



**Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee**  
**Winter Meeting Notes**  
December 13-14, 2016  
Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown, Missoula, MT



**Welcome & Introductions:** IGBC Chair Jim Unsworth opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting and to Missoula.

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

Jim Unsworth, Jodi Bush (for Matt Hogan), Dave Schmid, Ken McDonald, Rick Hotaling, Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Tony Hamilton, Jim Hayden (for Ed Schriever), Patrick Walsh, Eric Rickerson (for Terry Rabot), Joe Alexander (for RF Region 2), Julie King, Jim Williams, Frank van Manen (for Claudia Regan), Tim Wooley (for Scott Talbott) Becki Heath, Kristine Lee (for Nora Rasure R-4), Mary Erickson and Mary Farnsworth.

IGBC Advisors Wayne Kasworm, Scott Jackson and Frank 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:** Historically, the IGBC recommended that bear sprays have a minimum spray duration of six seconds. Recently, however, through the recommendation of a work group (Scott Jackson, Rick Hotaling, Jamie Jonkel, John Waller, and Ellen Davis) assigned to review the history and current IGBC bear spray guidelines, the IGBC Executive Committee unanimously agreed to adopt new guidelines that recommend the use of any EPA-registered bear spray product without reference to spray duration. The IGBC recognized that existing EPA bear spray registration standards are adequate for public safety and that consumers should select an EPA-registered bear spray and follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use of their selected bear spray product.

They also emphasized a re-commitment to not promote or endorse one bear spray over another and will continue to be diligent in that effort.

Specifics of the approved motions to be completed as follows:

- **DUE DATE:** By the end of February. **WHO:** Scott Jackson. **ACTION:** Rewrite the IGBC bear spray guidelines without reference to a numerical criterion for spray duration, but rather emphasizing repeatability;
- **DUE DATE:** By the end of February. **WHO:** Scott Jackson. **ACTION:** Write a letter to EPA asking them to notify the IGBC directly if their current registration standards for approving bear spray change;
- Continue due diligence to not promote or endorse one bear spray over another and display another disclaimer on the IGBC website that the IGBC does not promote or endorse one bear spray over another.

**DECISION:** Chris Smith, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) was asked by the IGBC Executive Committee at the IGBC summer meeting in Bonners Ferry to review, modify and

**synchronize IGBC guiding documents including the IGBC Charter, MOU and Five-year Action plan. After consulting with the FS G&A Specialist, it was determined that we could forgo the MOU and incorporate any agency specific requirements from the MOU into the IGBC Charter. It was agreed by the executive committee to discontinue the IGBC MOU.**

**It was also noted that we need a common format on the Five-Year Action Plan for both the Executive Committee and the Subcommittees.**

**Chris made a presentation at the winter meeting with his modifications to the documents and asked the IGBC executive committee for some clarity and guidance for further edits. Additional discussion and decisions are documented in this agenda topic below.**

**An Ad-Hoc Committee consisting of Chris Smith, Tony Hamilton, Ken McDonald, and the new USFWS Grizzly Bear Coordinator will continue work on the IGBC guiding documents.**

**The IGBC Charter and Five-year Action Plan were sent out to the IGBC Executive Committee Members shortly after the winter meeting for review and comment by the Executive Committee back to Chris Smith with the following due dates:**

- **DUE DATE: FEBRUARY 15, comments/edits on the IGBC DRAFT Charter/IGBC Five-Year Action Plan to Chris Smith.**
- **Revised Charter will be out to the Executive Committee for review by April 15**
- **Final Charter presented by Chris Smith at IGBC summer meeting, June 2017**
- **March/April/May ad-hoc committee continue working on Five-Year Action Plan**
- **May 30, Revised Draft Five-Year Action Plan out to Executive Committee for review**
- **Final Five-Year Action Plan presented at IGBC summer meeting, June 2017.**

**DECISION: There were some last minute wording changes that were resolved by the agencies and the YES CS strategy was unanimously approved and signed by the appropriate IGBC Executive Committee members.**

**DECISION: The IGBC agreed to communicate to the USFWS in writing strongly encouraging them to prioritize the NCDE delisting and provide the necessary resources and complete the NCDE Conservation Strategy.**

**ACTION: Ken McDonald will draft a letter to the USFWS by the end of December for the IGBC Chair signature.**

#### **IGBC I&E Update – Gregg Losinski, IGBC I&E Chair (see PowerPoint Presentation)**

Gregg gave an update on the I&E program to the executive committee and announced the IGBC I&E funding awarded for 2017. We had \$36,000 dollars available again this year and received a total of 22 proposals totaling \$59,920.00.

Gregg recently returned from Slovakia on a Fulbright Scholarship doing bear information and education and shared some of his time and experiences there.

**WMI/IGBC Challenge Cost Share Agreement Update – Chris Smith (see PowerPoint Presentation)**

Chris gave an update to the IGBC on the Challenge Cost Share Agreement the IGBC has with Wildlife Management Institute (WMI).

Challenge Cost Share Agreements are renewed every 5 years if both parties want to continue in the partnership. The first agreement with WMI was from 2011-2016. The IGBC agreed to continue another 5-year agreement with WMI which was recently signed and in effect from 2017-2021.

The base funding from the IGBC to WMI is \$51,400.

The annual IGBC I&E funding that WMI help to administer varies from year to year.

WMI is currently working on a new Food Storage regulation requirements interactive map that is expected to be completed soon. The map depicts the western states where food storage orders exist. This is an interactive map where you pick the location you are going and a pop up window shows you the actual food storage order. **UPDATE: The food storage interactive map has been completed and links of a tutorial slide show and the map were sent out to the IGBC executive committee.**

WMI continues to work with the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center (GWDC) in West Yellowstone through an agreement to help leverage grizzly bear resistant container testing fees. Currently about 50 percent of the overall testing fees received by the GWDC come to WMI to help expand support from IGBC.

Printed materials developed by WMI through the IGBC/WMI agreement include more IGBC bear safety coloring books and helping the NCDE update food storage signs.

Chris updated the committee on the SW Montana Bear Safety Education Program and highlighted the current program and needs as follows:

- Two-year program,
- Consistent bear-safety education messaging and year-round public outreach to hunters, etc.,
- Reduce human-bear conflicts,
- Position held by WMI contract employee and co-located on the Custer/Gallatin NF
- Raised \$122,500 but still need \$38,000 to cover salary through the summer of 2018

Chris outlined the priorities for WMI's program of work for FY17

- Continue to manage website content
- Continue to support bear-resistant container testing program
- Reassess and update as needed the comprehensive strategy for information, education and outreach
- Continue to manage the SW Montana Bear Safety Education Program
- Administer IGBC I&E 2017 funding

**Bear Spray Review Findings and Recommendations – Scott Jackson**

In 2016, UDAP Industries retained law firm of Crowley Fleck PLLP (Greg Dorrington), out of Helena, MT as its government relations counsel to present its concerns to the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) regarding the IGBC's bear spray recommendations and the appearance of implied endorsement

of another bear spray manufacturer. Greg Dorrington presented UDAP's position at the IGBC summer meeting in June 2016 in Bonners Ferry, ID, and asked the IGBC to take swift and appropriate action in response to UDAP's concerns.

UDAP made two Motion requests dated June 21, 2016 for the IGBC to review and consider along with supporting documentation and exhibits for each of the motions.

Motion Request No.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.***

Motion Request No. 2 – ***That the IGBC fulfill its promise not to promote or endorse one commercial bear spray product over another.***

The decision by the Executive Committee at the summer meeting in Bonners Ferry was to convene a work group to review UDAP's concerns and 1) evaluate the current IGBC recommendations of a 6-second minimum spray duration for bear spray; 2) evaluate bear spray materials both printed and on the IGBC website; and 3) present the findings to the IGBC Executive Committee to make a decision on UDAP's motions at the IGBC winter meeting. The bear spray work group committee comprised of Scott Jackson –USFS; Ellen Davis – IGBC; Rick Hotaling – BLM; Jamie Jonkel – MFWP and John Waller – NPS made the following recommendations to the Executive Committee:

**UDAP Motion Request No. 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.*

**Work Group Recommendations to IGBC:**

*That the IGBC re-write its bear spray recommendations/guidelines without reference to a numerical spray duration criterion and that the IGBC continue to recommend use of EPA-registered bear spray products.*

*That the IGBC write to EPA's Biopesticides Division informing them that IGBC's recommendation to the public to use EPA-registered bear spray products is based on EPA's current registration standards, which we believe are adequate, and to request that EPA confer with IGBC if EPA considers changing these standards in the future.*

**UDAP Motion Request No. 2:**

*That the IGBC promise not to promote or endorse one commercial bear spray product over any other.*

**Work Group Recommendations to IGBC:**

*The IGBC does not promote or endorse any one commercial bear spray product over another. To avoid the appearance of favoritism, the IGBC has removed references to bear spray product names and images from materials produced by IGBC and from the IGBC website. The IGBC will continue to be vigilant and conscious of this to ensure neutrality in the future. We recommend that the IGBC add another disclaimer to its website stating that it does not promote or endorse one brand of bear spray over any other.*

**Decision: The IGBC Executive Committee unanimously agreed to the recommendations of the work group and to rewrite and adopt new guidelines that recommend the use of any EPA-registered bear spray product without reference to spray duration. The IGBC recognized that existing EPA bear spray registration standards are adequate for public safety and that consumers should select a bear spray from those EPA registered by EPA and follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use of their selected bear spray product.**

**They also emphasized a re-commitment to not promote or endorse one bear spray over another and will continue to be vigilant in that effort.**

**Specifics of the approved motions to be completed as follows:**

- **DUE DATE: By February 15. WHO: Scott Jackson. ACTION: Write a letter to EPA asking them to notify the IGBC directly if their current registration standards for approving bear spray change;**
- **DUE DATE: By the end of February. WHO: Scott Jackson. ACTION: Rewrite the IGBC bear spray guidelines without reference to a numerical criterion for spray duration but rather emphasizing repeatability;**
- **Continue due diligence to not promote or endorse one bear spray over another; and display another disclaimer on the IGBC website that the IGBC does not promote or endorse one bear spray over another.**

**IGBC Inter-Document Coordination Review (IGBC Charter, MOU & Five-Year Action Plan) – Chris Smith**

Chris Smith was asked at the IGBC summer meeting in Bonners Ferry to lead a document coordination effort, revising the IGBC Draft Charter and then ensuring all IGBC documents are consistent in desired objectives and working outcomes including the IGBC Charter, MOU and IGBC Executive Committee five-year action plan, working in conjunction with Ken McDonald and Ellen Davis.

**DECISION: After consulting with the FS G&A Specialist, it was determined that we could forego the MOU and incorporate any agency specific requirements from the MOU into the IGBC Charter. It was agreed by the executive committee to discontinue the IGBC MOU.**

Chris made a presentation and asked the IGBC executive committee for some clarity and guidance.

**The key discussion points regarding the IGBC Charter included:**

What is the role of IGBC after delisting?  
What is the relationship of the executive committee to ecosystems after delisting?  
What is the decision making process?

**The key discussion points regarding the IGBC Five-Year Action Plan**

What is the decision making process and timeframe?

In regards to the YES Conservation Strategy it was noted it is a policy level decision and needed to be approved by the IGBC Executive Committee.

It was also noted that another role of the IGBC Executive Committee is implementation of the recovery plan.

General discussion around the IGBC guiding documents included:

Tony Hamilton referenced the umbrella chart and suggested adding monitoring to research, adaptive management cycle, science monitoring, demographic criteria, monitoring the social side as well, need consistency across sections of roles and responsibilities, funding example.

Recovery Plan – Demographic criteria add into documents.

Chris Savage – SCY

Need communication across interface.

Subcommittee level to executive committee level continued

How are things communicated?

Need some mechanisms in place to have better communication and dialogue between the two entities

Rick Hotaling

Governance section – no legal requirement but not voluntary either.

Mention purpose in MOU

Define better decision making (ie; administrative functions)

Jodi Bush

Need a table to show listing and delisting

Good illustration

Good add to the Charter

Jim Unsworth weighed in on a request to add additional executive committee members from NGOs and other requests and noted that the members on the committee were established by the original MOU. We would need to redo the MOU and the original language but that becomes a very slippery slope. The people already on the committee are already representatives of the people.

At the subcommittee level, county commissioners added to the committee fulfil that role.

### **Five-Year Action Plan comments**

Consolidated five-year plan

Executive Committee/Subcommittees

Lots of actions but not clear priorities in subcommittee plans

Not clear direction from the Executive Committee on where they want the subcommittees in 5 years.

2018-2022 consolidated plan

In the interim period, the executive committee will provide specific direction to the subcommittees during the annual accomplishment reports.

Becki Heath asked what the subcommittees need from the Executive Committee in the next 12 months. Can we give some feedback now?

Chris Smith added that would be very helpful to give some clarity and guidance.

The Executive Committee appointed an ad-hoc committee to help Chris Smith work on and finalize the Five-Year Action Plan.

The group brainstormed future visioning ideas on what the Five-Year plan could contain as follows:

- Climate change resiliency
- Linkages/migration North
- Reestablish linkage
- Core security/investigate and support

- De-emphasize human use of backcountry
- Mountain bike/back country
- Heli mountain biking becoming very popular
- Ethics/Science behind grizzly bear hunting
- Need IGBC to show some leadership, hunting vs not hunting (North American Conservation model)
- Tribal input- more formal presentation
- Try and diffuse some of the conflict with hunting
- Bears on private lands and dealing with bears in the future (separate section)
- Social tolerance /social science- needs articulation with specific actions
- Attractive food conditioning – developing a consistent food storage requirement

It was also noted that we need a common format on the Five-Year Action Plan for both the Executive Committee and the Subcommittees.

**DECISION: An Ad-Hoc Committee consisting of Chris Smith, Tony Hamilton, Ken McDonald, and the new USFWS Grizzly Bear Coordinator will work on the IGBC guiding documents.**

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

Grizzly Bear Demographics in the NCDE-2016 – Cecily Costello

Interagency population monitoring plan (2005) calls for determining trend by monitoring survival and reproduction of females.

Target sample sizes of 25 females and 5 males radio-monitored for research, supplemented with bears monitored for management purposes. As intended, distribution of sample generally agrees with relative density as estimated from 2004 DNA study (Kendall et al. 2009).

Reviewed key findings of 2014 report, provided copies and link for online copy.

Inside Recovery Zone, recovery criteria for occupancy of females with cubs were met by 2010 and continue to be met. Full occupancy of Zone 1 was documented starting in 2013.

As of 2014, population was distributed over >55,000 square km, falling well outside of Recovery Zone and most of DMA. Only ~120 km separate the NCDE population from the GYE population.

2016 update: (1) captured 64 bears; (2) monitored 55 independent bears and documented 5 mortalities; (3) monitored 21 dependent offspring and documented 4 mortalities; (4) documented reproductive status for 39 females; and (5) documented cub litter size for 6 females.

In 2014, analyses indicated growth rate of 2.3% per year. Assuming 765 bears in 2004 (Kendall et al. 2009), the estimate for 2014 was 960 bears and the estimate for 2016 is 1005 bears.

We documented 22 total mortalities in the NCDE (inside and outside DMA) during 2016. Inside the DMA, we estimated 17 total mortalities (12F, 5M) of independent bears from 13 documented mortalities (9F, 4M). These numbers fall below thresholds for maximum numbers of sustainable mortalities, consistent with continued population growth.

#### Bear Population Trend Estimated Using Genetic Detection - Kate Kendall

1. Objectives: 1) Estimate overall population density and trend using data from genetic detections at natural bear rub sites, 2) Explore variation in local growth rates within the NCDE
2. 662 grizzly bear detected through hair collection from 4,300 - 4,900 bear rubs monitored 2004 and 2000-2012. 1/3 of population detected each year.
3. Grizzly bear population grew 5.6% between 2004 and 2012.
4. Growth rate varied from 1.6% on Blackfeet Reservation Bear Management Unit to 10.8% in the South End BMU. This resulted in all the highest density areas occurring in the northern third of the NCDE in 2004 to higher densities spreading to the southern half of the ecosystem by 2012.
5. The large sample size produced by genetic detection methods provides information of variation in density and trend useful for designing monitoring and management strategies tailored to area-specific needs and priorities.
6. Genetic detection at rub sites is an efficient method to monitoring trend: the large sample produced a precise population growth rate from just 2 years of data (2004 and 2012). Costs may be further lowered while maintaining adequate precision by decreasing sampling effort.

#### Trends in grizzly bear genetic diversity – Tabitha Graves (see PPT)

Genetic diversity paper in Proceedings B

- Genetic diversity lower in 3 southern regions of NCDE relative to north in 2004
- Genetic diversity increased by 2011-2012 due to immigration into those areas, illustrating existence and importance of connectivity even within an ecosystem
- Initial lower genetic diversity result of a few individuals dominating reproductions

Nature vs Nurture Paper

- More cubs of moms with history of problems experience human-bear conflicts than expected (more than cubs of moms with no history of problems) so important to keep females with cubs from attractants.

#### **Bitterroot Ecosystem Subcommittee Report – Julie King (see handout)**

**North Cascades Ecosystem Report – Bob Everett (see handout) Karen Taylor Goodrich (see PPT)**

**Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee Report – Mary Erickson (see PPT)**

**Discussion and approval of the Yellowstone Conservation Strategy**



Ken McDonald noted the Yellowstone CS was approved by the YES ecosystem subcommittee at the Fall meeting with 18 members voting for and 1 against to move CS strategy forward to the IGBC Executive Committee for review and approval.

**DECISION: There were some last minute wording changes that were resolved by the agencies and the YES CS strategy was approved by the IGBC Executive Committee.**

**GYE Research and Monitoring Summary 2016 – Frank van Manen**

**Known and Probable Mortalities for 2016**

34 mortalities in DMA

31 human caused

2 natural and 1 undetermined

20 mortalities outside DMA

All 20 were human caused

Causes of mortalities

9 from vehicle strikes 7 males (5 sub adults) and 2 females (sub adults)

3 grizzlies drowned in 2016 canal east of Cody, WY (high flow/steep bank)

Frank went on to note there are several false claims being circulated and wanted to set the record straight.

**CLAIM:** The grizzly bear population is declining and the population is smaller than being reported.

**RESPONSE:** There is no evidence of a decline in population in the DMA. In fact, on the edges of the DMA, we are possibly seeing locally high growth rates.

There is a pretty strong bias in the Chao 2 estimator for underestimating population; 40 to 50 percent bias in this estimator which is the technique being used

For the Mark/Resight Estimator, which is not being used as the primary estimator because there is a lot less bias but quite a bit of variation from year to year in this model; it provides some useful information but is not sufficient for trend detection.

Managers chose to use the Chao 2 estimator model primarily because it is a conservative indicator.

**CLAIM:** Mortality is at a record high

**RESPONSE:** We are not experiencing the highest mortality rate. That was in 2008

**CLAIM:** Bears are leaving the Core of the ecosystem

**RESPONSE:** Since the 1970's, there is no indication that bears are leaving the core of the ecosystem. There is no indication that females w/cubs are leaving the core.

**CLAIM:** The increase in bear conflicts indicates that bears are not finding enough food sources

**RESPONSE:** As bears are expanding their range the likelihood of increased conflicts continues which is why we are seeing the trend in rising conflicts.

**CLAIM:** Federal and State scientists are biased (based on Bruskotter et al 2016).

**RESPONSE:** The recent critique of Bruskotter et al (2016) by Garshelis and Noyce (2016) in *International Bear News* addresses this issue.

Jodi Bush gave an update on filling the FWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator position behind Chris Servheen. She noted that the agency is moving quickly to fill the position and that a qualified candidate had expressed interest. The position will function mostly as it has in the past but will now report directly to her. **UPDATE: Hilary Cooley has officially accepted the USFWS Grizzly Bear Coordinator position vice Chris Servheen)**

**Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee Report - Mary Farnsworth (see PPT)**

Mary announced that both the Kalispell tribe and the Kootenai Tribe of ID accepted the invitation to participate as members of the SCY subcommittee.

Chris Savage, Forest Supervisor on the Kootenai NF will be the new SCY Chair vice Mary Farnsworth  
Rodney Smolden, Forest Supervisor on the Colville NF will be the new Vice Chair

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

Ken McDonald noted that we have met the criteria in the Recovery Plan for the NCDE since 2008. He asked the IGBC to write a letter to the USFWS leadership strongly encouraging them to list the NCDE as a priority for delisting ad to provide the needed resources.

Ken made the motion and a second motion was made by Jim Hayden.

**DECISION: The IGBC agreed to communicate to the FWS in writing strongly encouraging them to prioritize the NCDE delisting and provide the necessary resources and complete the NCDE Conservation Strategy. Ken will draft a letter by the end of December for IGBC Chair signature.**

**Summer IGBC Meeting, June 20-22, 2017, Choteau, MT**

**\*\*\*END\*\*\***

