

IGBC Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee 2015 Winter update

June – October 2015 in the CYE

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Education and Outreach

Activities were limited this year due to extensive human-bear conflict activities.

- Educational booth at Trout Creek Huckleberry Festival
- Bow Hunter Education in Libby
- Libby School Hiking Club
- KNF Orientation for Libby District
- KNF Campground Hosts
- Troy 4th of July Festival
- Bear trailer was at the Lincoln County Fair utilized by Eureka based CYE/NCDE Bear Ranger
- Several articles for regional/local papers reminding residents about attractants and the assistance that is available with electric fencing and bear-resistant garbage containers.

Sanitation

- Residential garbage continues to be a problem, particularly in Libby, Troy and Thompson Falls. All bear resistant garbage containers were on loan this year. More Kodiak containers will be available to loan to residents next year. Trying to get the private disposal company in Lincoln County on board with providing bear-resistant containers to their customers.
- Black bears were into the non-secured dumpsters at 4 Lincoln County waste transfer sites; the Halfway House site on Bull River Road, the Fisher River site at the Fisher River/Kootenai River, the dumpsters at the old KOA site just west of Troy and the dumpsters inside the city limits of Troy. The Troy area commissioner, Greg Larson, had the county dumpsters removed at the Halfway House and Little Joes site due to multiple bears accessing garbage and then causing problems at nearby residential homes. The Troy city police shot and killed a young black bear that was actively defending garbage at the dumpsters inside city limits. Discussions will continue throughout the winter to come up with permanent solutions to these problem sites.
- A black bear family discovered the Sanders County waste transfer center south of Thompson Falls. They were entering the non-secure building after dark for garbage and got stuck inside their transfer truck one morning. They are working to better secure the site, but this site will be moved once their lease is up in 2017. The waste transfer site at Rock Creek in Noxon is almost complete. Defenders of Wildlife have offered to help Sanders County finish the electrified portion of this fencing project by months end.

Human-bear conflicts

- Human-bear conflicts were heavy this year, largely due to a widespread low elevation berry crop failure. The majority of conflicts were black bears accessing fruiting trees and garbage. In the past 8 years the average number of black bears captured for human-bear conflicts was 8, with the previous highest number being 13 black bears captured in 2010. However, this year I captured 32 black bears, which included 4 family groups (2 females with 3 cubs of the year (COY) each, 1 female with 2 COY and 1 female with 1 COY) and an orphaned black bear COY. Twenty-eight black bears were relocated and 4 were euthanized.
- Fruiting trees were the primary cause of human-bear conflicts between August and October this year. In a 3 week period, 16 individual bears were identified in and around the city limits of Libby alone, specifically eating fruit from trees in peoples yards and then hitting unsecured garbage containers once the

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fruit was gone. In Troy the YVFC and the Troy Farmers Market helped Troy area residents by gleaning fruit from multiple trees at multiple residences for their Apple Festival. This gleaning project was very helpful for residents that are unable or unwilling to remove fruit from their own trees in order to prevent further conflicts with bears. In Noxon and Thompson Falls the schools talked with the homeowners surrounding the schools and had kids help them remove fruit from trees in order to prevent multiple bears from being in the immediate vicinity of the schools.

- I captured a 6.5 year old 500lb male grizzly south of Libby. The bear was previously collared in 2011 as a 2 yr old in the Yaak for research. In 2012 I followed his activities and attempted to trap him twice for eating unsecured chicken feed at 2 separate residences (these residents now have permanent electrified fencing around their coops). On Oct 4th a resident called to report a grizzly bear had destroyed one of their beehives. I had helped them in previous year build a very nice permanent electrified fence around their hives. Unfortunately unknown to them, the battery on their solar energizer had quit working and the bear had full access to unsecured beehives. We fixed their fence and I captured the grizzly bear the following day. The bear was collared and relocated in upper Bear Creek in the Cabinet Mountains. He has since traveled back north of the Kootenai River.

Cabinet Mountain Grizzly Bear Augmentation Program

- On 8/4/15 a 2 yr old male grizzly bear was captured in the Whitefish Range and released in the west Cabinet mountains above Spar Lake. The bear walked south into Idaho shortly after the fires began in the west Cabinets. The bear was shot and killed by a hunter on September 30th along the NF of the C'da River. Wayne Kasworm will give an update on this bear and his activities.
- Attempts to capture a female for the program were suspended in late August due to fire activity and poor food resources throughout the Cabinet Mountains.

IGBC I&E Grant Program

- Six grants were received, 3 from the Selkirks and 3 from the Cabinet-Yaak, totaling \$15,680.
- Only \$36,000 available for all 6 Ecosystems.
- Our S/CYE I&E Subcommittee will review the 6 proposals over the next week and report to the main body of the IGBC. Grant awardees will be determined by main IGBC I&E Committee by the winter meeting on December 8th. Awardees will be notified shortly thereafter.