



Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

March 28, 2019

Dear subcommittee chairs,

At our winter 2018 meeting, the IGBC engaged in a substantive discussion about grizzly bear mortality trends in the Northern Continental Divide (NCDE) and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). The number of conflicts and mortalities have increased in these areas, primarily as a function of population recovery and expansion. Although this trend was expected, and mortalities have not exceeded sustainable levels to date, these issues have generated interest among a wide range of stakeholders and merit further attention.

The decision was made to ask IGBC Advisors Hilary Cooley, Kim Annis, and Frank van Manen to form a working group to identify if and how the subcommittees might address emerging trends regarding grizzly bear conflicts and mortalities.

The working group examined a 2009 report prepared by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team for the Yellowstone Grizzly Coordinating Committee (YGCC) that reviewed mortalities and conflict reduction efforts, and developed recommendations for reducing mortalities in the future (attachment).

A similar critical review of grizzly bear mortalities and current mortality reduction methods would be useful for the 4 occupied ecosystems, as well as the Bitterroot Ecosystem, and the working group suggested these subcommittees undertake such a review.

We anticipate that specific processes and outcomes will differ by ecosystem, so each subcommittee can develop approaches at their own discretion. At a minimum, the working group suggested the review should include recommendations on focal areas, resource needs, methods, and implementation strategies to reduce grizzly bear conflicts and mortalities. They proposed each subcommittee produce a preliminary list of priority issues for discussion at the summer 2019 IGBC meeting, a list of recommendations by winter 2019 that addresses those issues, and a final implementation strategy to be presented to the IGBC by summer 2020.

I recognize the considerable efforts that IGBC agencies have been taking to address human-bear conflicts. It is this collective effort and commitment over the last 35 years that has contributed to the recovery of this iconic species. The review of conflict issues proposed here is a continuation of that commitment and desire to use best practices for conflict prevention and resolution.

If you have any questions, please contact Hilary Cooley (hilary_cooley@fws.gov), Kim Annis (KAnnis@mt.gov), or Frank van Manen (fvanmanen@usgs.gov).

Sincerely,

Matt Hogan
IGBC Chair

cc: IGBC Executive Committee

