

# Summary of Editorial Changes to the NCDE Conservation Strategy

**Note:** This document will be periodically updated as the NCDE Conservation Strategy is edited, from first draft to final posting.

Updated through: **August 18, 2021**

## July 3, 2018:

- Changed throughout: the acronym for total reported and unknown mortality from 'TRUM' to 'TRU mortality'
- P. 7, Correction: USDA APHIS, Wildlife Services - signatory line should be "Western Regional Director" rather than "State Director."
- P. 20, Correction: last paragraph: "54" wilderness areas should read "5" wilderness areas.
- P. 159, Style change (lit cited): spacing is off between citations in middle of page.
- Added a suggested citation for this document:
  - NCDE Subcommittee. 2018. Conservation strategy for the grizzly bear in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. 326 pp.

## Clarifying Points

- Added throughout:
  - Components of the Conservation Strategy, including the underlying Tribal, Federal, and State plans and regulations, will be included in any Proposed Rule that the USFWS may publish relative to delisting the NCDE grizzly bear population, which would be available for public review and comment. In addition, MFWP is developing an Administrative Rule for its NCDE grizzly bear population management objectives that are described in the Conservation Strategy. There will be public review and comment opportunities included in this rulemaking process.
- Added the following sentence to the end of the first paragraph under Chapter 3 heading on page 10 (Preface) of the Strategy:
  - The use of the term 'objectives' in this Conservation Strategy does not change the way the terms "standard" or "guideline" are used or applied relative to each agency's land use management plan that provides the required regulatory direction when agency actions are implemented.

## August 31, 2018:

- P. 72: Clarified sentence to read, "**Designated** roads in timber sale areas will be closed after harvest is complete."

- P. 83, Correction: Removed Hog Heaven and Ferry Basin from list of identified crossing areas where there is hiding cover along major highways.
- P. 100, Correction: Helicopter logging is available at Burgess.
- P. 9, 51, 52, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 222, 237, 239, 240, 241: Rewrote sentences explaining Chapter 2 Demographic Monitoring for clarification and consistency.
  - Overall Objective description change to say, “Manage mortalities from all sources to support an estimated probability of at least 90% that the grizzly bear population within the DMA remains above 800 bears.”

**Previous version of objective explanation:**

- Independent female survival threshold: Using a six-year running average (see Glossary), maintain estimated annual survival of independent females within the DMA to: (a) a rate of  $\geq 0.90$ ; and (b) a rate at or above the minimum level consistent with a projected  $\geq 90\%$
- Independent female mortality threshold: Using a six-year running average, limit annual estimated number of total reported and unreported mortalities (TRU mortality, see Glossary) of independent females within the DMA to: (a) a number that is  $\leq 10\%$  of the number of independent females estimated within the DMA based on population modeling; and (b) a number that is at or below the maximum level consistent with a projected  $\geq 90\%$  probability that the population within the DMA will remain above 800 bears based on population modeling.
- Independent male mortality threshold: Using a six-year running average, limit annual estimated number of TRU mortality of independent males within the DMA to a number that is  $\leq 15\%$  of the number of independent males estimated within the DMA based on population modeling.

**Updated version:**

- Independent female survival threshold: Using a six-year running average (see Glossary), maintain estimated annual survival of independent females within the Demographic Monitoring Area of at least 90% and a rate at or above the minimum level consistent with a projected probability of at least 90% that the population within the DMA will remain above 800 grizzly bears based on population modeling.
- Independent female mortality threshold: Using a six-year running average, limit annual estimated number of total reported and unreported mortalities (TRU mortality, see Glossary) of independent females within the DMA to a number that is no more than 10% of the number of independent females estimated within the DMA based on population modeling and a number that is at or below the maximum consistent with a projected probability of at least 90% that the population within the DMA will remain above 800 bears based on population modeling.
- Independent male mortality threshold: Using a six-year running average, limit annual estimated number of TRU mortality of independent males within the DMA to a number that is no more than 15% of the number of independent males estimated within the DMA based on population modeling.

## **October 15, 2018:**

P. 237-238: Correction: Appendix 3 previously referred to Appendix 1 for the methods of estimating vital rates. It should have referred to Appendix 2 and has been corrected throughout Appendix 3.

## **May 16, 2019:**

P. 323: Correction: Fixed misspellings of “specific” and “mandatory.”

P. 318: Updates to Appendix 11 via BLM and approved by NCDE Subcommittee (April 2019):

- Remove “Draft” and “for Management Zone 1” from the title of Appendix 11 to accurately reflect that the Appendix contains standards for Zone 1, Zone 2, and PCA. Add “for Missoula, Butte and Lewistown Field Offices.”
- Add “for Zone 1” to the first header Road Density Standards to accurately reflect the Zone 1 strategy standards.
- Add header “Road Density Standards for PCA” before the 4th and 5th paragraph of Appendix 11 to accurately reflect that these management standards apply to PCA lands.
- Remove “Missoula Field Office” from paragraph 4 of Appendix 11 to accurately reflect that the PCA road density standards apply to all BLM lands with PCA, not just the Missoula Field Office. Begin the paragraph with “Baseline levels of secure core, OMRD and TMRD will be maintained in each BMU subunit.” Insert “each” before “field office” at the end of the paragraph.

P. 276: Correction: Fixed misspelling of “management” in Table 3.

## **Aug. 5, 2019:**

P. 71. Clarification: “In the South Fork Jocko Primitive Area, there will be no net increase of *total road density*.”

P. 83. Clarification. “*Designated* roads in timber sale areas will be closed after the harvest is complete.”

P. 44 & 79: References to “allotments” were updated on Flathead Indian Reservation lands to include the term “range units.”

## **Sept. 17, 2019:**

P. 100. Clarification: “*Designated* roads in timber sale areas will be closed after the harvest is complete.”

## **March 25, 2020:**

P. 64, Typo corrections, Table 4.

- Under PCA, Glacier NP square miles & km<sup>2</sup>
- Under PCA, BLM square miles are 41, not 141
- Under PCA, total Area is 8,926 and not 8.926

- Under Zone 2, total area is 7,280 and not 7.280

P. 65:

- Typo: Rational for the habitat Baseline in the PCA, 1st paragraph. Previous said "... (e.g. secure core, OMRD and total motorized route density (TMRD, see Glossary), ....". To match document format, updated to read, ... "e.g. secure core, open and total route density (OMRD and TMRD, see Glossary).
- Typo: Previous read, "PAC" and was fixed to "PCA"

P. 67: Clarification: As it previously read now, it is not correct in calculating secure core.

**Previous language:** Secure core is different by no longer deducting a buffered area around high-intensity-use non-motorized trails. In addition, Plum Creek Timber Company (now Weyerhaeuser Company) lands and routes are now considered private. Using a computerized GIS analysis process, Federal, State, Tribal, and private roads are considered by buffering them 0.31 miles (500 meters) when identifying secure core, but only Federal lands are included when calculating the percent secure core in the BMU subunit. Additionally, private roads are not included in calculation of OMRD and TMRD.

**New language:** Secure core does not deduct a buffered area around high-intensity-use non-motorized trails. In addition, Plum Creek Timber Company (now Weyerhaeuser Company) lands and routes are now considered private, as the amount of land acreage is substantially less due to Montana Legacy Project land transfers. Using a computerized GIS analysis process, primary and secondary federal/state highways, county, city, and private roads, as well as open, signed or gated federal state and tribal roads and open motorized trails, are buffered 0.31 miles (500 meters) when identifying secure core, but only federal, state, and tribal lands are included when calculating the percent secure core in a BMU subunit. Private lands are not included in calculations of secure core, OMRD, or TMRD. Once these lands have been excluded, the minimum size criteria for an area of secure core (3.91 mi<sup>2</sup>(10.12km<sup>2</sup>)) is applied. Additionally, private roads are not included in calculation of OMRD and TMRD. Appendix 6 clarifies the process for motorized access density and secure core analyses.

P. 68: Clarification: Confusing language in fourth bullet of "Motorized Access Objective on Federal Lands in the PCA"

**Previous language:**

- 5% temporary increase in OMRD baseline plus 5%
- 3% temporary increase in TMRD baseline plus 3%
- 2% temporary decrease for secure core (secure core baseline minus 2%)

**New language:**

- 5% temporary increase in OMRD (OMRD baseline plus 5%)
- 3% temporary increase in TMRD (TMRD baseline plus 3%)
- 2% temporary decrease for secure core (secure core baseline minus 2%)

Clarification:

**Previous language:**

- If a project cannot occur within the allowable levels of administrative use (six trips/week OR a 30-day window) on restricted ...

**New language:**

- If a project cannot occur within the allowable levels of administrative use (six (three round trips) trips per week OR a single 30-day window per year) on restricted ...

P. 71: Update:

**Previous language:** As a result of completion of the land transfers, the remaining parties that are bound to the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement are the USFS, DNRC, and USFWS. In the foreseeable future, we anticipate that the Swan Valley Conservation Agreement will no longer be needed and will be dissolved. DNRC would then manage their lands in the Swan Valley in accordance with their HCP (DNRC, 2011). The USFS would manage in accordance with the forest plans, applying the same management direction to NFS lands in the Swan Valley as elsewhere in the PCA.

**New language:** As a result of completion of the land transfers, the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement has been dissolved. DNRC now manages their lands in the Swan Valley in accordance with their HCP (DNRC, 2011). The USFS manages in accordance with the forest plan, applying the same management direction to NFS lands in the Swan Valley as elsewhere in the PCA.

P. 105: Typo: HLC, not NLC

P. 121: Clarification:

Previous language: The NF and BLM Resource Management Plans, ....

New language: The NF Land Management Plans, BLM Resource Management Plans, ...

P. 122: Typo: Schafer Meadows, not Shafer Meadows

P. 140: Typo: Missing space in paragraph six

P. 141: Update:

**Previous language:** The Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement is not a plan but is a collaborative document that was developed in 1997 to coordinate management of multiple use lands now largely managed by the USFS and the DNRC. Chapter 3 addresses more detailed information about how lands in the Swan Valley will be managed in the foreseeable future.

**New language:** DNRC withdrew from the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement on August 3, 2018, and on March 15, 2019, the Flathead National Forest terminated the agreement. Chapter 3 addresses more detailed information about how lands in the Swan Valley will be managed in the foreseeable future.

- P. 149: Clarification: Added, “signed” to secure core definition.
- P. 265: Typos, “procedures”
- P. 266: Clarification, removed “Arc/Info” because it is no longer being used.
- P. 266: Typo, “utilized”
- P. 267: Typo, “decommissioned”
- P. 268: Typo, “motorized”
- P. 270: Typo: “Analyzed”
- P. 271: Typo: “Reservation”
- P. 273: Clarification: Made “NCDE Conservation Strategy Analyses” title a font size 14, still bold
  - Added “There are two sections to this topic” to first sentence.
  - Typo: “Utilized” and added, “during the time” afterward.
  - Typo: “Motorized”
  - Clarification: “Although highways, county, city, or private roads are open to public motorized wheeled use, these routes...”
  - Clarification: “motorized wheeled use”
- P. 274: Clarification: Added, “sign” before “or gate” and “impassable” roads for acceptable routes
- P. 275: Clarification:
  - Previous language:**
    - 5% temporary increase in OMRD baseline plus 5%
    - 3% temporary increase in TMRD baseline plus 3%
    - 2% temporary decrease for secure core (secure core baseline minus 2%)
  - New language:**
    - 5% temporary increase in OMRD (OMRD baseline plus 5%)
    - 3% temporary increase in TMRD (TMRD baseline plus 3%)
    - 2% temporary decrease for secure core (secure core baseline minus 2%)
- P. 276: Typo: “Motorized”
- P. 252 and 287: Typo: “Route Biggs”

### **Aug. 18, 2021**

- Improved formatting throughout
- Corrected typos throughout
- Clarified throughout: Federal (FS & BLM) have allotments, DNRC and Blackfoot Tribe uses leases, CSKT uses range units, and MFWP uses cooperative land use agreements. Added “/range units/leases” next to any mention of “allotment” and replaced these correct terms where “allotment” was misused

p. 76: Updated headline to “Livestock Grazing Administration”

p. 77: Updated Table 6 with new info

p. 145: clarified “26 lb (NRCS) or 30 lb (USFS)” under the animal unit definition

p. 146: clarified definition of grazing allotment/lease: “a designated area of land that is available for livestock grazing and is represented on a map. The term allotment is used for federal lands. The term lease is used for DNRC & Blackfoot Tribal lands, range units for CKT lands, and cooperative land use agreements for MFWP. Allotment is something completely different in tribal lands. A grazing

allotment/lease/range unit can include lands not under the jurisdiction of the issuing agency. Permits are issued for the use of allotments/leases or portions of allotments/leases.”

p. 273: Added analysis process to appropriate section and deleted from page 289.

“Within the PCA, it was decided to keep the same process that was utilized during the time when the grizzly bear was listed with 3 differences:

1. High use trails will no longer be buffered and excluded from secure core (See Chapter 1).
2. Weyerhaeuser (formerly Plum Creek Timber Company) lands and routes will be considered as private lands (explained earlier in this appendix).
3. With grizzly bear management situations no longer being used, the lands and route densities on Management Situation (MS-3) lands are now included in OMRD and TRD calculations.”

p. 274: Added clarification: “It does not include routes that have been treated in such a way as to be impassable to all types of motorized vehicles.”

p. 274: Added clarification: “Acceptable routes in secure core: roads that are restricted with permanent physical barriers (not signs or gates), roads impassable to all motorized vehicles, decommissioned, or obliterated roads, and/or non-motorized trails.”

p. 274: Added clarification: “small PVT roads – typically the permittee of a Special Use permitted road does not have road management restrictions. As a result, the road access is managed by the permittee, therefore the road is classified as “small PVT roads” for the analyses.”