



Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee
Summer Meeting Notes
June 24-25, 2014
Sun Mountain Lodge, Winthrop, WA
North Cascades Environmental Learning Center,
Diablo, WA



Welcome & Introductions: IGBC Chair Scott Talbott opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the North Cascades Ecosystem and the Sun Mountain Lodge. Executive Committee Members and those representing Executive Members included the following:

Scott Talbott, Tammy Whittington, Matt Hogan, Nora Rasure, Jim Unsworth, Tony Hamilton, Jodi Bush, Dave Schmid, Bob Everitt, Jim Brown, Terry Rabot, Rich Hannan, Rich Hotaling, Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Eric Gardner and Becki Heath.

IGBC Advisors Chris Servheen, Scott Jackson and Frank T. van Manen and IGBC Executive Coordinator Ellen Davis were also present.

ACTION ITEMS/DECISIONS: (Note: Additional discussion with greater detail is discussed in agenda topics below these action and decision items).

***Decision – Chris Smith, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) will work with Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s web master to see if Wyoming can host the IGBC website and bring a greater level of effectiveness to the site. IGBC funding through the Challenge Cost Share Agreement with WMI needs to be directed at improving the IGBC website.**

***Decision – The IGBC Executive Committee agreed to continue forward with developing a Grizzly Bear Conservation Fund (GBCF) with the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Ellen will send out a request for each DOI agency of the IGBC to identify a lead agency executive, a G&A contact name, and a WO point of contact for NFWF, if they have one with a response due September 1.**

***Decision- Tony Hamilton reminded folks that we need an IGBC rep for the GNLCC. Tammy will visit with Tom Olliff and get back to the executive committee.**

***Decision – Ellen will send out IGBC Five-Year Action Plan (2013-2017) to IGBC Committee and subcommittee chairs for review and updates if needed. She will send out revised draft to IGBC executive committee for review and final.**

IGBC Bear-Resistant Container Testing Program follow-up – IGBC’S bear-resistant container testing program will be evaluated to determine if program changes are needed and, if so, what costs might be involved.

To assist with assessing how IGBC-approved products fare during actual use, Scott Jackson will add language to the testing protocol that requests reports of any field failures of products that have been approved to IGBC

Scott will also add language that will be available on the IGBC website relative to some of the pros and cons associated with differing types of approved containers that are available to the public.

Other Action Items

IGBC Budget- the USFWS, R-1, agreed to continue their contribution for the full amount to the IGBC budget for FY15. However, folks would like to continue an in-depth discussion at the IGBC Winter Meeting. Tammy Whittington, Scott Talbott, Matt Hogan and Terry Rabot all agreed to work as a group to gather any pre-work needed including the history of past funding and make a presentation at the winter meeting for further discussion. Chris Smith volunteered to help if needed.

IGBC I&E Update – Chris Smith

Chris Smith, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) shared with the executive committee the extent of the I & E program. We now have 8 traveling education trailers in all of the IGBC ecosystems. Chris further explained the IGBC I&E structure and highlighted the challenges of keeping bear awareness out in front of the public but at the same time not wanting to overwhelm them.

Chris also talked about the challenges and dual roles of some of our partners. Defenders of Wildlife for example, has been instrumental in helping us leverage funds and provide electric fences, but they are also often times in litigation with us over differing positions on management issues.

Chris showed a PowerPoint presentation to show what the current I & E program does for the IGBC. He talked about the 3 must have components of the program.

1. Good Science – IGBST
2. Effective Management
3. Strategic IE&O program.

Chris outlined his continued recommendations for the IE&O program

1. Increase awareness of the IGBC IE&O strategy.
2. Continue to leverage resources.
3. Maintain or expand funding
4. Define future priorities for IGBC.

Decision - It was agreed by the IGBC executive committee that we needed a higher level of effectiveness regarding the IGBC website. Tammy Whittington noted that we need to direct IGBC funding towards improving the website.

Scott Talbott offered the Wyoming Game and Fish webmaster to help evaluate our current situation and possibly host our site in the future. Chris Smith/Colleen Matt will work with Wyoming to see what they can do.

Update on Western Wildlife Outreach (WWO) Program – Lorna Smith, Executive Director

Lorna Smith gave an update on WWO, including partners, projects and funding opportunities.

Grizzly Bear Conservation Fund (GBCF) – Dave Schmid (Harv Forsgren on the phone)

Dave gave an overview of the GBCF noting that two years ago the IGBC signed a Program Memorandum with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) outlining our intention to establish a Grizzly Bear Conservation Fund.

He updated the group on our fiscal agreements, the development of our conservation strategies for each IGBC ecosystem, our communication strategies and our remaining needs. Two significant pieces of work remain:

1. Ensuring there are viable funding mechanisms available for use with the NFWF for each participating IGBC member agency, and if so, complete Phase II Conservation Strategy and associated performance measures to guide distribution of funds from the GBCF (if not, there is no need to complete Phase II of the strategy).

Dave presented the recommendations and decisions needed from the group to move forward.

1. Continue efforts to establish the GBCF? The group unanimously voted yes.
2. Identify a **lead agency Executive**, a **G&A contact name** and a **WO point of contact** for their agency **with NFWF** if they have one for each DOI agency to help facilitate a dialogue between their and NFWF grants and agreements staff to identify potentially suitable fiscal mechanisms to support the purpose of the GBCF:
 - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
 - U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
 - National Park Service (NPS)
3. Assess whether those mechanisms are sufficient to support the intent of the GBCF – ***IGBC agency leads, Ellen and Harv working with NFWF staff by October 1, 2014***
4. If suitable mechanisms are available, develop a plan to put into place the necessary agreements and execute the plan - ***IGBC agency leads, Ellen and Harv working with NFWF staff by December 1, 2014***
5. If suitable mechanisms are available, identify a staff lead to work with the Ecosystem Subcommittee Chairs and Science Advisors to develop a plan and guide development of the Phase II Conservation Strategy (proposed plan to be presented to the IGBC Executives for a decision at the 2014 winter meeting)

Decision - Ellen will send out a request to the IGBC Executive Committee asking for the above information in #2. Need all information requested by September 1.

North Cascades News – Tammy Whittington/Bob Everitt

Tammy reported that the National Park Service (NPS) is continuing to make progress on the North Cascades grizzly bear restoration plan/ EIS since the December meeting.

All primary stakeholders including the NPS, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service, and the WA Department of Fish & Wildlife have communicated and continue to communicate with each

other at the highest levels. The British Columbia Provincial Government is also a key partner in the planning process. Other partners or cooperators may also be identified.

The North Cascades Ecosystem subcommittee will continue to play a significant technical role.

Funding for the EIS will be provided by the NPS and stakeholders will contribute with in-kind scientific and technical support throughout the process. The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) will also contribute significant funding.

Discussions within DOI have been started and need to be completed before we move forward.

Thanks to all of the partners involved in the planning process, especially to WA Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW).

Bob Everitt, WDFW, noted that there has been some confusion, possibly even some concern over the last several months about the ability of Washington State to engage in this effort.

WDFW has worked and continues to work closely with our federal partners and believe we will be able to fully participate if, and when, the EIS effort occurs as long as the EIS evaluates all options for achieving recovery in the North Cascades, including how challenges to those alternatives may be addressed.

Washington has been an active participant with the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) for many years and chaired the committee as recently as 2009-2011. Washington State also has had similar involvement with the IGBC North Cascades Ecosystem subcommittee.

Because of the large amount of resources that will be spent on this effort and the reality that this could be the last real chance for significant recovery actions to occur in the North Cascades, it wouldn't make sense to initiate this effort without consideration of the potential roadblocks.

Those discussions are perhaps what led to any confusion regarding WDFW's support for grizzly bear recovery and participation in the EIS process. While we have worked through them to the point where we are comfortable engaging in the EIS process, they remain very real and will have to be addressed.

One of the issues has to do with a state statute that provides a legal framework under which WDFW is obligated to work. **RCW 77.12.035 Protection of grizzly bears – Limitation on transplantation or introduction – Negotiations with federal and state agencies** (*see below*) sets some expectations for State involvement and also speaks to the need to managing using only bears native to Washington.

Secondly, it is imperative that efforts to develop a grizzly bear EIS and the implementation of any recovery actions not fail due to public concerns over other large carnivore management in the state, nor that they negatively impact our wolf recovery program.

Fortunately, it is not unusual for an EIS process to evaluate legal challenges for alternatives and we are hopeful that the Washington State statute and its implications to management alternatives will be addressed during the process. We are confident any EIS process will address the social concerns as well; thanks in part to the dedication and commitment of everyone involved.

In acknowledging these legal and social challenges, we believe everyone will be better prepared for the difficult work that lies ahead in achieving, meaningful recovery of a grizzly bear population in the North Cascades.

RCW 77.12.035: Protection of grizzly bears – Limitation on transplantation or introduction – Negotiations with federal and state agencies.

The commission shall protect grizzly bears and develop management programs on publicly owned lands that will encourage the natural regeneration of grizzly bears in areas with suitable habitat. Grizzly bears shall not be transplanted or introduced into the state. Only grizzly bears that are native to Washington State may be utilized by the department for management programs. The department is directed to fully participate in all discussions and negotiations with federal and state agencies relating to grizzly bear management and shall fully communicate, support and implement the policies of this section.

Discussion Panel on Initiatives and Partnerships occurring in the North Cascades Ecosystem that support the North Cascades EIS and Grizzly Bear Recovery

- Tom Olliff – GNLCC – Tom talked about what the GNLCC does, its members and how the GNLCC could support grizzly bear conservation and recovery. He also requested that IGBC appoint someone to the GNLCC as the committee rep.
- Scott Powell – Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC). Scott talked about SEEC and what they do and their involvement with Seattle City Light.
- Jen Watkins – Cascadia Partner Forum. Jen showed a Power Point presentation and then talked about how they are complimentary to grizzly bear activities in the North Cascades

Nora Rasure commented on the excellent presentations by the panel members and noted the abundance of resources and partners.

Review and Update IGBC Five-Year Action Plan (2013-2017) – Ellen Davis

Ellen asked the committee to think about any updates or changes needed to the IGBC five-year action plan. She noted that the Bitterroot Ecosystem Subcommittee has offered some additions to their subcommittee portion of the plan at their recent meeting.

Decision - Ellen will incorporate changes and send to the executive committee for review and additional updates before finalizing.

IGBC Bear-Resistant Container and Certification Program – Scott Jackson

Scott gave an update to the executive committee on the IGBC Bear-Resistant Container and Certification Program and specifically addressed a recent issue with a soft sided food storage container and concerns regarding approval of a new product. The concerns and responses are included in the attached letter from Scott that was presented to IGBC members at the summer meeting (see letter).

Follow-up action - IGBC'S bear-resistant container testing program will be evaluated to determine if program changes are needed and, if so, what costs might be involved.

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Public Comments

Rob Smith, National Parks advocate , he believes that the North Cascades is the place where it will work thanks to the NPS.

Ray Campbell, Okanogan County Commissioner, likes wilderness, parks, etc, but not a lot of grizzly bears here in the North Cascades, the habitat doesn't support them. He says information is not forthcoming.

Chris Morgan – GBOP/WWO, welcomed the IGBC to the North Cascades. He noted the broadbase of support for the North Cascades from the government to the NGOs.

Joe Scott, Northwest Conservation, there is a unique set of circumstances and geographies in the North Cascades. There is lots of energy on both sides of the border. This is a good example of how grizzly bear recovery can work.

IGBC Winter Meeting Dates – December 9-10, 2014. Location to be determined.

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