



Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee
Winter Meeting Notes
December 9-10, 2014
Holiday Inn Downtown Missoula



Welcome & Introductions: Incoming IGBC Chair Tammy Whittington opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Missoula and the IGBC winter meeting. Executive Committee Members, those representing Executive Members and IGBC Subcommittee Chairs include the following:

Tammy Whittington, Jim Unsworth, Matt Hogan, Garth Smelser (representing Nora Rasure), Debbie Hollen (representing Becki Heath), Bob Everitt, Joe Alexander (representing Dan Jiron), Dave Schmid, Faye Krueger, Ken McDonald, Terry Rabot, Jodi Bush, Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Jake Chaffin, Jeff Kershner, Tony Hamilton, Julie King, Deb Mucklow, Randy Hojem and Brian Nesvik.

IGBC Advisors Chris Servheen, Scott Jackson, and Frank T. van Manen, IGBC I&E Chair Gregg Losinski 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 – Ellen will work with Colleen Matt to ensure the IGBC Hunting Position Statement is on the IGBC website and is easy to locate.**

***Decision – Ellen will work with Sandy Frost and R-1 G&A folks on initiating a draft agreement with the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with money from BNSF for grizzly bear mitigation efforts in concert with ongoing FWS efforts. This is part of a bigger plan to establish a Grizzly Bear Conservation Fund (GBCF) with NFWF and the IGBC by laying the ground work and having the Forest Service initiate an agreement due to an immediate need and an opportunity. The hope is once this agreement's in place, the other IGBC members will want to jump on board as part of the bigger effort.**

***Decision- Tammy Whittington will take the first shot at a short report showing the contributions from IGBC agency members for grizzly bear recovery and management efforts. The FWS, WGF, NPS and IDF&G annual reports will be sent to Tammy. Once Tammy has completed a draft report, she will share with the adhoc group (Terry Rabot, Scott Talbott, Matt Hogan, Dave Schmid and Ellen Davis) to decide what next steps to take.**

***Decision –The IGBC Subcommittee Chairs will update their Five-Year Action plans (which expired in 2014) to reflect work for 2015 to 2017 only. For some of the ecosystems, there needs to be a shift reflected in the work plans from recovery to management. In 2017, the subcommittee chairs will update the work plan again for 5 years to be in sync with the IGBC Executive Committee Five-Year Action Plan of 2013-2017.**

Ellen will send each Subcommittee Chair a copy of the Five-Year Action Plan. Subcommittee Chairs need to incorporate updates for their respective ecosystem and send back to Ellen by January 30. Ellen will incorporate Subcommittee updates into overall Five-Year Action Plan and send to executive committee for review and approval.

***Decision – Ellen will send out a doodle survey to the executive committee to set up a conference call in February for Scott Jackson to review proposals on how to increase the capacity of the bear-resistant container testing program through increasing testing fees, IGBC member contributions, and working with WMI. Scott is looking for a decision from the conference call to begin implementation in April as the testing program starts up for the season.**

IGBC I&E Update – Gregg Losinski

Gregg gave an overview of the IGBC I&E program for 2014. Topics covered included:

- Use of bear spray is going up, the word is getting out
- Working and recreating in the woods safely
- Travelling bear trailers
- Video footage w/Brutus the Bear (Casey Anderson)
- Bear #760 in Grand Teton NP was euthanized and had lots of media attention
- Greater Yellowstone Coalition – A success story. IGBC certification means something.
- IGBC I&E grants- overview of projects received and funded for FY15.
- PowerPoint presentations are encouraged to be shared and posted on IGBC web.

Chris Smith, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) Update

- WMI was established in 1911 as a non-profit organization
- The IGBC/WMI Challenge Cost Share Agreement is a 5-year agreement (2011-2016)
- Base funding from IGBC in 2011 and 2012 was \$40K, in 2013-2015 it was \$51,400.
- >50% of cost of Chris Smith's time
- Waived overhead 34%
- 10% indirect costs
- IGBC website improvement ongoing. Migration of website to WGF will occur once their new content management system is completed.
- Accomplishments in FY14 include Craig Boddington PSAs, Brutus the Bear video footage with bird feeders and BBQ, purchased footage of Brutus the Bear reacting to bear spray.
- WMI supplemental funding obtained in 2014 to leverage IGBC funding was \$13,500
- The message received overall following interviews and subcommittee results is that WMI is headed in the right direction.
- Funded projects for FY15 include:
 - Coordination w/subcommittees
 - Disseminating information on how to fill inert bear canisters
 - Moving IGBC website to Wyoming Game and Fish
 - Completion of new coloring book
 - Completion of an interactive food storage map
 - Creation of video library of bear-human interactions
 - Oversee and manage 4 IGBC grant recipient projects

Other potential projects include:

- Longer bear spray tutorial
- Additional bear container work
- Electric fencing outreach support
- North Cascades EIS
- YES/NCDE delisting

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

WVO was founded by Chris Morgan and has been operating for the last 10 years. The IGBC recently awarded WVO \$2,500 for their I & E grant proposal. WVO also received a \$10,000 grant from Vital Ground for the bear trailer. The bear trailer was used 13 times in FY14. The logistics of using the bear trailer are substantial including cost, size, and pulling the trailer. Approximately 800-1000 people engage with the folks and the trailer during events. About 86% of people polled like bears. The issue is getting people to understand how to live and recreate safely with bears. It was also noted that bear spray messages about the success of using bear spray are getting out.

Bear awareness week is June 1-7. There will be activities and programs at the Woodland Park Zoo in Washington State.

WVO is also involved in a new program pilot called Wildlife Wise with the NPS and the North Cascades Institute. The Program is planned for additional places in Washington throughout the ongoing North Cascades EIS process.

A survey done by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in 1996 showed that support for grizzly bear recovery was strong. In 2005, a survey conducted by WVO showed that 86% of people supported the preservation of grizzly bears for future generations. WVO noted how much they appreciate their partnership with the IGBC.

Bob Everitt asked Lorna if WVO has considered doing another survey in the near future. Lorna noted that there has been some discussion but nothing solidified. Lorna said she predicts that a survey done today would not look much different than past surveys. She believes the job now is to continue with small scale producers and livestock producers asking them what they can do to co-exist with bears and protect livestock. She noted that surveys are also quite expensive.

Tammy Whittington commented that the education component is critical throughout the North Cascades EIS process. She also pointed out that putting information out there but not taking a position was very important.

Faye Krueger thanked WVO for all their hard work and effort.

IGBC Five-Year Work Plan - Jim Unsworth

Jim noted that the IGBC five-year work plan is tracking well. The social and political aspects are challenging as always.

Ken McDonald noted that the work plans are the backbone of the IGBC and the need to shift from recovery to management needs to be reflected in the work plans as relevant.

It was also noted that the IGBC subcommittee ecosystems work plans expired in 2014 and needed to be revised.

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Grizzly Bear Conservation Fund Update (GBCF) – Faye Krueger

Faye thanked Harv Forsgren for all his hard work and effort in trying to set up the GBCF. She remarked how challenging and frustrating it has been not getting the responses needed to keep momentum at its peak. Faye noted that there is already an agreement in place with the Cabinet and NCDE with NFWF and to continue to work within the confines of the subcommittee. The NCDE is working with the Department of Transportation on wildlife crossings and can report back in June the progress that is being made.

Faye noted there is an earmark of \$3 million dollars from the FS to work with NFWF. “ We want to get hitched so we can grow the family,” she said.

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Ethyl the Bear – Chris Servheen

Ethyl, the female adult 20 year old grizzly bear, has taken the greatest journey of any documented bear on record. She travelled at least 3000 miles before losing her collar in October and has opened our eyes to what bears are capable of doing.

In the Fall of 2012, Ethyl was monitored in Glacier NP, then in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Rocky Mountain Front, NCDE Flathead Reservation, SW almost to I-90, shore of Flathead Lake, North of Missoula (North Hills), then to Idaho, North to Kellogg and almost to Coeur d’alene, Bitterroots (West of Florence), back to Idaho, back into the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier NP, Eureka, MT and then lost her collar in October.

Decision – Ellen will work with Chris Servheen to provide a map showing Ethyl’s 3000 mile journey for posting on the IGBC website. There is lots of public interest in the adventures of Ethyl and folks want to see where and how Ethyl traveled.

Bitterroot Ecosystem FY14 Accomplishments and FY15 Program of Work – Julie King (see handout).

Julie relayed to the executive committee her appreciation for the IGBC grants awarded to the Bitterroot Ecosystem. The Bitterroot is looking forward to working with their partners to implement the proposals that were awarded.

Julie also noted that the Bitterroot would like to recognize some of the folks in the community for their efforts providing bear-resistant containers to the area. She is hopeful we can present some awards at the spring meeting.

Julie also emphasized that there is a huge opportunity to be proactive in the Bitterroot ecosystem. It may be unoccupied at this time but predators in general are the key players. She reiterated the definition of a defined grizzly bear population as seeing two different female grizzly bears with cubs or seeing the same female grizzly bear at two different times with different cubs.

NCDE FY14 Accomplishments and FY15 Program of Work – Deb Mucklow (see handout).

Deb reminded folks that the NCDE Conservation Strategy was completed in 2012. Public comments were received and they are being responded to.

Grizzly Bear Mortalities – Chris Servheen

In 2014 there were 18 known and probable mortalities. There were 0 management removals of grizzly bears in the NCDE ecosystem. This is the first time there were no management removals in the NCDE.

Ken McDonald noted that workplan accomplishments for the subcommittees need to be tied to each of the subcommittee work/action plans.

NCDE Delisting Update – Chris Servheen

- Public Comment
- Working on Demographics, then Proposed Rule by USFWS
- DEIS December 2015
- Mid February 2015, Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS
- FS is putting grizzly bear standards in Forest Plans (proposed action and amendments in same EIS under different planning rules).

IGBC Budget Discussion – Tammy Whittington

- History of past contributions to the IGBC budget
- What are agencies contributing to grizzly bear management & conservation and what is the equability of those contributions?
- What kind of annual reporting mechanisms do agencies have in place and what does the program look like? The NPS has a program specific to grizzly bears and a certain dollar amount is allotted to that program and tracked.

Dave Schmid commented that he thought there was some value in transparency of what agencies bring to the table for grizzly bear management but questioned who our intended audience is.

Brian Nesvik commented that Wyoming had easy access to the type of investment and cost attributed to grizzly bears by Wyoming since they track and report that information annually in a report.

Ken McDonald noted that MTFWP has dedicated staff ie; grizzly bear specialists but said that the peripheral work would be more difficult to quantify.

Tammy remarked that the NPS has programs specifically dedicated to grizzly bears.

Debbie Hollen noted that this assignment needs to be comparing apples to apples and what kind of apples are we looking at?

Jodi Bush commented that the USFWS does an annual report and could provide the amount of dollars spent by the agency on grizzly bear management and conservation efforts to Ellen to share with Tammy and the group.

Faye Krueger noted that we are all partners around the table and we all contribute in many ways.

Brian Nesvik commented that it is complicated to quantify how much money is received by the Feds each year contributing to grizzly bear recovery. He noted that this is part of telling one of the greatest conservation and partnership stories.

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Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak FY14 Accomplishments and FY15 Program of Work – Randy Hojem (see handout)

Randy announced that Mary Farnsworth, Forest Supervisor on the Idaho Panhandle NF is the new incoming Chair for the SCY Ecosystem Subcommittee and Chris Salvage, Forest Supervisor on the Kootenai NF is the new Vice-Chair.

Randy noted that the population estimate of grizzly bears in the SCY ecosystem is 50 bears and the recovery goal is 100 bears.

He also noted that the SCY needs to increase their I & E efforts and folks need to become more active.

YES/NCDE continue making good progress towards delisting while the Bitterroot and North Cascades are still moving forward towards a grizzly bear population. The SCY is right in the middle since they have an established population. Randy noted that he expects to see increased requests for I&E dollars and interest from the local communities who are dependent on natural resources and have the least negative impacts on communities.

Randy reiterated the work ahead for the SCY ecosystem subcommittee is to review the goals in the recovery plan.

Grizzly Bear Augmentation in the SCY Ecosystem – Wayne Kasworm

- From 1990 to present only 7 bears have been moved.
- Selkirks to the Cabinets – male grizzly augmentation bears or products of augmentation bears
2 female grizzly bears

Jodi Bush commented to make sure the NCDE delisting efforts do not impact the bears moving forward with recovery in the Cabinet-Yaak.

Ken McDonald noted the NCDE Conservation Strategy has wording that addresses some of those concerns.

IGBC Bear-Resistant Product Testing and Certification Program Update – Scott Jackson

Scott gave an overview and history of the bear-resistant testing program.

Overview:

- The program was initiated and sustained by just a few folks in the beginning but the program has evolved and has grown exponentially, especially over the last couple years.
- The task assigned last summer was to review the program and evaluate the critical issues and possible solutions.

Follow-up:

- The program has grown exponentially. In 2014, 80 plus products were tested and about half of those passed the live-bear testing.
- The IGBC bear-resistant testing and certification program is the only game in town and the IGBC certification is highly sought after by manufacturers all over the country.

Proposal:

- Request to put more resources into the program to handle administrative duties. Scott will prepare a more formal proposal.
- Testing season in April 1 to October 30 and season starts again April 1
- Looking for \$20K a year for a part-time person

Dave Schmid commented that we need to capture cost recovery. The GWDC has taken over the testing process and they have taken in more funds than it costs to run the program. They are willing to roll those savings into this program.

Scott Jackson will have a complete proposal ready to discuss with the Executive Committee by February. The proposal will lay out how WMI will administer the funding through the WMI agreement already in place with the IGBC. Chris Smith suggested that to guarantee a steady income, the additional funding needed for the program come through the IGBC budget. WMI could then cover the costs of testing to GWDC and cover the costs of additional dollars needed to pay for the administrative work.

Scott proposed another opportunity to have a facility in Kanloops, BC do testing. Scott would like to explore this opportunity. Tony Hamilton commented that he believed wed still need an engineering component to this program and challenged the executive committee to find an engineering student or firm to help us out.

Scott also discussed electric fences and the requests for IGBC certification. Scott contacted MTDC and they would need funding from the Forest Service before running through their project selection process to develop design specs for electric fences.

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North Cascades FY14 Accomplishments and FY15 Program of Work – Karen Taylor-Goodrich
(see handout)

Denise Shultz is the new I&E Chair for the North Cascades Ecosystem.

Priority action items for the North Cascades are as follows:

- North Cascades EIS 3-4 year expectation
- Outreach working with WWO
- Genetic analysis
- Sighting report follow-up
- Access Management
- Sanitation

Update on North Cascades Restoration Plan and EIS – Jack Oelfke

There are 4 priority actions including:

- Strategy to implement the Recovery Plan
- I & E
- Monitoring
- NEPA process

Actions to-date include:

- Scoping meetings (NPS, USFWS, co-leads FS, WDFW, BC)
- Notice of Intent and public scoping meetings begin in January 2015

Timeline:

- Scoping done
- NOI – January
- Draft summer 2014-2015
- Public Draft/Public Review Summer/Fall 2015
- Final EIS??

Tony Hamilton noted that BC has not yet decide on how to respond to the NC EIS. Tony hopes to get that done soon and hopefully rolls on both sides.

Bob Everitt reminded folks of the Washington State statue and is hoping it can be modified. He also notes that Washington State is having budget issues (decisions supreme court) 1.5 to 2 billion dollar shortfall.

Population Monitoring in the NCDE - Rick Mace

Population monitoring in 2004 to estimate population trend
Known fate method (capture females, attach radio collars and follow them)

What do we know about the NCDE population?

Grizzly data bases

Population size DNA Study in 2004 – 765 bears

62% female

Density map was created

Created a gender specific relative population map

The average growth rate is 3% but uncertainty due to various reasons, ie; mortality, survival rates, etc.

Chris Servheen noted that the EIS is a great advancement for grizzly bears.

Notice of Intent to start EIS in January

Yellowstone FY14 Accomplishments and FY15 Program of Work – Brian Nesvik (see handout)

- There is an expansion of grizzly bears where we haven't seen before.
- We are working with IGBST
- Monitoring
- Conflict Mitigation
- Ups and downs but over time and upward trajectory
- Live-stock conflicts up
- Human conflicts down
- Human fatality this year

GYE 2014 Grizzly Bear Population Status Update – Frank van Manen

Overview: Displayed a map orienting folks on park boundaries, YES ecosystem and Conservation Strategy boundaries.

- Females with Cubs of the Year (FCOY) – Reliable method, aerial observations.
- Observation flights.
- 2014 total population estimate 757
- 95% confidence interval 674-839

We had a good reliable model for estimating population but realized a few years ago that we were underestimating populations. We pursued the Mark-Resight Model to estimate females with cubs.

- Uses number of unmarked and radio-marked during observation flights or moth site considerations – greater sightability but few radio marked bears
- Small number of sighting of marked Fcoy affects decision
- Variation in arrival estimates

2013 estimate: 1,000 bears using a 3-year average of both models

2014 estimate: 1,140 bears

- Greater than expected FCOY count
- Highest number of FCOY observed in 2013
- 2013 count followed good WBP cone production during 2012
- Implementation of Mark-Resight estimator.

Conflict and I&E/Bearwise Efforts – Dan Thompson

Reality of Recovery

- Definition of conflict
- Major trends and issues
- Success and conflict
- Grizzly bear conflicts
- Produces and annual report in addition to study team report.
- Live-stock damage
- Property damage
- Food rewards
- Human/bear encounters

- Bear injury/death
 - Other notables
 - Roadside bears on State Highways
 - New areas of conflict
 - Public education – transparency and tolerance
 - All of the above leading to Management Actions.

Relocations and Removals

- 20 grizzly bears relocated
- 9 removals
- Preemptive Strikes – Creativity – Success
- Bearwise efforts
- Demonstrations & Outreach
- Bear jams in the Park
- Attractant Management Program – Electric Fencing

Yellowstone Delisting Update - Matt Hogan

Where are we with delisting grizzly bears in the Yellowstone Ecosystem?

- We were working on the Proposed Rule and we thought we were all on target
- We thought we were all on the same page
- Differences between the States and the Feds have been brought to light
- There may be some differences of what post-delisting looks like among agencies
- Lack of information, being on the same page and population numbers have contributed to concerns
- Dialogue continues with the States/Feds and Policy Decision Makers
- We are not moving forward with the Delisting Rule at this time because we all want to be on the same page but we are hoping to move forward soon.

Tammy Whittington is the new incoming IGBC Chair and Jim Unsworth is the new Vice-Chair.

The Summer IGBC meeting is scheduled for June 16-17, 2015 at Many Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park.

****END****