

2009-2014 Five-Year Work Plan/Accomplishments

North Cascades Management Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Planned actions Item 1, Restoration EIS for the NCE:

- Dependent upon adequate funding and state and federal support, complete by December 31, 2014, an EIS for the North Cascades that involves the public in the decision on how to recover this population. Estimated cost \$1.7 million total. With agency contributed personnel, cost is \$1.06 million.
- Upon completion of the EIS process, develop a Record of Decision (ROD) and have it signed. Implement the ROD with funded conservation actions in cooperation with our British Columbia partners. Cost will not be known until decision is made.

Accomplishments Item 1, Restoration EIS for the NCE:

- The intent to initiate an EIS was made public in August 2014. The NPS and USFWS will be co-leads for the EIS, with the USFS and WDFW as cooperating agencies. Internal scoping meetings were held in October 2014.
- A contract was awarded by the NPS for roughly \$550,000 to complete the EIS. The EIS is being funded primarily through the NPS Environmental Quality Division. Additional funds are available through a grant from the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission.

Planned actions Item 2, Outreach:

- Enhance cooperative efforts with local communities by working closely in partnership with local residents and county governments to build local support and understanding about grizzly recovery and ecosystem health.

Accomplishments Item 2, Outreach:

- The North Cascades Subcommittee established a partnership with the Western Wildlife Outreach Project (then called the Grizzly Bear Outreach Program) in 2002. The objectives of the Western Wildlife Outreach Project are: 1) gauge the knowledge and opinions of people living, working, and recreating in the North Cascades with respect to bear recovery, behavior, and ecology; 2) reduce opposition to grizzly bear recovery that is based on incorrect information and unwarranted fears; 3) provide opportunities for people living in grizzly bear recovery areas to express their concerns about wildlife and recovery; 4) educate people to reduce the potential for encounters between grizzly bears, black bears and humans that result in a threat to human safety or wildlife mortality; and 5) provide improved access to accurate information about bears, recovery, and conservation processes.
- The WWO also completed and distributed the booklet "Living with Bears in Washington State" a high quality publication providing information on both black and grizzly bears. Information includes identification tips, sanitation recommendations, grizzly bear reporting procedures, and bear smart community programs. The brochure was revised in 2013 under the auspices of the IGBC, as part of a contract with the Wildlife Management Institute.

- Through support from IGBC I & E funding and other supporters a trailer, similar to the one used by Center for Wildlife Information, was purchased in 2010. It is fully equipped and available for educational purposes at various events throughout the state. The trailer has been used at locations such as the Cabelas' Great Outdoors Event in Olympia and the Pullayup Fair. Other educational programs were held in many locations throughout the ecosystem as well.
- During 2013-14 the WWO took over operations of the Bear Education Trailer when funds for staffing it with federal employees were no longer available.

Planned actions Item 3, Genetic analyses Part 1:

- Monitor key back country areas in the north end of the ecosystem using baited hair collection sites and automatic cameras to document presence of bears. Estimated annual cost \$90,000. FWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Office could possibly cover much of these costs in 2010. They would then provide the training and crew.

Accomplishments Item 3, Genetic analyses Part 1:

- The USFWS Recovery Fund (Lacey Office), Seattle City Light, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, North Cascades National Park, the Western Transportation Institute and the USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Office all contributed to efforts to survey for presence of grizzly bears in the North Cascades during 2010-2012. The priority areas surveyed included backcountry areas in the Pasayten Wilderness (northeast portion), North Cascades National Park, Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness, Alpine Lakes Wilderness, and Glacier Peak Wilderness.
- Approximately 23% of the ecosystem was sampled using the same protocol employed in the Bitterroot Ecosystem. Sites were distributed with emphasis given to remote areas in excellent grizzly bear habitat. Many hair collection sites were equipped with remote cameras.
- This project was dovetailed with a preexisting black bear project in order to best leverage limited funds. Including the preexisting project, overall 604 sites were sampled and 619 individual black bears detected. No grizzly bears were detected.
- Remote cameras were set at 40% of the sampling sites for 4,585 camera nights. No grizzly bears were observed. Other species of interest detected by the cameras included 5 wolves, 3 wolverines and 2 lynx.
- Total cost of the 2010-2012 project (which was targeting grizzly bears) was \$320,000. Of this amount approximately \$105,000 funded genetic analyses.
- An additional 9 sites were sampled in an area just north of State Route 20 during 2014. All of these sites had remote cameras and while they captured other species of interest (wolverine, wolf, lynx), they did not detect a grizzly bear.

Planned actions Item 3, Genetic analyses Part 2:

- As possible, apply enhanced monitoring via DNA hair snags, automatic cameras, and follow-up on reported observations to assess the presence of grizzly bears along the international boundary of Washington and British Columbia between the Selkirks and the North Cascades. Estimate \$15,000/year to apply the same approach used to date in the ecosystem to follow up

on reported observations. There could also be a similar approach to the action above for a more systematic sampling. That could be substantially higher, possibly \$50,000.

Accomplishments Item 3, Genetic analyses Part 2:

- All efforts were focused on the NCE.

Planned actions Item 4, Report follow-up:

- Continue to follow up on all reliable reports of grizzly bear presence. Seek funding to support a crew of technicians to follow up the most credible reports with techniques that obtain samples for DNA analysis or photographic record.

Accomplishments Item 4, Report follow-up:

- Reports of possible grizzly bears were followed up when received. There were no credible reports.
- A page on the Western Wildlife Outreach's website provides another venue for the public to report possible grizzly bear observations. Reports submitted to the website are automatically forwarded to members of the Technical Team for evaluation.

Planned actions Item 5, Access management Part 1:

- Adopt and implement access management standards. Interim guidance was issued by the three forests (now 2) in 1997. This will be completed through the Forest Plan revision on the Okanogan-Wenatchee. The Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie NF will need to initiate some level of NEPA to incorporate standards into forest direction, since their forest plan revision is not scheduled as yet. Cost will depend on final standards incorporated into the Okanogan-Wenatchee NF plan.

Accomplishments Item 5, Access management Part 1:

- Interim guidance remains in place on both forests.
- There is no timeline for release of the draft EIS for the O-W NF Plan Revision.
- Funding is not available for the MBS.

Planned actions Item 5, Access management Part 2:

- Re-evaluate core areas and road management in the western part of the recovery area (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF).

Accomplishments Item 5, Access management Part 2:

- The MBS has updated their road layer, and trails will be updated in 2015. Core area reevaluation will follow this process.

Planned actions Item 6, Sanitation:

- Expand the NPS food storage requirements to other federal lands in the recovery area.

Accomplishments Item 6, Sanitation:

- No progress was made to expand food storage orders to other federal lands.
- The Okanogan-Wenatchee NF and the Regional Forester currently require proper storage of attractants by all contractors, permittees, and employees. Direction is also in place to use wildlife resistant facilities when replacing existing garbage facilities.
- As of 2013 North Cascades National Park requires the use of bear-resistant canisters in a number of backcountry areas where other means of proper food storage do not exist. The park maintains a canister loan program for backcountry use. Many frontcountry campgrounds are equipped with bear-resistant food storage lockers and most waste receptacles are bear-resistant.
- The park and forests all continue to increase the availability of bear-resistant waste receptacles and food storage lockers throughout the ecosystem, with an emphasis on the northern end.
- In 2014 a "Wildlife Wise" agreement was made between the North Cascades National Park and the North Cascades Institute, whose Environmental Learning Center is within the park. The agreement emphasizes increased awareness among staff and ELC guests about measures they will take to minimize risk of conflict with bears and other wildlife.

2015 Work Plan

North Cascades Management Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Planned actions Item 1, Restoration EIS for the NCE:

- The NPS and USFWS will jointly publish a Notice of Intent to initiate an EIS in the North Cascades in early 2015, examining alternatives for how to recover this population.
 - Public scoping efforts will take place early in 2015.
 - The NCE Technical Team will provide support to the NPS contractor to assist as possible with document preparation and public review.

Planned actions Item 2, Outreach:

- Work closely in partnership with local residents and county governments to build local support and understanding about grizzly recovery and ecosystem health.
- Continue to work with and support the efforts of the Western Wildlife Outreach (formally the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project) to aid in outreach to local communities.

Planned actions Item 3, Report follow-up:

- Continue to follow up on all reliable reports of grizzly bear presence. Seek funding to support a crew of technicians to follow up the most credible reports with techniques that obtain samples for DNA analysis or photographic record.

Planned actions Item 4, Access management Part 1:

- Explore means to formalize access management on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, through a NEPA process. This may take the form of amendments to existing forest plans until forest plans can be completed. Interim guidance was issued by the forests in 1997.

Planned actions Item 4 Access management Part 2:

- Re-evaluate core areas and road management in the western part of the recovery area (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF), after trails data have been updated.

Planned actions Item 5, Sanitation:

- Expand the NPS food storage requirements to other federal lands in the recovery area. We propose reviewing existing food storage orders on forests in other ecosystems.

2015-2020 Five-Year Work Plan
North Cascades Management Subcommittee
of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Planned actions Item 1, Restoration EIS for the NCE:

- Complete an EIS by December 31, 2017, for the North Cascades that involves the public in the decision on how to recover this population.
- Upon completion of the EIS process, develop a Record of Decision (ROD) and have it signed early in 2018.
- Implement the ROD with funded conservation actions in cooperation with our British Columbia partners. Cost will not be known until decision is made.

Planned actions Item 2, Outreach:

- Enhance cooperative efforts with local communities by working closely in partnership with local residents and county governments to build local support and understanding about grizzly recovery and ecosystem health.

Planned actions Item 3, Genetic analyses:

- As possible, apply enhanced monitoring via DNA hair snags, automatic cameras, and follow-up on reported observations to assess the presence of grizzly bears in and adjacent to the North Cascades Ecosystem.

Planned actions Item 4, Report follow-up:

- Continue to follow up on all reliable reports of grizzly bear presence. Seek funding to support a crew of technicians to follow up the most credible reports with techniques that obtain samples for DNA analysis or photographic record.

Planned actions Item 5, Access management Part 1:

- Explore means to formalize access management on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, through a NEPA process. This may take the form of amendments to existing forest plans until forest plans can be completed.
 - Interim guidance was issued by the forests in 1997.

Planned actions Item 5 Access management Part 2:

- Re-evaluate core areas and road management in the western part of the recovery area (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF).

Planned actions Item 6, Sanitation:

- Expand the NPS food storage requirements to other federal lands in the recovery area. We propose reviewing existing food storage orders on forests in other ecosystems.

2014 Work Plan/Accomplishments
North Cascades Management Subcommittee
of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Planned actions Item 1, Restoration EIS for the NCE:

- Initiate an EIS in the North Cascades that involves the public in the decision on how to recover this population. The initiation date will influence completion and the entire process is expected to take from 3-4 years
- Estimated cost \$1.4 million total; with agency contributed personnel, cost is \$0.8 million.
- Continue to work with NPS and other agencies to secure adequate funding, including "in kind" staff support, to accomplish EIS process.
- Upon completion of the EIS process, develop a Record of Decision (ROD) and have it signed. Implement the ROD with funded conservation actions in cooperation with our British Columbia partners. Cost will not be known until decision is made.

Accomplishments Item 1, Restoration EIS for the NCE:

- The intent to initiate an EIS was made public in August 2014. The NPS and USFWS will be co-leads for the EIS, with the USFS and WDFW as cooperating agencies. Internal scoping meetings were held in October.
- The EIS is being funded primarily through the NPS Environmental Quality Division. Additional funds are available through a grant from the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission.
- Forest Service Region 6 is funding 1/3 FTE (Forest Service biologist) for technical support.

Planned actions Item 2, Outreach:

- Enhance cooperative efforts with local communities by working closely in partnership with local residents and county governments to build local support and understanding about grizzly recovery and ecosystem health.
- Strategize for I&E capabilities for the interim period before an EIS is initiated. Recruit a Public Information Officer to serve as the Chair of the Information & Education Subcommittee. This would likely require assigning these duties to a PIO from one of the participating agencies.
- Continue to work with and support the efforts of the Western Wildlife Outreach (formally the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project) to enhance cooperative efforts with local communities by working closely in partnership with local residents and county governments to build local support and understanding about grizzly recovery and ecosystem health. The project objectives are: to reduce opposition to grizzly bear recovery that is based on incorrect information and unwarranted fears; provide opportunities for people who live in and recreate or work in grizzly bear recovery areas to express their concerns about recovery; educate people to minimize the potential for encounters between grizzly bears

and humans that result in a threat to human safety or wildlife mortality; and provide improved access to accurate information about bear recovery and conservation processes.

Accomplishments Item 2, Outreach:

- The new Chief of Interpretation and Education for the North Cascades National Park Service Complex, Denise Shultz, is the new chair of the NCE's I&E subcommittee vice Doug Zimmer. She has also taken on the role of Communications Lead for the NCE Restoration EIS.
- Funding was granted by the IGBC for the WWO to continue bringing the bear education trailer to events throughout the state.

Planned actions Item 3, Genetic analyses:

- Continue to survey for grizzly bear presence, but on a much smaller scale. There are some locations that have not been surveyed that we hope to cover in FY2014.
- Complete genetic analysis of data collected in 2010-2012 in key back country areas in the north end of the ecosystem using baited hair collection sites and automatic cameras to document presence of bears. Finalize report.

Accomplishments Item 3, Genetic analyses:

- In 2014 nine hair corrals were deployed in the SW corner of the Pasayten wilderness. There were no grizzly bear detections.
- Genetic analyses were completed for the 2010-2012 survey, with no grizzly bears detected. Final report was summarized at the Fall Meeting. The report will be submitted for publication in the near future.

Planned actions Item 4, Report follow-up:

- Continue to follow up on all reliable reports of grizzly bear presence. Seek funding to support a crew of technicians to follow up the most credible reports with techniques that obtain samples for DNA analysis or photographic record.

Accomplishments Item 4, Report follow-up:

- Reports of possible grizzly bears were followed up when received. There were no credible reports.

Planned actions Item 5, Access management Part 1:

- Adopt and implement access management standards. Interim guidance was issued by the three forests (now 2) in 1997.
- The interim guidance will be replaced by the revised Forest Plan on the Okanogan-Wenatchee NF. A draft EIS is scheduled to be released in spring 2014.
- Work to secure funding for the Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie NF to complete the appropriate NEPA to amend their existing forest plan to adopt and implement access management

standards to replace the interim guidance issued by the three forests (now 2) in 1997. The amendment would make the forest compatible with the rest of the ecosystem.

Accomplishments Item 5, Access management Part 1:

- Interim guidance remains in place on both Forests.
- There is no timeline for release of the draft EIS for the O-W NF Plan Revision.
- Funding is not available for the MBS.

Planned actions Item 5, Access management Part 2:

- Re-evaluate core areas and road management in the western part of the recovery area (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF).

Accomplishments Item 5, Access management Part 2:

- The MBS has updated their road layer, and trails will be updated in 2015. Core area reevaluation will follow this process.

Planned actions Item 6, Sanitation:

- Expand the NPS food storage requirements to other federal lands in the recovery area. We propose reviewing existing food storage orders on national forests in other ecosystems.

Accomplishments Item 6, Sanitation:

- No progress was made to expand food storage orders to other federal lands.
- A "Wildlife Wise" agreement was made between the North Cascades National Park and the North Cascades Institute, whose Environmental Learning Center is within the park. The agreement emphasizes increased awareness among staff and ELC guests about measures they will take to minimize risk of conflict with bears and other wildlife.

Travel Management Planning

The Travel Management Rule, published in 2005, directs each national forest to designate roads, trails and areas that are open to motor vehicle use on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM). Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside-designated areas would then be prohibited.

The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest initiated a public process on 2007 to complete an environmental impact statement addressing motorized use on the forest. Several alternatives have been developed and public comments analyzed. The Forest is switching gears to an EA rather than EIS. It is scheduled to be completed in June 2015. The final analysis on the effect to core has not been completed. It appears some BMUs will gain small amounts of core area.

The Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is in the process of a Minimum Roads Analysis. Public workshops for Sustainable Roads were held in 2013 and comments from these have

been analyzed. The MBS has updated their road layer and trails will be updated in 2015.
Geospatial analyses with respect to effects on core area will follow completion of the trails data.