

MEMORANDUM

To: IGBC Executive Committee

Date: June 13, 2014

Subject: Evaluation of Information, Education and Outreach Efforts

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) was formed to coordinate efforts to recover and delist grizzly bears. The IGBC recognized, early on, that in addition to providing habitat on the landscape, recovery and delisting would require social tolerance and appropriate behavior among the people who live, work and recreate in bear country. Creating that social tolerance and modifying behavior requires information, education and outreach (IE&O).

IE&O have been a central component of the IGBC's efforts and budget for many years. From at least 2005 through 2010, the IGBC maintained a partnership with the Center for Wildlife Information (CWI). CWI provided printed materials for IGBC subcommittees and agency personnel. CWI also created the first bear education trailers and established the initial IGBC website. The partnership between CWI and IGBC ended in 2011, but CWI continues to provide some materials and support to the IGBC.

At its summer 2011 meeting, the IGBC Executive Committee recognized the need to be more strategic in applying IE&O. In August, 2011, the IGBC entered a 5-year partnership agreement with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) to enhance coordination of efforts in support of grizzly bear recovery and delisting. Funding provided under the agreement to date is as follows:

Fiscal Year	IGBC Base	IGBC Grant	WMI	Total
2011			\$5,600	\$5,600
2012	\$40,000		\$21,500	\$61,500
2013	\$51,400	\$19,600	\$21,750	\$92,750
2014	\$51,400	\$14,400	\$35,585	\$101,385

Accomplishments

2011¹ – WMI initiated development of a comprehensive strategy (available [here](#) on the IGBC website) for IE&O through a process that involved all subcommittees and a range of stakeholders. The strategy was completed in early 2012 and approved by the IGBC Executive Committee in June, 2012.

2012 – WMI began implementation of the strategy; assumed responsibility for hosting the IGBC website, redesigned and updated the site; and provided I&E materials produced by CWI to IGBC subcommittees.

2013 – WMI continued to host and maintain the IGBC website; re-designed and updated bear safety and bear spray brochures and made them available on the web; provided I&E materials produced by CWI to IGBC subcommittees as requested; assumed responsibility for administration of the bear-resistant container program; administered I&E grants to states and non-government partners for electric fencing of bear attractants, Idaho Fish and Game Department bear conflict management staff in the Selkirk ecosystem, updating Living with Predators Guides, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks outreach efforts in

¹ Federal fiscal year

the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem, and development of a high school level science lesson plan promoting the recovered status of the Yellowstone ecosystem population.

2014 (to date) – WMI continued to host and maintain the IGBC website (current analytics indicate an average of 50 new visits per day with the most views being pages on bear-resistant containers, use of bear spray and status of grizzly populations); raised additional funding and produced two high-quality videos featuring renown hunter-conservationist Craig Boddington promoting the use of bear spray by hunters which has now been viewed over 500,000 times; administered IGBC I&E grants for enhanced outreach in the Northern Cascades ecosystem, Idaho Fish and Game Department bear conflict management staff in the Selkirk and Yellowstone ecosystems, Wyoming Game and Fish outreach efforts in the Yellowstone ecosystem in Wyoming; evaluated implementation of the I&E strategy to date.

Additional activities planned for the remainder of 2014 include efforts to raise additional funding to produce an educational video on use of bear spray and potentially redesigning the children’s coloring book. See further discussion about the coloring book, below.

Evaluation of Strategy

As the IGBC Executive Committee reviews its budget and priorities for 2015 and beyond, it is appropriate to assess how well the Comprehensive Strategy for Information, Education and Outreach has been implemented, what impact it has had on recovery and delisting efforts, and whether any changes are needed. To assist with this process, WMI participated in four of the five IGBC ecosystem subcommittee spring meetings, conducted in-depth interviews with leaders in each ecosystem and surveyed over 150 IGBC agency staff and non-government partners.

We explored the following questions with each subcommittee through discussions at recent meetings of 4 of the 5 subcommittees and follow-up interviews with 10 individuals.

Are the recommendations for your ecosystem in the 2012 Strategic IE&O plan still relevant? Generally, the recommendations were still considered relevant. One exception was the recommendation to produce a video with Chris Morgan to promote recovery in the North Cascades. Given the ongoing discussion about next steps in the North Cascades, the subcommittee thought it best to hold off on such an ambitious project, pending the outcome of the EIS process, if that advances. Across all ecosystems, WMI heard that additional resources were needed to implement the recommendations effectively.

How have the IGBC information and education program and tools affected your grizzly recovery efforts? The program has provided consistent messages and good materials. However, the most important element is one-on-one contact. Additional IGBC support for field staff is needed.

How would your ecosystem’s grizzly bear recovery efforts change if the priority and funding for IE&O were substantially reduced? A common theme was loss of staff and/or time to commit to the important task of one-on-one contact with the public, leading to reduced public awareness and support for recovery. Some expressed that NGO’s cannot effectively fill any gap in funding or agency commitment. A common theme expressed was if the IGBC doesn’t fund IE&O, why would anyone take it seriously?

What advantages or benefits have you seen from IE&O efforts, if any, as a result of the partnership between WMI and the IGBC? Responses indicated the agreement between WMI and the agencies has provided additional capacity and expertise the agencies can tap to produce materials and ensure quality and consistency.

How would delisting of the YE and NCDE grizzly bears in the next 2 or 3 years affect the importance of IE&O in those ecosystems? The need for IE&O, and additional resources to provide that, will continue to increase after delisting, because bear numbers will continue to increase. If anything, there will be an even greater need for IE&O after delisting.

WMI invited 152 individuals who work for IGBC agencies or partners in both local government and in non-government organizations to complete an online survey. Questions explored participant's familiarity with elements of the IGBC's IE&O program and their perception of the effectiveness of those elements. Seventy-eight people completed the survey (51% response rate). Respondents included personnel from every IGBC agency, a number of NGO's and local governments.

IE&O in general was ranked "very important" or "extremely important" by 92% of respondents. Large majorities of the respondents said they were "moderately" or "extremely" familiar with the IGBC Website (83%), bear resistant certification program (85%), and the IGBC I&E grants program (82). Familiarity with the IGBC strategy for IE&O was mixed, with only 40% reporting they were "moderately" or "extremely" familiar with the strategy and nearly 20% (including at least 1 Executive Committee member) reporting they were "not at all" familiar with it. The IGBC website was considered "somewhat" or "very" effective by 78% of respondents, but only 5% thought it was "extremely" effective. The bear resistant container program was considered "somewhat" or "very" effective by 70% and "extremely" effective by another 22%. IGBC's I&E grants program was considered "somewhat" or "very" effective by 64% and "extremely" effective by an additional 27%. Open-ended responses indicated that the lower effectiveness ratings of the grants program was related to the limited funding provided. The strategy for IE&O was considered "somewhat" or "very" effective by 68% of respondents, but only 1% thought it "extremely" effective and 20% did not know enough about the strategy to rank it.

Survey results showed that majorities of respondents were "moderately" or "extremely" familiar with the revised bear safety brochure (51%), bear education trailers (60%), new bear spray brochure (68%), bear species ID cards (76%), and bear spray PSA's (72%). Familiarity with the coloring book was lower with only 43% reporting being "moderately" or "extremely" familiar and 23% being "not at all" familiar with it. Large majorities judged all of these tools as being "moderately" or "extremely" effective, with the exception of the coloring book.

Over 97% of respondents indicated they think consistency of messages is important. Large majorities of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" the IGBC I&E program has improved consistency between ecosystems (75%), between agencies (78%), regarding bear spray (91%), about how to hike and camp safely in bear country (85%), about food storage (93%) and about living safely near grizzly bears (74%).

In response to an open-ended question regarding where additional funding should be applied, 29 of 74 respondents indicated more funding should be made available for agency staff to engage in direct one-

on-one contact, through the IGBC Grants program. Nine individuals mentioned increased education on the use of bear spray and seven mentioned more work on securing garbage and attractants. The following three topics each were mentioned by five individuals: using marketing to improve the quality of messages and/or identify target audiences, increased signage or other materials related to food storage, and providing more and different materials. Four individuals mentioned the need to improve the website or expand use of social media. Two individuals suggested creating additional bear education trailers. Other priorities mentioned by one individual each included increased in-school programs and more grant funding.

Summary and Recommendations

IE&O is as important to recovery and delisting as good science about grizzly bear biology and ecology and effective management of bears and their habitat. The IGBC has provided essential funding to support IE&O as a core component of its budget. IGBC funding has been leveraged with matching funds from WMI for the past 3 years and the IGBC I&E Grants program has significantly enhanced field-level efforts in 4 of the 5 ecosystems.

Current funding levels are not adequate to implement the Comprehensive Strategy for IE&O as effectively as subcommittees and field staff would like. For example, the quality and impact of the IGBC website are constrained by the limited amount of time WMI staff can commit to site maintenance and the cost of the internet service provider. WMI lacks funding to create new materials and products for IE&O requested by subcommittees. Funding for I&E Grants consistently runs well below the level requested, even though some individuals said they no longer even bother to apply because funding is so limited. Any reduction in IE&O funding will further reduce effectiveness.

Given available funding, WMI has prioritized efforts related to minimizing bear's access to attractants, use of bear spray by hunters and recreationists, and supporting agency staff in the field with quality materials. Most grant funding is being directed to seasonal field staff, in part to off-set agency cutbacks in base programs.

WMI is reassessing the value of redesigning the coloring book. Given the relatively lower effectiveness ratings of this product, it may be appropriate to redirect the limited funds to other uses such as outreach related to a North Cascades EIS or the delisting process in the Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide ecosystems. Discussion at the upcoming Executive Committee meeting will inform decisions on this matter.