

# Wyoming Grizzly Bear Management Plan

Approved May 2016

## Wyoming Grizzly Bear Management Plan



Prepared by:  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department



Wyoming Game and Fish Department



# Outline-What's in the Plan?

- Key Components
  - History and Background
  - Adaptive Management Criteria-Recovery Criteria
  - Population Status
  - **Regulations**
  - Occupancy
  - **Population Management**
  - **Hunting**
  - Research and Monitoring
  - Habitat and Land Management
  - **Conflict Management**
  - **Information and Education**
  - **Law Enforcement**
  - **Management Costs and Funding**
  - **Maintaining a Recovered Grizzly Bear Population**
- Questions





# REGULATIONS

- History

- 1899 – Game and Fish Laws of Wyoming: no mention of grizzly bears
- 1903 – State Game Warden Report: misdemeanor to hunt, kill, or trap grizzly bears upon any of the National Forest Reserves in the state, except during the open game (ungulate) seasons
- 1937 – Black and grizzly bears classified as game animals most national forests, classified as predatory animals throughout remainder of state
- 1975 – GYA grizzly bears listed as threatened



# Current Regulations

- Wyoming Statute (W.S.) 23-1-101 (a) (xii) (A)
  - Classifies the grizzly bear as a “trophy game animal” statewide; this classification empowers the Commission to regulate take of grizzly bears
- Appendix II of the Plan details specifics of current regulations in place
  - Statutes in place regarding damage (agricultural and property) caused by grizzly bears
    - W.S. §23-2-101
    - W.S. §23-1-901





# Current Regulations cont.

- “The commission is directed and empowered: To fix season and bag limits, open, shorten or close seasons including providing for season extensions for hunters with disabilities as established by commission rules and regulation, on any species or sex of wildlife for any type of legal weapon, except predatory animals, predacious birds, protected animals, and protected birds, in any specified locality of Wyoming, and to give notice thereof;”
  - (W.S. 23-1302(a)(i))
- “The commission is directed and empowered: To establish zones and areas in which trophy game animals may be taken as game animals with a license...giving proper regard to the livestock and game industries in those particular areas;
  - (W.S. 231302(a)(ii))



# Regulations

- The WGFC shall establish standards and requirements for mortality in accordance with demographic recovery criteria mortality thresholds as outlined in the three state MOA and the *Conservation Strategy*
- No person shall take any grizzly bear in Wyoming without a proper license (W.S.23-3-102(a))
- No person shall take any grizzly bear outside of WGFC established hunting seasons or hunt areas (WGFC Regulation, Ch. 67)
- Hunting seasons, mortality limits and grizzly bear hunting regulations will be approved by the WGFC through a public process (WGFC Grizzly Bear Management Plan)
- No person shall take any grizzly bear with dependent young at side, nor shall they take dependent young (WGFC Regulation Chapter 67)



# Regulations (current and pending)

- Any person taking a grizzly bear will report the harvest to the Wyoming Game Fish Department (WGFD) office, game warden or biologist within 24 hours (WGFC Regulation Chapter 67)
  - Any person taking a grizzly bear will be required to present the hide and skull to a WGFD regional office within 5 days (WGFC Regulation Chapter 16, pending)
- Hunting seasons will close if female mortality limits are reached or exceeded (WGFC Grizzly Bear Management Plan, WGFC Regulation Chapter 67)
- If adult female, adult male or dependent young mortality limits are exceeded, the following year's discretionary mortality allocation will be adjusted accordingly (WGFC Grizzly Bear Management Plan)

# MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- The Department established the Large Carnivore Section (LCS) to manage grizzly bears and other large carnivores in Wyoming
- Below are major components of the Department's grizzly bear management program





# Occupancy

- We have documented increased distribution and occupancy of grizzly bears through time throughout Wyoming and beyond the DMA in many areas





# Population Monitoring and Management

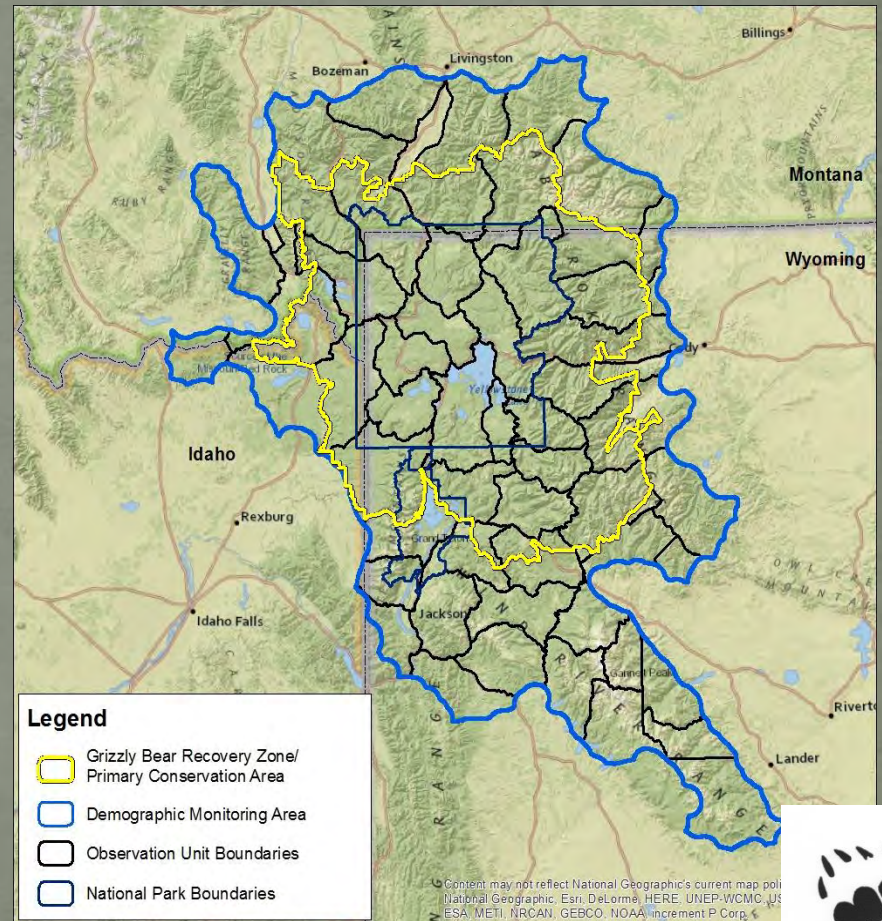
- Captured grizzly bears maintain a representative sample of the population providing insight into:
  - Survival, reproduction, movements, habitat use, condition, and abundance (amongst many other things)





# Grizzly Bear Observation Areas

- Designed to match the DMA boundary for consistency
- Annually record bears seen to be used in population abundance and distribution analyses
  - Aerial and ground observations





# Population Monitoring

- Monitor all forms of mortality for grizzly bears in Wyoming
  - The Department will manage human-caused mortality to assure overall mortality limits for the DMA are not exceeded
- Grizzly bear foods monitoring





# Hunting

- If the Commission decides to do so, hunting would be a component of grizzly bear management
- The goal of hunting would be to ensure long term conservation of grizzly bears by maintaining the population within a healthy sustainable range within the DMA
  - Female grizzly bears with dependent young and dependent young will be protected from harvest
  - All potential harvest objectives would ensure a recovered grizzly bear population as per this Plan and the Conservation Strategy (2016)



# Research and Monitoring

- Continue to evaluate and develop more precise techniques to estimate abundance and trend of the population
- Unique opportunity to evaluate changes within the population as it increases in density and distribution
- Interactions with other carnivores and ungulate populations
- Evaluate changes to population demographics through time





# Habitat and Land Management

- The Department has no direct authority to manage habitat except on Commission-owned lands
- The six national forests within the GYA have committed to maintain secure grizzly bear habitat at 1998 levels
- All six forest plan revisions include standards ensuring habitat will be conserved at levels needed to sustain the recovered GYA DPS grizzly bear population



# Habitat and Land Management

- The Department advocates maintenance of roadless areas where they currently exist within occupied grizzly bear habitat
- The Department promotes the use of bear pepper spray in areas occupied or likely to be occupied by grizzly bears
- The Department also recommends that land management agencies require proper food/waste handling practices (i.e. food storage orders) that reduce the potential for conflicts





# Conflict Management

- The Department has been managing grizzly bear conflicts since the 1970s
- As the population has grown in abundance and distribution we have responded in kind with increased efforts and infrastructure to deal with human/grizzly bear conflicts





# Information and Education

- 1991 – The Department launched educational efforts to reduce conflicts and educate the public regarding grizzly bears
- 2005 – The Department initiated the Bear Wise Community Program
- 2013 – In order to broaden the efforts of the Community Program, the work was re-branded; *“Bear Wise Wyoming”*





# Bear Wise Wyoming Program

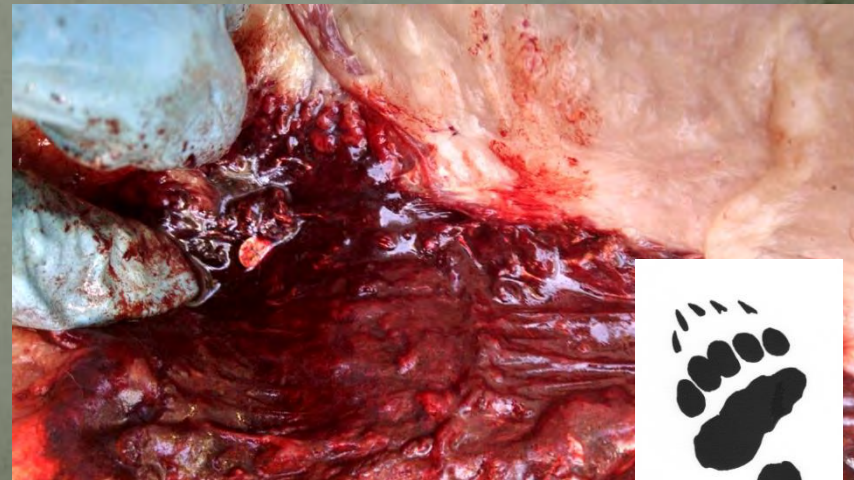
- Important component of grizzly bear management program
- Actively engage and work with the local public, livestock producers, communities, land management agencies, hunters, outfitters, schools, and local governments to proactively deal with grizzly bears





# Law Enforcement

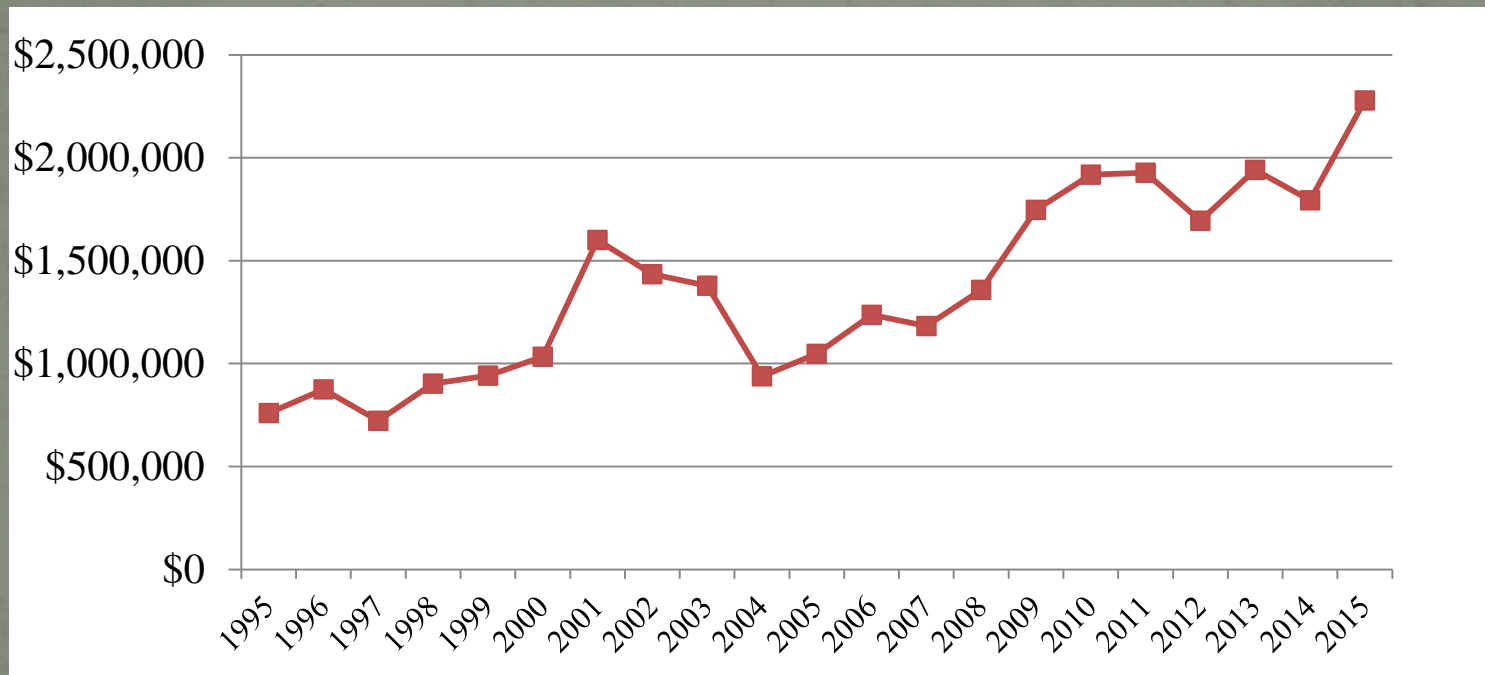
- The Commission will ensure the fair, consistent and effective enforcement of laws and regulations related to grizzly bears
- The Department will invest in the protection of the grizzly bear population, the thorough investigation of reported and discovered violations and will work with local prosecutors to adjudicate violations appropriately and in accordance with state law





# Management Costs and Funding

- More than \$40,000,000 expended by the Department for grizzly bear recovery from 1990-2015





# Questions

