looking at radio telemetry as well as DNA to find how they are moving around the Ecosystem.

Mortality rates have been going up since 1991. About 14 males and 12 females die per year on average. Grizzly Bears are growing in size and distribution.

Almost done with our analysis and it should be ready in the next month. The goal of the analysis is to inform final version of the conservation strategy.

Sincere appreciation and recognition to Rick mace form the NCDE Subcommittee – Thanks for the research and professionalism that has benefited the Grizzly Bear.

Public Comments

Electric Fence incentive program – 35 people have signed up our goal is 50.

Mission Mountain Wilderness – has a sign that says the grizzly bear population is not doing well. It is an agency sign, between the Swan Lake Ranger District and the Mission Mountain Wildlife Biologist they will research whether it is an old or current sign. (follow-up older tribal sign – not current)

Fall Meeting – First week in December. Missoula or Helena as the location please look for a doodle poll.