



Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Winter Meeting Notes

December 8-9, 2015
Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown



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

Tammy Whittington, Jim Unsworth, Matt Hogan, Dave Schmid, Leanne Marten, Ken McDonald, Rick Hotaling, Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Deb Mucklow, Tony Hamilton, Paul Frame, Terry Rabot, Joe Alexander, Julie King, Mary Erickson, Mary Farnsworth, ML Smith, Claudia Regan, Scott Talbott, Ed Schriever, and Chris Iverson.

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 – A motion was passed to renew the Challenge Cost Share Agreement between the IGBC and the Wildlife Management Institute for another 5 years. The agreement expires in September 2016.**

***Action Item – Scott Jackson agreed to develop a “field failure” form and have it posted on the IGBC website to facilitate and encourage the public to note and report failures of IGBC certified bear-resistant containers or other problems with products. The suggestion to develop a form came from earlier discussion that the public has no way to report failures of products and this form would allow the public to help monitor how well IGBC certified grizzly bear-resistant products are holding up.**

***Decision – The executive committee agreed that for both winter and summer IGBC meetings, the ecosystem chairs will attend and give a standard presentation at the beginning of each meeting on their 5-year action plans. Actions and updates will be presented to the executive committee for each subcommittee with approval or non-approval by the executive committee to proceed.**

The IGBC Chair will also present the IGBC executive committee 5-year action plan at both winter and summer meetings with reports on progress at each meeting. The 5-year actions plans for both the executive committee and subcommittees will kick off each meeting.

***Decision – Draft a Charter for IGBC by March 1 to help define and establish a clear framework of function of the executive committee, organizational structure, mission, purpose, objectives, etc. Once developed and approved, the template can be used by the subcommittee chairs to develop charters in their respective ecosystems. A charter will help new folks coming on board to have a better understanding of how and why the IGBC operates. An ad-hoc committee of Chris Servheen, Ed Schriever, Julie King, Rick Hotaling and Ellen Davis will develop the charter and send out for review.**

***Decision – It was determined by the IGBC Chair, Tammy Whittington, that the IGBC 5-year Action Plan was not ready for approval. The IGBC subcommittees need to carry on with action items outlined in the current plan as we work through an updated 5-year action plan.**

Once the IGBC Charter is done, the ad-hoc committee will work to update and sync the Charter with the IGBC 5-year action plan and MOU so all documents are consistent and synced with one another.

***Decision – Ellen will send out the roles and responsibilities that were developed during Harv Forsgren’s tenure as IGBC Chair to the smaller ad-hoc committee assigned with developing an IGBC Charter as well as comments and concerns received from the committee regarding the IGBC 5-year action plan, recovery plan criteria, roles after delisting, and the MOU.**

***Decision – Jim Unsworth would like a presentation at the summer meeting by Chris Servheen and his folks with an emphasis on linkage and connectivity. Tony Hamilton would like linkage addressed by Chris at the next summer meeting as well.**

***Decision – The State of WY asked for a 3rd party clause to be added to the IGBC MOU. Because additions such as that have to be elevated to the Forest Service WO for approval, we could not sign the MOU at this time. There is another issue of inconsistent wording in the MOU and the 5-year action plan regarding the role of IGBC following delisting. Both those issues need to be addressed before signatures can be acquired. Those issues will be worked out and a revised MOU will be presented to the IGBC executive committee at the summer meeting for signatures.**

***Decision – Tammy distributed the Draft IGBC Expenditure Report for review to the executive committee. Comments and ground truthing numbers as best as possible will be sent to Mike Wrigley by the end of December. Mike will have the report completed by the end of January for distribution to the IGBC executive committee.**

IGBC I&E Update – Gregg Losinski

Gregg presented the I&E update for 2015 (see posted PowerPoint presentation). Several other topics of discussion included the following:

- Meetings are now being video recorded and are posted on the IGBC website
- Gregg showcased the variety of media stories regarding grizzly bears and how getting factual information to the media is critical.

Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) Update – Colleen Matt (see PowerPoint presentation)

Colleen gave an overview of the work being done by WMI through the Challenge Cost Share Agreement with the IGBC. Some of the topics she touched on included:

- How to get copies of the new IGBC coloring book. The coloring book can be downloaded from the IGBC website and printed or taken to a local printer.
- Update on the IGBC website with Wyoming Game & Fish (WG&F). Due to technical issues and other unforeseen complications, WG&F will not be able to host the IGBC website on its server. Other options are being looked at and decisions will be made soon on where the IGBC website will be hosted.

- Update on the food storage interactive map. Scott Jackson has indicated this is not a priority since we now have a list of food storage orders listed by forest on the IGBC website.
- SW Montana working group and bear safety education coordinator position. The IGBC I&E provided \$5,500 for assistance in funding this temporary position.
- Update on the funding for the IGBC bear-resistant container testing and certification program through the WMI/Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center (GWDC) agreement.
- Results of the IGBC I&E Grants for 2015 administered by the WMI.
 - ✓ Defenders of Wildlife
 - ✓ Western Wildlife Outreach
 - ✓ Idaho Department of Fish & Game
- Future of the IGBC/WMI 5-Year Challenge Cost Share Agreement (expires September 2016)

***Decision: The IGBC Executive Committee approved a motion to renew another 5 year Challenge Cost Share with WMI. The current agreement expires in September 2016.**

Bear-Resistant Container Testing & Certification Program – Scott Jackson

Scott gave an overview of the bear-resistant container testing & certification program which has been in existence for about 25 plus years.

The program continues to grow with lots of interest from government agencies, counties, individuals and even other countries. There are often media inquiries into the program and lots of interest as well. Scott noted how much he appreciates our partnership with the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center (GWDC) and how much they do to make this program so successful including the testing of products and funding they have provided.

In 2015, there were 56 products tested which averages out to be about 35 products per year. Average over last few years was 45 products. There is a fair amount of variability in the products tested each year with coolers being the most tested products we see. A decision by the Executive Committee agreed to establish an MOU with GWDC and WMI to help offset program costs and to increase testing fees. About \$25,500 of funding came in from testing fees this year. GWDC covers their expenses with the testing fees and then sends WMI the remaining dollars which are used to cover Patti Sowka's time assisting with the bear-resistant container program. We may need to increase testing fees again to help continue paying for Patti's time. GWDC provided \$5K in seed money to help pay for Patti's time this year.

Some of the challenges of the program are the large metal dumpsters. Bears have not been able to access them and have lost interest in trying to do so. This is becoming more of a problem. The solution is an inspection based protocol by developing standard specs and criteria. A determination to decide if a product is bear-resistant could be based on the developed criteria and inspection. Scott plans to have specs and criteria in place for on-site inspections by the 2016 testing season.

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IGBC Five-Year Action Plan – Chris Servheen

The IGBC executive committee continued a discussion after reviewing the IGBC's Five-Year Action Plan and the revisions done by Chris Servheen as directed at the summer meeting.

Ken McDonald noted that the work plan for the executive committee contained in the five-year action plan is the driver for evaluating what we should be working on. The executive committee needs to evaluate itself first. This should be done at each meeting with a review and report out by the IGBC Chair of the five-year actions and objectives and a check-in and agreement of where we are.

Ken also noted that there is a discrepancy of the role of IGBC pre and post delisting as outlined in the IGBC MOU and the five-year action plan. We need to agree what that role is and then have it reflected consistently in our documents.

Mary Erickson noted that the YES subcommittee does not have a charter but that YGCC does. She said she is unclear what the role of the subcommittee chair is as well as the role of the work plan. She suggested we refresh our expectations perhaps by developing charters for each ecosystem subcommittee as well as the IGBC executive committee. We need a better and clearer process in place.

Joe Alexander noted that he was still unclear of the role of YES with the IGBC once the bear is delisted. The committee needs to define what the relationship will be with ecosystems after delisting.

Mary Erickson noted that there needs to be a definite link and connection to all the IGBC documents including the Charter, 5-year action plan, and MOU.

Ken McDonald suggested the role of the IGBC after delisting should be linked to the Recovery Plan in the Charter that is being developed.

Tammy Whittington asked the group how to move forward with the role of the IGBC after delisting.

Tony Hamilton stated that the ongoing role for IGBC after post-delisting is having the flow of communication of information going both ways.

Mary Farnsworth responded that connectivity is critical and it is beneficial to keep connected to the executive committee.

Jim Unsworth stated that he believed it was an evolving role (more a communication role) and the need for continued connection and communication.

Mary Erickson suggested that we keep the relationship and not define it and get bogged down in details.

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Yellowstone Ecosystem Delisting Update – Matt Hogan

Matt talked about the three elements that the USFWS have been working on to move closer to delisting. He talked about the revision to the Conservation Strategy, revision to the recovery criteria (demographics and habitat criteria) and the proposed rule itself.

Public/peer review – publish all three elements at the same time. He said the proposed rule is in the not too distant future.

Scott Talbott noted that from a state perspective, they have been working with the USFWS looking at regulatory mechanisms and making good progress. They are making sure the state plans are all revised.

YES Accomplishments 2014 and Program of Work 2016 – Mary Erickson (see handout)

Yellowstone National Park Grizzly Bear Incidents 2015 – Kerry Gunther (see PowerPoint)

GYE Grizzly Bear Population Monitoring & New Genetic Research – Frank van Manen (see Powerpoint)

White Bark Pine Manuscript Overview – Mary Francis Mahalovich (see PowerPoint)

Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem

Augmentation & Research Update in the Cabinet Yaak and Selkirk Mountains – Wayne Kasworm (see PowerPoint)

Accomplishments 2015 and Program of Work 2016 – Mary Farnsworth (see PowerPoint)

The SCY Ecosystem just conducted a very successful workshop and are thinking about having another one. The workshop helped administrators get up to speed on bears and reinvigorated the I&E group.

The subcommittee has increased monitoring efforts and is focusing on priority work in the recently updated 5-year action plan for the SCY subcommittee. We are on schedule for the 2019 deadline for access management objectives.

Priority Actions include:

- Continue work on monitoring
- Create our own grant program
- Continue connectivity discussions with Canada
- Continue connectivity discussion with the NCDE ecosystem folks

Discussion on Recovery Plan Criteria

Tammy notes that we still need resolution on the recovery plan/criteria discussion we had earlier.

Ken McDonald contends that we need to evaluate the recovery plan criteria. There are different perspectives of what recovery is.

Joe Alexander notes that he see that as a USFWS role (biological issue).

Matt Hogan says the USFWS is looking for a consensus opinion.

Ed Schriever appreciates Joe's opinion that it is not the subcommittee's role to determine recovery plan criteria and he agrees. It is the USFWS's role. We need clarity and definition to the criteria so we all have the same understanding and can work towards that end.

Tammy noted that she did not suggest the subcommittee chairs re-write the criteria but rather evaluate the goals in the recovery plan.

Mary Farnsworth noted that citizens have concerns about the number of bears in the recovery plan. Other than a societal issues, Mary is not seeing the rationale.

Ken McDonald responded that we need validation that the recovery plan that was put together 23 years ago is still valid.

NCDE accomplishment Report 2015 and Program of Work 2016 – Deb Mucklow (see handout)

Jim Williams will be the new NCDE Chair in the spring.

IGBC Expenditure Report – Tammy Whittington

The expenditure report demonstrates the level of coordination, commitment and effort by the agencies as well as the monetary cost.

The report contains ball park estimates as best as can be determined.

The report can be made available on the IGBC website.

Bitterroot Ecosystem accomplishment Report 2015 and Program of Work 2016 – Julie King (see handout)

Jim Unsworth is the new IGBC Chair and Matt Hogan is the new IGBC Vice-Chair.

The next IGBC summer meeting is scheduled for June 21-22 at the Kootenai River Lodge in Bonners Ferry, ID

*****END*****

