



Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Summer Meeting Notes

June 21-23

Kootenai River Inn, Bonners Ferry, ID



Welcome & Introductions: IGBC Chair Jim Unsworth opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Bonners Ferry and the Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem. County Commissioner Dan Dinning also provided opening comments and welcomed the group to his community.

Members and those representing Executive Members and Ecosystem Subcommittee Chairs present at the meeting include the following:

Jim Unsworth, Matt Hogan, Dave Schmid, Ken McDonald, Rick Hotaling, Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Tony Hamilton, Terry Rabot, Joe Alexander, Gil Gale, Jim Williams, Claudia Regan, Ed Schriever, Becki Heath, Jim Bedwell, Mary Farnsworth and Chris Iverson.

IGBC Advisors Wayne Kasworm and Scott Jackson, 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 – As part of the Challenge Cost Share Agreement with WMI (Chris Smith) and IGBC, Chris will lead the inter-document coordination for IGBC to ensure documents are consistent in desired objectives and outcomes including the IGBC Charter, MOU and IGBC Executive Committee section for the 5-year action plan (2017-2021) working with Ken McDonald and Ellen Davis. Chris will share the documents with the executive committee sometime in November for review and will present the documents to the executive committee for approval at the IGBC winter meeting in December.**

***Action Item – Send a copy of the Talbott/Beck report to the IGBC executive committee**

***Decision – Wayne Kasworm will work on answering how many bears can be supported in the SCY ecosystem and present as a winter meeting topic in a small group symposium of a couple hours for the IGBC winter meeting in December.**

***Action Item – Send IGBC I&E funding criteria to executive committee for review and comments.**

***Decision – The IGBC approved and signed the IGBC budget for FY17**

***Action Item – Send Terry Rabot, USFWS-R1, a copy of the IGBC approved and signed IGBC Budget for FY17**

***Decision – A smaller ad-hoc committee of Scott Jackson (replacing Wayne Kasworm), Rick Hotaling, Ellen Davis and 1-2 bear management specialists (1 state and 1 federal) will evaluate the current IGBC recommendations of a 6-second minimum spray duration for bear spray and bear spray materials both printed and on the IGBC website and present the findings to the executive committee to make a decision on UDAP's motions.**

***Action Item – Ellen will send a copy of the NCDE (Jim William’s subcommittee report) to the rest of the subcommittee chairs to use as a template for reporting their progress on their subcommittee’s five-year plan tasks at each summer IGBC meeting.**

IGBC Draft Charter – Rick Hotaling

Rick went through the IGBC draft charter page by page and reviewed each section with the committee. Comments and edits were captured for additional revision. Lots of discussion occurred including the role and relevancy of IGBC after delisting with agreement that the IGBC will still play an active role in ecosystems with delisted populations.

Joe Alexander noted that monitoring aspects were needed in the Charter. Matt Hogan asked what the vision of IGBC was that led us to 2016. Is there a historical perspective and what is the coordination role of IGBC?

Is part of the IGBC executive committee role to help prioritize funding allocations between subcommittees?

Jim Unsworth added that he sees IGBC structure as policy level/info sharing/technical groups/land managers.

We need to establish common practices and models of subcommittees

We need to emphasize recovery to management

There is a need for this forum to always interact with the land managers

We need to beef up information sharing

***Decision – WMI (Chris Smith) will lead an inter-document coordination effort, revising the Draft Charter and then ensuring all IGBC documents are consistent in desired objectives and outcomes including the IGBC Charter, MOU and IGBC Executive Committee five-year action plan, working in conjunction with Ken McDonald and Ellen Davis. The group will present the documents to the executive committee for review and approval at the IGBC winter meeting in December.**

Yellowstone Ecosystem Update – Rick Hotaling for Mary Erickson

Rick gave an overview of the strategy planned for the YES proposed delisting rule and draft conservation strategy.

The YES subcommittee met in April. The conservation strategy revision steering committee assembled and made recommendations. The subcommittee is reviewing those recommendations. Several groups are working on the edits/comments.

This is process driven and comments need to come through respective agencies.

The deadline for the steering committee is July 15.

Ken McDonald asked if the expectation of the IGBC executive committee was a YES conservation strategy?

Dave Schmid noted that there are 3 FS Regional Foresters involved in coordinating this process.

Representatives of the IGBC need to stay in touch and communicate with folks on the YES subcommittee so any issues or concerns are communicated and addressed and the CS is ready to be signed in November.

Overview of Proposed Delisting Rule and Draft Conservation Strategy for YES – Matt Hogan

The public comment closed on May 10 with 165,000 comments on the delisting rule.

There were 12,000 individual comments (lots of comments with no substance). There were some comments of substance from a variety of groups and science organizations including comments on climate change, declining food sources, tribal concerns, tourism value, and human encroachment of bear habitat.

The USFWS will respond back to the substantive comments.

There are 5 peer reviewers of the proposed delisting rule. The USFWS contracted with an organization to pick the 5 peer reviewers. There were no fatal flaws identified for the rule or the CS.

Process wise, the intent of the FWS is to finalize and sign the CS and for the States to complete their respective management plans.

A brief comment period will be open hopefully in August for comments on the peer review and the State Management Plans.

A final decision is expected at the end of the year.

Ken McDonald noted that for the Montana State Management Plan, a hunting frame-work was adopted by the commission and the comment period is closed. The plan now goes back to the commission for finalization in July. There is no hunting season currently scheduled, that will be some time down the road.

The Idaho State Management Plan has not been revised since 2012. It has seasons and limits with evidence of sex. There is no hunting females with cubs. There are 8 proposed modifications to facilitate regulatory mechanisms. The Commission meets on July 7 and will pass temporary rules or will do so in August.

For Wyoming, the revisions to their state management plan regulations is currently before the Commission.

Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee Report - Mary Farnsworth

Michael Proctor gave a presentation on Connectivity/gene flow/demographic linkage for the SCY ecosystem – (see PPT)

Mary Farnsworth gave an update on the SCY program of work. The subcommittee is making strides to work more closely Canada.

The I&E program is rocking and rolling with huge improvements of electric fences and getting the word out.

More solid funding sources are needed for both I&E and monitoring. We definitely need more funding going towards these areas.

The SCY welcomed both the Kalispell Kootenai Tribes of ID and the Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribe as representatives of the SCY ecosystem subcommittee.

Making good progress with access management working with border patrol on the Blue grass road access issue to meet everyone's objectives.

Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem Report - Jim Williams (see PPT)

Jim introduced himself as the new NCDE chair and announced that Jeff Mow, GNP Superintendent, was the new vice-chair.

Jim Williams provided a handout and PPT presentation on the progress of the NCDE five-year action items for the subcommittee. The handout was noted as a really good template for all subcommittees to use when reporting progress on five-year action plan tasks.

Matt Hogan asked where the NCDE was in the recovery criteria and that we need to discuss the recovery plan each time the IGBC meets. We need recovery criteria we can all agree on.

Jim responded that the recovery criteria is nailed down (1,000 bears). We need to bring the science team together to finish CS.

Jim was given a nod of approval by the IGBC executive committee to carry on with what the subcommittee is doing, to reconvene the science team and to finish the conservation strategy work on monitoring.

***Action Item – Ellen will send a copy of the NCDE (Jim William's subcommittee report) to the rest of the subcommittee chairs to use as a template for reporting their progress on their subcommittee's five-year plan tasks at IGBC meetings.**

Information & Education Update – Gregg Losinski (see PPT)

Gregg gave a presentation on the IGBC I&E program updates. He talked about the new NPS campaign called "A Bear Doesn't Care if..." noting it was very good and well received but there was no external contact or coordination with any of the IGBC partners.

Gregg also gave an update on the I&E funding for 2016 and noted that many of the requests for funding now coming in are for funding seasonal bear education positions. He noted that some direction from the IGBC is in order on their priorities for funding both products and positions.

***Action Item – Ellen will send IGBC I&E funding criteria to executive committee for review and comments.**

IGBC FY17 Budget – Ellen Davis

Ellen presented the IGBC budget to the executive committee for review and approval. There was an increase in agency contributions due to increased cost to the government.

***Decision – The IGBC approved and signed the IGBC budget for FY17.**

***Action Item –Send Terry Rabot, USFWS-R1, a copy of the IGBC approved and signed IGBC Budge for FY17.**

IGBC MOU – Ellen Davis

The MOU was not approved due to inconsistent language in it and other IGBC documents. The MOU will be included in the decision to have WMI lead the effort to review all IGBC documents for consistency in objectives and outcomes and present at the IGBC winter meeting.

***Decision – WMI (Chris Smith) will lead an inter-document coordination effort, revising the Draft Charter and then ensuring all IGBC documents are consistent in desired objectives and outcomes including the IGBC Charter, MOU and IGBC Executive Committee five-year action plan, working in conjunction with Ken McDonald and Ellen Davis. The group will present the documents to the executive committee for review and approval at the IGBC winter meeting in December.**

UDAP Industries request for IGBC review of bear spray recommendations – Greg Dorrington

Greg Dorrington of Crowley/Fleck Attorneys and a government relations attorney representing UDAP Industries made a presentation to the IGBC executive committee requesting 2 motions for the IGBC to consider:

1. That the IGBC withdraw the 6-second spray duration recommendation and reconsider the committee's role in issuing public position statements on bear spray product performance and efficacy.
2. That the IGBC fulfill its promise not to promote or endorse one commercial bear spray product over any other.

Greg provided the committee with a binder of 18 exhibits of supporting material for review and consideration.

***Decision – A smaller ad-hoc committee of Scott Jackson (replacing Wayne Kasworm), Rick Hotaling, Ellen Davis and 1-2 bear management specialists will evaluate the current IGBC recommendations of a 6-second minimum spray duration for bear spray and bear spray materials both printed and on the IGBC website and present the findings to the executive committee to make a decision on UDAP's motions at the IGBC winter meeting.**

Livestock Industry- Request for Representation on IGBC – Maggie Nutter

Maggie Nutter opened her statement to the IGBC, recognizing the concerns of the IGBC committee of growing the Committee and recognizing the MOU that is in place identifying IGBC executive committee members, to request additional seats at the table to represent the livestock agencies from three individual states and perhaps others seeking representations. Even with those challenges in mind, Maggie stated the 5 benefits to having the Livestock industry on the IGBC Executive Committee as follows:

1. Direct information from the IGBC to the State Livestock Agencies who have the means to pass that information on to the industry groups and livestock producers.

2. Ability of Livestock Agency to speak in timely manner as peers at the table vs the end of the meeting in public comment.
3. Ability to present concerns brought forward by farmers and ranchers.
4. Help to fulfill the obligation of the Montana Department of Livestock to protect livestock from predators.
5. Build relationships with State and Federal agencies whose management decisions will affect the agriculture community.

She also noted that there is a common goal shared by the IGBC and the Livestock Loss Board and Department of Livestock to prevent livestock losses to grizzly bears. Livestock depredation by bears means losses to the livestock producer but repeated killing often means the management removal of a grizzly bear.

In 2015 the number of head of livestock lost to grizzly bears doubled from 2014. Here in 2016 we are again seeing a large increase in the number of livestock lost. Cooperation between grizzly bear managers and livestock producers to reduce this number would be beneficial to both. Representative on the IGBC at the table vs a short public comment period at the end of each meeting would ensure that farm and ranch community issues on private lands are anticipated and discussed.

Maggie noted that in the Board of Livestock role in predator control and the loss of livestock included as follows:

2014 – 44 head

2015 – 90 head

Since May 31, 2016, 94 head

Human safety is another important aspect. She is asking the IGBC to consider having a livestock representative at the table.

George Edwards, Executive Director, MT Livestock Loss Board feels the focus is somewhat narrow at IGBC meetings. He sees an important role at the IGBC level. The Board of Livestock is charged with predator control and there is lots of expansion on to prairies.

Bitterroot Ecosystem Report – Gil Gale (for Julie King)

Gil gave a Bitterroot ecosystem update. He noted that the recent travel plan did not include grizzly bears because the Bitterroot ecosystem is unoccupied.

Gil talked about how the inability to delist grizzly bears affects the communities' view of inviting bears into the ecosystem. How serious is this commitment? How do we ramp things up?

Tony Hamilton noted that we need communities pushing up to make grizzly bear recovery successful. Leadership, energy, spark, etc., has to be locally based.

IDF&G is currently working with the Forest Service to get an idea of what transient bears are moving through the Bitterroot Ecosystem.

North Cascades Ecosystem – Karen Taylor-Goodrich

Karen let the group know that Bob Everitt is the new vice-chair for the NC ecosystem.

Karen noted the number #1 priority of the NC EIS is recovery of grizzly bears in the North Cascades. The NPS and USFWS are the signatories on the Record of Decision.

Funding for the EIS is coming from the NPS

The EIS is on schedule. In March there was public scoping. There were 500 attendees and 2,500 comments received. There were also lots of online comments

There will be an alternatives workshop in November. The NC ecosystem technical team is providing direct assistance. There is an interagency communications team, ongoing consultations, eternal outreach briefings and pre-draft EIS briefings for agencies.

- 30 programs conducted
- Media interviews
- Comprehensive briefings available on demand
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The Draft EIS is expected in late September, early October with a 60 day comment period and 7-8 public meetings in rural communities, intensive review and analysis with the ROD expected in the fall of 2017.

Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) update (see PPT presentation)

Chris Smith gave an update on the WMI/IGBC Challenge Cost Share Agreement. The current agreement expires September 30, 2016 and a new agreement for 2016-2021 has been approved by the IGBC for the next 5 years.

The new IGBC website is up and Chris asked the IGBC executive committee members and the I&E folks to take a look at it and provide feedback to either him or Colleen Matt.

Danielle Oylers has been hired for the SW MT Bear Safety Education position. This is a temporary position for the next two years and has been funded through agency and private funding. The position will be supervised by WMI.

Currently WMI has been able to secure \$122,000 towards the position but still needs another \$38,000 to fund full-time for the next 2 years.

WMI has capped their indirect costs at 10 percent for the Challenge Cost Share Agreement.

IGBC Winter Meeting

December 13-14, Missoula, MT (location to be determined)

*****END*****

