

Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak IGBC Subcommittee

5/17/17 Meeting

Trout Creek, MT

Subcommittee Members Present: Chris Savage, Dan Dinning, Mac Herrera (for Mary Farnsworth), Barb Moore (for Chip Corsi), Eric Besaw, Ray Entz, Scott Soultz (for Gary Aitken, Jr.), Dave Hattis, Neil Anderson, Ben Conard, Karen Cathey, Michelle Eames (for Russell MacRae), Steve Pozzanghera, Wayne Kasworm (Science Advisor)

Hilary Cooley introduction/NCDE and GYE update with Jennifer Fortin-Noreus:

- Prior to becoming the grizzly bear coordinator for USFWS Hilary was the polar bear program coordinator.
- Restructuring – Hilary is supervised by Jodi Bush in Helena USFWS now, rather than directly by Denver USFWS.
- NCDE – Jennifer working on drafting a habitat supplement; updating the demographic recovery criteria is next; followed by updating the conservation strategy.
- GYE – responded to public comments; final rule to be published this summer
- GYE updated recovery criteria will be published with final rule.
- NCDE demographic recovery criteria – why may it be updated? It is difficult to sight bears due to canopy cover, so it's problematic to measure females w/ young distributed inside and outside of Glacier National Park. So, looking at different criteria that would be easier to measure. Timeline – this summer.

Wayne Kasworm – Research/Monitoring update

- See PDF of the presentation – additional notes included below
- In 2016 released a sub-adult male for augmentation – dened in Sanders County
- Monitored 1 of 2 females released in 2014
- Movements: 3 year old offspring of augmentation female was collared in the Cabinets but went to the NCDE before losing its collar; Male bear collared in the Yaak went to Canada then back to the Yaak; another male bear went from the Yaak to the Selkirks.
- This year two trap teams in the CYE, one in the Selkirks; plus crews collecting hair from rub trees.
- CYE – growth rate of 1.6%; 2012 population estimate of 49 bears; with growth rate the estimate becomes 53 bears plus 3 augmentation bears = 56 bears.
- Selkirks – growth rate of 1.8% with a current estimate of 70-80 bears.
- Testing habitat quality maps – layers given to the FS for testing on projects; layers show probability of use (Resource Selection Function, RSF); testing how these maps help manage

habitat; 100m x 100m pixels; data generated with radio/gps collars; limited sample in the Cabinets so used the Selkirks model for the Cabinets.

- Selkirks – lowest genetic diversity of our grizzly populations; Yaak has heterozygosity numbers comparable to the NCDE; Cabinets a little better than the Selkirks.
- Have not seen bears move on their own from the NCDE and then breeding successfully in the CYE; in 30 years only 2 bears have made the move, but no indication of successful breeding.
- Question: what have been the discussions around augmenting the Selkirks? Focus has been on natural movement and haven't looked hard at augmentation.
- Question: is inbreeding a problem right now in the Selkirks? Haven't seen deleterious effects so far, but there may be a long-term impact; tough to find dead bears and document deleterious effects of inbreeding.
- Question: have the goalposts for recovery moved? Criteria still the same as the recovery plan; population goal has changed between versions of the recovery plan (1980s version vs 1990s version).
- Question: are there more females w/ young in the Selkirks than we've documented? Maybe in Canada because not as intensive of efforts in that portion of the Selkirks.

I&E

- Brian Johnson – has “This is Grizzly Country” signs available – (note: the Kootenai and Lolo National Forests claimed the signs after the meeting)
- Neil Anderson – Kim Annis is putting together her annual report and will have that on the MFWP's website soon

Ray Entz – Interest in increased trapping efforts in WA?

- Picking up more bear detections in WA.
- What would be needed for resources in order to increase trapping efforts?
- Kasworm = estimates 1 month of trapping (people, equipment, etc.) = \$20-25K; in 2015 and 2016 crews did 2 months of efforts in the Selkirks each year (May & June); will try to distribute efforts; WA side may be better in the spring; may try again next year.
- Goal = trap and collar to get more info
- Kasworm: ongoing rub tree work on the WA side
- Dan Dinning: if we're going to make the investment/effort, why not do a full DNA study? (to be discussed during the 5 year Plan portion of the agenda...)
- Steve Pozzanghera – WDFW can continue to provide resources; this topic is consistent w/ the Objectives and 5 year Plan discussion later in the agenda.
- Training of the crews – takes some time to get crews ready to function independently; tough to retain crews if only providing short-term/seasonal work.

IGBC 5 Year Plan

- See separate notes for comments/edits on the 5 Year Plan to send to Chris Smith

Defenders of Wildlife – Russ Talmo and Erin Edge

- See PDF of their electric fencing Powerpoint; additional notes included below
- Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders (EWCL) program contacted Defenders with interest in a grizzly bear project
- Gael Bissell of Vital Ground - they have a conservation partners program that gives small grants for grizzly bear/human coexistence projects; compiling a list of sites that identify priority private lands to work on reducing conflicts (identifying needs/strategies)
- EWCL program – have them work with Vital Ground to reach out to agencies to get a prioritized list of conflict management needs; will identify funding strategy
- Question: how is NRCS involved? Defenders is not currently working with NRCS; NRCS comes in on larger projects.
- Question: how much of Russ's work is preventative vs. reactive? Russ does some preventative work, but focuses on reactive work.
- Question: how much is solar power used for electric fencing projects? Solar power works well, especially for off the grid locations. Russ's preference is to have power available on-site rather than relying on solar power.
- Question: do backpacking fences work (D cell batteries)? Meets criteria, but unsure how well they work given the size of the energizer.

Next Meeting

- Planning for September 13-14th in Creston, BC.
- If Creston doesn't work out, then plan for Newport, WA. If Creston works out, use Newport for the Spring 2018 meeting.