

Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak IGBC Subcommittee Meeting
May 24, 2016 9:30-1:00, PST
Sandpoint Ranger District office
Sandpoint, ID

Attendance: members of the SCYE IGBC subcommittee: Mary Farnsworth (FS-IPNF (chair)), Chip Corsi (IDFG), Ben Conard (USFWS-MT), Eric Besaw (IDL), Rodney Smolden (FS CNF), Neil Anderson (MFWP), Bart George (Kalispel Tribe for Ray Entz), Steve Pozzanghera (WDFW), Cindy Weston (BLM-for Linda Clark), Norm Merz (Kootenai Tribe for Gary Aitken, Jr.) and Technical Advisor Wayne Kasworm (USFWS) . Additional agency representatives and the public in the audience.

Agenda Topic	Person(s) leading discussion	Desired Outcome
Introductions	Mary	
Grizzly Bear Recovery Update	Jen	Information & Discussion
Grizzly Bear Ecosystem Updates	Wayne K.	Information & Discussion
Information and Education Updates	Kim	Information
Progress on 2016 Priority Actions	Mary	Review & Finalize
2016 June IGBC Executive Committee Field Trip Planning In and around Bonners Ferry (Tuesday the 21 st)	Mary	Review and finalization of Plan
Draft IGBC Charter Review	Mary	Review & Requested Edits
Other Actions/Updates	Mary	Information
Public Comments/Questions	Subcommittee	Information

NOTES:

Introductions

- ✓ Welcome to new members on the Subcommittee including Rodney Smolden. Bart George (Kalispel Tribe) and Norm Merz (Kootenai Tribe) sitting in for new subcommittee representatives Ray Entz and Gary Aitken, Jr. who were unable to attend.

Grizzly Bear Recovery Updates-Jennifer Fortin-Noreus:- Notes from her powerpoint.

Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem:

⇒ Summary of the proposed action

- ✓ We (US Fish & Wildlife Service) are proposing to delist the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) population of grizzly bears.
- ✓ Upon delisting, as per the delisting rule, the population will be managed under a comprehensive management plan called the 2016 Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy by a joint committee including the States of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, the Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the Eastern Shoshone, Northern Arapahoe, and Shoshone Bannock Tribes.
- ✓ Concurrent with this proposed delisting rule we released drafts of the 2016 Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy and the Recovery Plan Supplement: Revised Demographic Criteria for public comment and peer review.

⇒ Why delist the Yellowstone grizzly bear?

- ✓ The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (Act) is to get listed species to the point at which protection under the Act is no longer required.
- ✓ Recovery goals for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) have been met since 2004.

- ✓ The GYE grizzly bear population is healthy and has been essentially stable from 2002 to 2015.
- ✓ Cooperative efforts by state, federal, and tribal agencies and the support of the public have resulted in a healthy grizzly population.
- ✓ The above factors have brought the GYE grizzly bear population to the point where a change in status is appropriate as per the intent of the Act.

⇒ What is the purpose of the Conservation Strategy?

- ✓ The Conservation Strategy is the post-delisting interagency management plan that will be in place in perpetuity to guide and direct habitat and population management in order to maintain a recovered GYE grizzly population.
- ✓ The Conservation Strategy goes into effect upon delisting and will guide and direct management in perpetuity.

⇒ Will the Yellowstone grizzly bear still be protected?

- ✓ Yes. There will continue to be strict limits on total mortality from all causes inside the demographic monitoring area, state laws against illegal killing, and strong habitat protections on federal lands in the 9,200 sq. mi. primary conservation area where approximately 75% of females with cubs live for most of the year.
- ✓ Management decisions will be guided by regulatory mechanisms including:
 - the Conservation Strategy
 - National Park Service management plans
 - USFS forest plan amendments
 - state grizzly bear management plans
 - over 70 state and federal laws, statutes, and regulations

⇒ What is the YGCC?

- ✓ The Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Coordinating Committee (YGCC) is the management committee that will replace the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (YES) upon delisting.
- ✓ The YGCC is composed of representatives from Federal, State, Local, and Tribal agencies.
- ✓ The YGCC will continue in place to implement the details of the Conservation Strategy in perpetuity since grizzly bears are a conservation reliant species and will require careful and coordinated management to remain recovered.
- ✓ The YGCC is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Conservation Strategy, which includes:
 - Ensuring that population and habitat data are collected and evaluated annually to assess the status of the population.
 - Identifying management, research, and financial needs.
 - Coordinating information and education efforts.

⇒ How will the population be managed post-delisting?

As stated in the proposed delisting rule:

- ✓ Maintain the GYE grizzly bear population at the average population estimate for 2002–2014 of 674.
- ✓ The population inside the GYE demographic monitoring area will be estimated annually by the IGBST using the model-averaged Chao2 method.
- ✓ The States will meet each January to review the population monitoring data supplied by the IGBST and collectively establish discretionary mortality inside the DMA outside of National Parks within the total mortality limits per each age/sex class available for each jurisdiction (MT, ID, WY).

⇒ Will there be a hunting season for grizzly bears?

- ✓ The states have stated their intention to classify grizzly bears as a game species in the States of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho outside of the National Parks and the Wind River Reservation.
- ✓ There may be a limited hunting season if the states decide to have a hunting season, however:
 - Any hunting mortalities must be within the total mortality limits inside the DMA detailed in the proposed rule.
 - Grizzly bears cannot be killed out of season or without a hunting license.
 - All hunting mortalities must be reported.
 - Poachers will be prosecuted under State laws.
- ✓ The proposed rule sets out the necessary State regulations that must be in place prior to a final rule to delist.
- ✓ Mortalities outside of the DMA will not count against total mortality limits inside the DMA.

⇒ What population parameters will be monitored?

- ✓ Goal: maintain the GYE grizzly bear population at the average population estimate for 2002–2014 of 674.
- ✓ To achieve this goal, within the GYE demographic monitoring area (DMA) the IGBST will monitor:
 - The number of females with cubs
 - Distribution of females with cubs
 - Survival rates for all sex/age classes
 - All sources of mortality
 - Population trend
 - Cub production
 - Movements in relation to any changes in foods
 - Spatial distribution of grizzly bear-human conflicts

⇒ Under what circumstances could GYE grizzly bears be relisted?

- ✓ As stated in the proposed delisting rule, the Service may initiate a formal status review and could emergency relist (within 2 weeks) the GYE grizzly bear population until a formal status review is complete if any of these conditions exist:
 - There are any changes in Federal, State, or Tribal laws, rules, regulations, or management plans that depart significantly from the specifics of population or habitat management detailed in the proposed rule and this increases the threat to the population.
 - The population falls below 500 in any year using the model-averaged Chao2 method or counts of females with cubs fall below 48 for 3 consecutive years.
 - Independent female total mortality limits as per Tables 1, 2, and 3, in the proposed rule, are exceeded for 3 consecutive years and the population is fewer than 600.
 - Fewer than 16 of 18 bear management units are occupied by females with young for 3 consecutive 6-year sums of observations.

Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem:

- ✓ Draft Conservation Strategy released in 2013 for public comment but has not been finalized
- ✓ The Service will hold a workshop on July 7, 2016, in compliance with a 1997 settlement agreement
 - The workshop seeks input and ideas on objective, measurable habitat-based recovery criteria and on methods to measure these criteria
 - The habitat-based recovery criteria are available in draft form in the draft NCDE Conservation Strategy and the USDA Forest Service draft Environmental Impact Statement (to be released this spring)
 - Final habitat-based recovery criteria will be appended to the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan for the NCDE and incorporated into the NCDE Conservation Strategy

SCYE Grizzly Bear Updates-Wayne Kasworm:– Review of ongoing efforts and 2016 field season plans in both ecosystems.

- ✓ Cabinet-Yaak / Selkirk Mountains 2016 Grizzly Bear Monitoring Plans include:
 - Cabinet Mountains Augmentation
 - Hair snag collection and remote cameras
 - Research capture effort
 - Monitoring Collared Bears
 - Habitat Conservation
 - ✓ Interesting Note: Grizzly #726
 - Original capture 5/24/2011 Meadow Creek (ID/MT) 170 lbs
 - Lost collar Oct 2012
 - Hair snagged 2012,2014 in Yaak
 - Recaptured 10/5/2015 south of Libby in Cabinets 500 lbs
 - Currently collared and moved back into Yaak
 - First documentation of native bear moving between Yaak and Cabinets
- ⇒ Movement, but not gene flow ⇐

Information and Education Updates

Kim Annis (MTFWP) – Summary of Information and Education, law enforcement and bear management incidents in 2015 and successes in county sanitation upgrades. See updates.

Review of 2016 Priority Actions. Report out on where we are to date.

Field Trip Planning for Executive IGBC Meeting June 21st in Boundary County. Outline of what the subcommittee would like to do for this field trip and appointment of Chip Corsi, Lydia Allen, Norm Merz, Jay Shepherd & Dan Dinning on Field Trip development committee.

IGBC Draft Charter Review—The subcommittee noted the following concerns/requested changes to the document:

- ✓ Page 2, First Bullet Statement: Include Tribal entities
- ✓ Page 5, Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee:
 - 4 (not 2) National Forest Supervisors (Colville, Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, Lolo NFs)
- ✓ Concerns that “Approval” (page 6, last bullet statement) from the Executive IGBC meeting is required for Subcommittee actions/action plan. This seems disconnected from statements elsewhere in the document that there are limits on IGBC authorities. Suggest replacement of “Approval or Disapproval” with “Adoption” or “Cannot adopt as proposed”.

Other Updates

- ✓ Kalispel Tribe of Indians and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho accepted the SCYE IGBC subcommittee’s invitation to join the subcommittee.
- ✓ Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail—review and discussions about implications of this Congressional designated trail through the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear ecosystem. Some discussion of “high use trails” and what that means for core habitat.

Comments/Questions

Additional discussion concerning how agencies would deal with future bear situations like the Cabinet augmentation bear that moved outside the recovery zone to the CDA ranger district.

Defenders of Wildlife is working closely with the public in MT on securing attractants and electric fencing options to reduce bear/human incidents.

Vital Ground has a small grants program.

Action Items

- ✓ Field Trip subcommittee will meet to finalize field trip agenda and travel circuit
- ✓ Mary will contact Jim Williams and pursue coordinating a subcommittee meeting in tandem with the NCDE IGBC subcommittee

Fall Meeting: November 9th (Wednesday) in Bonners Ferry. Second choice of November 14th (Monday).